

*Postal Service*

complaints received, there are one or two matters which, by way of example, I should like to bring to his attention. I received a letter yesterday which exemplifies the problem inherent in the five day letter delivery system; it took five days for a letter to go 100 miles from the town of Tillsonburg in south-western Ontario to Toronto.

This afternoon I received an even more interesting letter from a lady travelling overseas in the *Empress of England*, one of the Canadian Pacific ships. She was without a passport. Heaven knows, we have had enough trouble in that department. This lady was told that her passport would be waiting at the dock when the ship left Canada. It was not there. She is now on the high seas, and I understand the passport is en route by air. I checked on this matter and ascertained that it takes six days to obtain a passport. The poor lady was lucky to get anything from the passport office, but it seems that the system fell down when it came to sending the passport from Ottawa to Montreal. There are limits to everything. I am sure the minister has good intentions, and I hope his staff will give him a little more support in this regard.

Early last December I had occasion to write to the minister about the non-delivery of a package to a foreign country. The package was consigned to the Falkland Islands, South America, to be exact. I received a very nice, prompt reply from the minister who said that the package was being traced and in due course he would let me know the results of the investigation. That letter of December 10 was the last I heard about the matter. I realize that it sometimes takes time to check these things, but I am sure matters could be speeded up a little.

There are two matters in particular which I should like to bring to the minister's attention. I shall be brief because of the time at my disposal. I know these problems have been brought to the attention of the minister, but sometimes repetition has a salutary effect. The first is the new postal rates and their effect on farm, trade and Canadian magazines generally. I do not think I need emphasize these problems because they have been brought to the minister's attention so often that he must dream about them. However, I should like to refer in particular to the magazine of the Royal Canadian Legion. The minister was questioned about the committee some time ago about this matter. He said he did not see why the government should subsidize magazines put out by the Liberal party,

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

the Conservative party, the Royal Bank or anyone else. I would agree with him, but it has always been customary in this country since the first world war to provide a little assistance to those who were associated with the defence of this country. After all, those who took on the burden of public service during the first and second world wars did take on some risk, unlike a good many others I could think of who were very anxious for public service at a later date when no risk was involved.

• (8:50 p.m.)

Incidentally, I am not in any way referring to the minister in this connection, because his record in this regard is very good. It has always been our policy to give a little help to veterans in any way we could and I do not see why a magazine put out by the Legion should have been dealt with by the department in such a summary way. I believe a little consideration might have been shown.

This leads to a final observation on the minister's views concerning the way in which we should pay for the postal service. It is apparently some sort of fetish with the minister, and presumably with the cabinet that the post office must pay its way. On the face of it, this sounds a good idea. There is only one thing odd about it, and that is that none of the other forms of communication operated by the government do so or are intended to do so. Look at the C.B.C. We pay \$150 million a year sending messages to the Eskimos. A good idea, and I am all for it. But why should the Post Office Department, which deals with communications between one person and another, be singled out for this kind of discrimination? The Post Office must pay its way but the C.B.C. gets a blank cheque for putting out a daily dose of communist propaganda—that is about what we get from them. And it is done at the public expense. There is no rationale to this. If all kinds of communications in Canada operated by the government must pay their way, then let the C.B.C. pay its way. That would really be a dandy! I should like to see it happen. On the other hand, if there are to be subsidies in Canada—and we have all accepted that principle—because some parts of our country are handicapped because of sparseness of population, and so on, why single out the postal service?

What has happened is this: rates have gone up but the quality of service has gone down to just about rock bottom. Last November one could post a letter in this building at seven in the evening and it would be delivered in my