

*Supply—Post Office*

postal system of this young Canada of ours. We have a post office in Charlottetown—I am not speaking of the building; that will come later—that is exceptionally well run. I doubt if any province has a post office of the same size with the same number of employees that is giving any greater service to the people. Right from the postmaster and the inspector down to the mail carriers and the stamp vendor—about whom I shall have a few words to say later on—all give good service.

I believe the department has not dealt properly with our province because it has not been made a postal zone the same as the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Why should we as a province, with all the rights of any other province, be tied to the Saint John post office? Here we have a post office which is just as good in the way it is set up and the men who are employed as the Saint John or Halifax post offices. At the same time we do not enjoy the authority to conduct our own business.

Let us look at the set-up. First of all the department at Ottawa sets up a regional controller with a head office in Moncton. He takes charge of the maritime area including the Magdalen islands. Under him is Mr. W. R. Ingram, district director of postal services at Saint John, New Brunswick. He has control over New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the Magdalen islands. There is a separate district director at Halifax for the province of Nova Scotia. Formerly Prince Edward Island was able to conduct its own business, but the department at Ottawa abolished our district. Now what happens? We have a very capable post office inspector at Charlottetown, Mr. Coyle. We also have a postmaster, Mr. Connolly. Both are good men. We shall suppose, and I have known of such cases, someone from a rural section comes in with some trouble, or perhaps to obtain some article he requires. He goes in to see the postmaster at Charlottetown who says, "You need that, and we will get it for you". He must then go through to the post office inspector, but that is right next door to him in Charlottetown. Then they must go through to Mr. Ingram in Saint John, New Brunswick. Well, it depends on the time of day when they get through to him by telephone or telegraph. He may be out. Then when they get through to him he cannot decide it. He has to go through to Mr. W. C. McEachern, the regional director at Moncton. It may perhaps be his day off and he may be out golfing. Then Mr. McEachern cannot act. He must go back to Ottawa. Instead of our doing our own business, by

[Mr. McLure.]

the time it gets back to Ottawa it may be a week end; they do not work Saturdays or Sundays, and on Monday they are still playing golf.

It takes from seven to ten days for this little item to be settled, when it could be settled in ten minutes by our own inspector or our own post office man. I want to say again that the department here had no right to abolish the district director and take away from the province of Prince Edward Island, and from the city of Charlottetown in particular, the right to run its own business with regard to postal matters.

I put this matter up to the Postmaster General last year, but he is now gone; nothing was done about it. It was never mentioned, it probably never came up for consideration.

So much for the postal department. I now want to deal for a few minutes with another matter. When the Postmaster General was introducing his estimates the other night he made a statement that came close to the hearts of many on this side of the house—because we have been pleading for it ever since 1945—when he announced that it was his intention at the next session to set up a parliamentary committee to study the problems of the rural mail couriers. This announcement was received with rejoicing by most of us.

I am rather surprised at what has happened tonight. When I turn back to other occasions when a number of us were speaking on this particular subject, we find that there was complete silence on the other side of the house. But tonight we find two or three of them wanting to get on the bandwagon. We are glad to have their assistance; and when the time comes for the Postmaster General to set up this committee I am sure it will be able to lay down a plan that will do away with the discrimination that exists today and that will give these mail couriers the treatment they deserve. They are among the finest people we have employed in any way. They are faithful. Let us deal with them as they deserve to be dealt with. I am sure a committee will assist the Postmaster General.

For the benefit of the Postmaster General in view of the decision he has already made, namely that he is going to set up this committee, I just want to give an idea of some of the discrimination that exists in the mail routes. I am going to deal only with the district I know, namely my own constituency of Queens.

In this constituency the couriers have different routes to travel. As I said, I am going to deal only with those I know. I am going