

*Postal Service Policies*

forget about Canada being a nation: we can think of the regional aspects only. This would be to the detriment of all concerned. I wonder if the Postmaster General insists on recognizing the discipline of the balance sheet when considering service to the people? From what we read about the Postmaster General, it appears that the discipline of the balance sheet is consistently what he has in mind. If this is all that he considers in relation to service to the Canadian people, there will be no efficient communications service for the people.

Does the Postmaster General not realize that millions of taxpayers are now paying for a not yet proven satellite communications system which is linked with our nation, when in reality the users of the satellite are unknown. When the minister appeared before the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications he indicated that the users of the postal service must pay for this satellite service. I do not object to millions of dollars being spent on developing a communications satellite for the benefit of Canada, but we have a proven communications system and some of this money could be allocated to the postal service to keep that line of communication open. It must be kept open for the benefit of Canadians. We should not spend millions of dollars on research and development of a new method of communications and at the same time disregard that line of communication which is the postal service.

Does the Postmaster General believe that only the users of the postal service should pay for the cost of that new service? Does the Postmaster General believe that senior citizens and those on low or fixed incomes should pay for the use of that service? The corporate giants, Members of Parliament and members of the cabinet are not concerned about an increase in postal rates. However, millions of people across Canada are concerned. Because of the increase in postal rates they will no longer be able to afford the paper which they have been used to reading. I would like to know whether the postal authorities in general and the cabinet in particular are concerned about increases of up to 400 per cent in respect of certain communications and journals. I realize the minister will say that there has been no change in the postal rate for these publications, but in fact a number of publications have fallen by the wayside.

It is easy to say that publishers can increase their rates to users and so cover the deficit. Those who can afford it will continue

to buy these publications, but those in the low-income bracket will not be able to renew their subscriptions. If this happens, publications such as farm journals will go out of circulation completely. If this is communication, I fail to recognize the definition of the word. Is it any wonder editorials are headed, "Kierans talks rubbish"? In many cases it is rubbish. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his cabinet know that increases are passed on to the users. When enough people opt out of subscribing to these publications we will realize that the policy on which the Post Office is based is rubbish. This means very little to the gold-studded people, but it means very much to those on low-income. The Postmaster General continues to say that the user must pay.

At this moment millions of dollars are being spent in Canada on a bilingual program. Thousands of Canadians are studying either the French or the English language in order to create a more effective means of communication in our great nation. However, the government is effectively cutting off the one positive means of communication, the postal service.

At the time when millions of dollars are being spent on a bilingual program, an effective means of communication is being cut off. I suggest that the type of postal service and communication to which we have become accustomed is in far greater danger at this time than the bilingual program. If we do not keep Canada united with an efficient communications system, it will be the end of our great nation. The Postmaster General always says the user must pay. Has the user a say at the ballot-box when the time comes? I say he has. I hope at the next election the users of the postal service of this nation will indicate whether they are in agreement with the Liberal government and its policy with regard to the postal service. The Liberal members may be very surprised to find that the grass-roots people of this nation are the ones that count.

What does service to the people really mean to this government other than the pronounced policy of service to the wealthy? The wealthy are not concerned, but the average Canadian is. The Postmaster General recently indicated to the committee that the government intends to take every possible step to reduce the deficit and establish a balanced budget within a few years. Is this a philosophy of the Postmaster General? Is this a socially acceptable and reasonable policy which the users in Canada should expect?