

The Budget—Hon. J. P. Côté

Therefore, as I said at the outset, the resolution which I submitted was quite justified, and I think it will be submitted again at the very beginning of the next session, so that we can meet the required time limit of rate increases and justify the operating cost of the department, while taking into account the quality of the service which the Canadian people already receive and is entitled to receive.

People ask this question: But what is going on in the Post Office Department? I answered part of this question. Now, let me go on, so that I may give you more explanations.

First and second class rates may not be changed without the approval of the house. All the other rates may be changed on the authority of the Postmaster General. If we study the changes made under his authority between 1961 and 1968, we note that all mail categories, other than the first and second class, produced additional revenue totalling \$180 million. In other words, Mr. Speaker, all mail rates which do not fall within the jurisdiction of parliament were increased and brought in additional revenue of \$180 million. Those new rates, and the resulting income, are based on the principle that each mail category must pay for itself. If the resolution had been examined and had become law, we would have been in a position to increase third class rates, known also as advertising mail.

Hon. members will recall that I announced earlier this year an increase in the rate of the second weight unit for third class parcels. I specified at the time that this was a temporary increase. It was, in fact, temporary, since third class rates with regard to mail handling, cannot be the same as those applying to local mail. Consequently, third class rates cannot be changed without changing those applying to local mail. My intention was to announce an increase in third class rates effective July 1, 1968. It is still my intention to do it, because I am convinced that the hon. members will give me the support I need at the proper time.

Mr. Speaker, I have other statistics to impart to the house; at this time, however, I should like to mention two other points which were embodied in the resolution which I should have liked parliament to pass. One of these has to do with the duration of contracts—

[*English*]

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, I raise the same point of order that has been raised

[Mr. Côté (Longueuil).]

before. I have no objection, and I am sure members of the house have no objection, to the minister reporting to us in a general way on the work of his department and particularly with respect to the financial implications of aspects of its work, but it does seem to me that he is violating the rule when he repeatedly returns to the resolution. I believe that he could make his speech more cleverly—and I say this in a kindly way—if he would avoid any reference to the resolution. He keeps returning to the resolution. He says it was responsible and he suggests that it is one which members will support the next time. He is making a speech in support of a distinct proposition which the house has rejected so far as this session is concerned. I do not suggest that the minister should be prevented from speaking about the affairs of his department but I ask, Mr. Speaker, that you apply the rule which states that there shall be no further references to a resolution on which the house has taken a decision.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. At this time I think I should point out to the minister that he is quite in order in discussing the financial affairs of his department or the operations of his department. However, a reference to the resolution which the house debated some time ago may be in contravention of some of the citations. I should like to refer the minister to citation 148 of Beauchesne's fourth edition:

(1) It is a wholesome restraint upon members that they cannot revive a debate already concluded; and it would be little use in preventing the same question from being offered twice in the same session if, without being offered, its merits might be discussed again and again.

Again, I refer the house to citation 149(a):

Besides the prohibitions contained in standing order 35, it has been sanctioned by usage both in England and in Canada, that a member, while speaking, must not: (a) refer to any debate of the same session on any question not then under discussion; nor—

Further along citation 149(k) reads as follows:

—reflect upon the past acts and proceedings of the House;

I suggest that perhaps the debate would be more in order if speeches were confined to topics more in keeping with a budget debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Côté (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I could probably talk about the increase in the volume of mail, for instance. I might say that mail volume has increased by 20 per cent