

Mr. HANSON: Does the minister not think it is necessary, in order to provide postal facilities, to establish a post office sometimes in a place where it is not remunerative?

Mr. SPENCE: Louder.

Mr. HANSON: Does the minister not think that the government is justified in providing postal services in places where it might not be immediately remunerative? In a pioneer country like Canada one cannot expect to get a profit on the operations of the post office for the first few years in an outlying district which is only sparsely settled, but in a few years that post office, instead of serving half a dozen or a dozen families may be accommodating quite a settlement. In a country like Canada we are entitled, I think, to get such facilities from the government.

Mr. HEAPS: The question of postal facilities is one entirely apart from the erection of huge buildings where they are not required. There is no hon. member in this chamber who does or will object to the provision of adequate postal facilities in every part of Canada.

Mr. HANSON: Speak up. The hon. member said that to me.

Mr. HEAPS: I heard the hon. member quite well; I never asked him to speak louder. Probably some of my neighbours did, but he must not accuse me of their sins; I have enough of my own to carry. I repeat that I have never objected to adequate postal facilities for any part of the country. What I have tried to do, and with no great amount of success in previous years, is to ensure that when buildings are to be erected for the use of the Post Office Department, that department is responsible for the requests which come in, and that there shall be, in the places where it is proposed to erect new buildings sufficient business, I shall not say to pay for their construction and upkeep, but to warrant their construction. In many places buildings are erected solely for postal purposes. In some cases, as is shown by the figures submitted to this chamber in past years, the revenue has been hardly more than sufficient to pay for the help. That is not running the postal business in a business-like way. I venture to assert that of the two millions and several hundred thousand dollars which are charged against the Post Office Department for the use of buildings, an enormous amount could be saved if the officials of the department had the sole right to decide as to the erection of the buildings and could put

them up as any business concern should do. The amount charged against the department is, I think, \$2,600,000.

Mr. EULER: Two and three-quarter million dollars.

Mr. HEAPS: The Post Office Department should have the say as to what kind of buildings should be erected and where they should be located. But that has not been the situation in the past. I am not blaming solely the present government for what is happening; the same kind of thing has gone on right down through the years. One department erects the buildings and then asks another department to use them. I am aware that in some respects the Department of Public Works, with its special facilities, may be in a better position to call for contracts, but I do not agree that it is better able to decide where post office buildings should go. Personally I have never asked any of the ministers for the erection of any buildings, and I do not intend to do so; I am quite satisfied to leave these matters in the hands of the Post Office Department and its expert staff. When I find that they are not doing things in the right way, then will be the time for me to complain.

In my opinion hon. members themselves are as much to blame as anyone else for existing conditions. We hear them one day crying for economy, and the next day they are rushing around the various departments asking for huge expenditures. I want to see the Post Office Department conducted as any efficient business should be. I do not think the habit of some members of seeking concessions for their own particular constituencies is at all a desirable form of activity, nor do I approve one department erecting buildings without the consent or knowledge of the other department concerned; under such circumstances we cannot expect business to be efficiently conducted.

The running of post offices as a separate utility should be concentrated in the Post Office Department. That is not asking too much. I remember an instance in my own constituency where, when one government went out and another party came into power, they changed some postmasters in the small post offices in the district. I was very much opposed to this proceeding. They put in charge of one office a man with a criminal record, to handle his majesty's mails, and although I protested as vigorously as I could to the then Postmaster General I could obtain no satisfaction. People were afraid to go to that office with registered mail; but all that was done was that the office was transferred