

*Post Office Act*

slow down or reverse the drift to an all-powerful cabinet and the shift to authoritarianism, we must use our system of parliamentary committees more effectively. I plead with the Postmaster General to accept the recommendation of the opposition, put forward responsibly, in order that we may go on with other matters of greater priority which, as the government house leader has indicated, are being held up until we finish our discussion of the post office legislation. We can do what I suggest without even voting on the amendment if the Postmaster General will only give the word.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. J.-A. Mongrain (Trois-Rivières):** Mr. Speaker, naturally there has been much talk about Bill No. C-116. The honourable minister has covered the subject quite well, and I would not be surprised if he should himself propose some amendments during consideration of the legislation. I listened to quite a number of objections from some opposition members and I fail to understand their reasoning when they blame the government for showing a \$400 million budget deficit and then for taking measures in order to offset that deficit.

An increase in the cost of government services is not, of course, a pleasant prospect and nobody likes it. I do not think that the minister was happy to introduce those measures, because I know that he has enough experience and intelligence to realize that a proposed increase in the price of government services is never popular.

I also think, Mr. Speaker, that we live in times when the vast majority of Canadian citizens realize that empty promises are totally irresponsible and that someone has to pay for every service. There may be two schools of thought on the subject, that is to say some services must be paid for by the community, while others have to be paid for by the people who use them. The minister and his advisers—a good many of us agree—believe that, with regard to postal services, the first people who should absorb this portion of the deficit which should disappear, must be those who benefit from these services.

Other measures will probably stem from this one, but I still believe that it is a sound theory by which the users of a service pay for its cost. Beside, the rates have not been increased for a long time and we wonder, for instance, if the cost of 6 cents for a letter

today is not equivalent to its cost of 2 or 3 cents, 10 or 15 years ago. Everyone knows that nowadays money does not have the same value.

Members on the opposition side have advanced all kinds of arguments that I shall not try to refute, because I would have to hold the floor too long. But evidently, the minister and ourselves were expecting that newspapers would protest, as would anyone who is called upon to pay more taxes.

• (4:10 p.m.)

Indeed it hurts us, as well as our friends opposite, when we see our income tax going up. Of course, we do not protest, because that would be unbecoming of members of parliament. The members of the Ralliement Créditiste only can afford to do so; they protested against the increase of rates on mail forwarded by members. They are the only ones who did, as far as I know; I heard nothing from the official opposition nor from the New Democratic party.

But it is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that all such things hurt. I do not say they are not right because they hurt; there comes a time when, whatever the party in office, the government has to face such a situation.

Everyone who reads the newspapers knows that there is now all over the world a sort of monetary crisis, which is even worse in other countries. I have here—I am sure my colleagues have it also—the latest report of the governor of the Bank of Canada, Mr. Louis Rasminsky; it explains how the government succeeded in avoiding a severe financial crisis. While other countries were forced to devalue their currency, Canada was able to restore confidence among investors here, and maintain a reasonable prosperity and prevent an increase in unemployment. According to what the governor of the Bank of Canada says in the report, Mr. Speaker, it was imperative for the government to take all possible means to balance its budget.

As everyone else I skimmed through the report of *Les Quotidiens du Québec Inc.*—Quebec dailies—and indeed, what they had to say was predictable. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the chance of proving that some of those assertions are exaggerated, that some figures are not realistic.

Besides, members of the opposition pointed out a while ago that newspapers are going through some form of modernization crisis. Some of them have gone out of business, and