

The entire Post Office bill is designed to provide people with a mail service. I am dealing with the definition, but I cannot do so by saying definition, definition, definition, as the hon. member of the NDP wants. I am referring to illustrations to show the definition.

As I said before, these cheques are mailed out on the thirteenth and fourteenth of the month if the fifteenth happens to be a Saturday or Sunday. For many years pensioners have been receiving their cheques before the end of the month. Now they are receiving them on the fifth and the sixth of the following month. In fact one chap in Canmore told me that he did not receive his cheque until the eleventh of the following month. Surely the mail service should be better than that.

My point is that there must be a chain of command in order to find out who is responsible. I know it is not the Postmaster General, but somewhere between Edmonton and Canmore there is a hold-up. Certainly this is not doing the Post Office any good.

The old age pension department mails out its cheques on the twenty-first of every month. These cheques are arriving later, later and later. Sometimes it is the fifteenth of the following month before pensioners receive their cheques.

Certainly what the minister was saying about a monopoly and so on was fine, but when the service is inefficient it is time for the monopoly to end. I impress this upon the hon. minister.

I should like to refer to one or two other examples. A letter was mailed in Montreal on February 16. It arrived at its point of destination in Calgary on March 12. Where was it? I travel from Ottawa to Calgary every weekend; it takes me 3.5 hours. If there happens to be some airplane trouble, it can take as much as seven hours, but never 24 days. I could go by bicycle faster than that. It is not efficient.

I would like to refer to another matter which bothers many people. One postmaster in southern Alberta said he was losing half his business because it takes so long to send a letter to Edmonton, to Regina, or any place in the east. It is getting stalled some place. I think the place where it is getting stalled is in the Calgary regional Post Office.

Clause 14(1) of the bill reads as follows:

Subject to Section 15, the Corporation has the sole and exclusive privilege of collecting, transmitting and delivering letters to the addressee thereof within Canada.

The Post Office should cut the mustard. If it cuts the mustard, no sensible Canadian will pay three times as much to send a letter. Business people do not spend money in that way, unless there is something wrong somewhere. They want the best possible service for every dime they spend.

I should like to refer to one or two other points in connection with this matter. Insurance agents depend upon their letters getting to their clients and receiving their cheques on time. Otherwise, clients do not know whether they are covered by insurance, or the agent will cancel the policy if the premium does not arrive. It is a serious matter. An insurance agent in Turner Valley indicated that half her business disappeared. She had to resort to other means at additional cost in order to

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stay in business. This is the point I am trying to emphasize. We do not want this exclusive privilege eliminated simply for the fun of it. It is because the Post Office is not cutting the mustard; that is the story. What about the inability to serve one's client? If I am in business, I have a responsibility to my client whether I am in insurance or whatever. If I am an insurance agent who must notify a client that his house or furniture is insured, it is sometimes necessary to convey this message over several miles. It is not always a case of walking down the street, because agents cover large territories. If they cannot notify their clients, their businesses go to rack and ruin because of a third party which makes it impossible for them to do their jobs. If that is the case, why should there not be an alternative? Why should there be an exclusive monopoly? I suggest that is simply to get the cream.

One or two members said that they were not trying to take money away from the Post Office. If the Post Office can do the job, anyone will spend 17 cents or even 30 cents on a letter, rather than \$4 for a courier. People must have their letters delivered. If we want an efficient postal service, the chain of command must guarantee that these letters will reach their destinations within reasonable lengths of time.

The sad thing is that small businessmen are affected by the service, not the larger organizations such as Calgary power or Canadian utilities. They can afford other methods, but small independent businessmen can least afford to ride out prolonged mail disruption to the orderly cash flow of their businesses.

England and the United States have made provision for this type of thing. For example, in the United States legislation exempts the delivery of stocks, bonds, insurance documents and similar instruments. This can be done in the United States where the mail service is not undergoing the pains of agony suffered in Canada. Why would it be so wrong to do it here, if it means better service?

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If the Post Office can deliver the goods, no one in his right mind would pay extra money for courier service. In the United Kingdom, proposed amendments to the legislation provide exemption for "time sensitive" documents which could include such matters as insurance policies.

The bill will not give satisfaction. There will be continual difficulty and trouble in this country unless we provide an alternative, when the Post Office does not or cannot cut the mustard and deliver the mail within a reasonable time. I think that is the important point we must emphasize today. All we are asking is that the Post Office do its job to move the mail and get it to the place where it is supposed to be within a reasonable time. An assured source of basic revenue does not guarantee better service. The monopoly the hon. minister mentioned will not guarantee better service. As a matter of fact, I am afraid that giving an exclusive monopoly would tend to make some types of employees very careless. They might say, "We have got the monopoly. Why should we care? We do not have to compete. We do not have to cut the mustard any more. We have got the monopoly as it is." That attitude is