

*Government Organization*

our people and not only because we must get what is rather strangely called a parking space for our satellite. There is no shame in mentioning that there are also good and sound financial reasons why we should get into this field early. There is revenue to be gained. There is, one might say, gold up in "that thar" space area. It is conceivable, because the minister is having trouble with his Post Office Department, that he might be able with his right hand to draw on something which might help the deficits on his left. I want him to know that when he is able to move on the implementation of a Canadian role in domestic satellites he will find every support and every encouragement from me.

• (3:00 p.m.)

I noticed the hon. gentleman's reference to the vision of the north. He paid a very fine tribute to the former leader of our party, the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert. I concur in that. I would only say in passing that that right hon. gentleman, while he was prime minister of this country, was capable not only of looking to the north but he also looked to the east and to the west. The people of the maritimes and the people of the prairies remember this very well and very vividly.

With reference to the Post Office, I hope we are not going to have a development where—under the Post Office Department will become the step child of the communications department. I note very carefully what the minister said in their regard on page 4 of his statement. He said that "at least until its future is defined," the Post office will not become one arm of an integrated Department of Communications headed by a single deputy minister. I repeat that phrase, "at least until its future is defined." The thing that would frighten me is that it would become the left arm, the weak arm. I have the nagging thought on occasion then I note the minister talking about telephones in the sky and interesting developments in foreign policy, that perhaps he is diverting his thoughts from some of the real problems in the Post Office. I would not impute motives. Of course, you cannot do that. It is ungentlemanly. But I wonder if he might be engaging a bit in diverting the thoughts of the patrons of the Post Office Department from the problems which his policies are visiting on them.

We want satellites in the sky. Good Lord, we are all for that, but we want mail to move rapidly on the ground as well. There are

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

some things happening in the Post Office of late which would cause people to wonder if somebody does not have his mind on something else while these things are developing. The imposition of the five day delivery has been changed in time and in scope. The original plans had to be abandoned. I wonder if the whole thing may not yet have to be abandoned.

I do not know whether I am plugged into the computer age, but I find it difficult to be convinced that you can move mail as rapidly by processing it five days out of seven as six days out of seven. This is a thing that has not yet been demonstrated by the backlog of mail in many parts of Canada. The half million letters lying around in Montreal were not only for the people of Montreal. Mail laid up in any important centre is inhibiting delivery of mail all over the country. This is very important and very serious.

There was insufficient consideration for the needs of letter carriers on the sort-through system. Without going into details, I would say there was insufficient consideration of very basic needs and working conditions of the most elementary kind. I am not at all surprised that there is controversy and indeed adjudication over this matter right now. There was insufficient consideration of the categories of mail which cannot properly be processed under the five day system.

I read in the *Ottawa Citizen* of February 26 a great concern expressed by medical people. I quote from the article in that newspaper:

Medical laboratories fear some patients may be endangered by the cut in mail delivery from six to five days.

Specimens mailed by doctors to the laboratories on Fridays will not undergo tests until Monday or even Tuesday.

Patients could wait almost a week, instead of about three days, to hear the verdict.

Another danger is that specimens will break down chemically or be affected by temperatures while lying in Post Office stations an extra day.

A change in the specimen could result in some disease going undetected—

"It very well could hamper a diagnosis," said a director of Douglas Laboratory Services, 150 Metcalfe Street. "Doctors depend on us for fast and accurate results."

The director of another laboratory said:

"It doesn't do the test samples any good to be hanging around in postal offices another day... There could be a chemical change in some of the substances, particularly the proteins—they can break down very easily."

So, this is a very important question that was obviously not considered, although the