

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

few minutes because I wish to address my appeal to the minister as seriously and earnestly as I can in the hope that he will consider it.

I have the floor tonight because on Thursday, April 24, as recorded in *Hansard* on page 7900 I addressed this question to the Minister of Communications:

Since there are now only three days in the week, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, when we can mail letters with any assurance they will be delivered promptly, will the minister take a new look at the entire question of the five-day delivery week and review the possibility of re-establishing a six-day delivery?

• (10:00 p.m.)

Hansard reports some hon. members as saying, "Hear, hear." Then, there is this entry:

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

That was quite definite and I suppose I will not fare much better tonight because, after all, this is a brand new idea in Canadian life as we know it to have postal delivery only five days a week. I assume it is the idea of the minister, and since it has been in effect for only a few weeks or few months at most, he will say that it should have a longer period of trial before any consideration is given to altering it. But even while he is asking the country to try out this system, I hope he will keep a close watch on what is happening.

I submit that the premise which I used for my question on April 24 is a correct one, namely, that there are now only three days of the week, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, when we can mail first class letters with any assurance that they will be delivered promptly that week. When we mail letters on Thursday their chances of being delivered on Friday are not good. There is no delivery on Saturday and Sunday, so it is Monday at the earliest when they are delivered. Of course letters mailed on Friday and Saturday are not delivered until the next week in any case, and when Monday is a holiday the situation is that much worse.

I have noticed with my own correspondence—and like all of us in this place correspondence is a major part of our life—that it has definitely slowed down. One receives a letter on Monday that was written the previous Tuesday. If you do not get the answer away for a couple of days the net result is that it can be two weeks between the time a person sends a letter and gets a reply.

I have the notion, and I suspect I am right, that this pile up over the week end is slowing

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

the mail down generally. Many hon. members have already brought experiences of theirs, to the attention of the Postmaster General. I have in my hand an envelope that contained a rather important letter which was sent to me from Winnipeg. When the person who sent it did not hear from me within a few days the result was a long distance phone call to find out why I had not answered. The only reply I could make was that I had not received the letter. It came a day or two later and, as I say, I have the envelope in my hand. It is postmarked Winnipeg, 9.30 p.m., on April 30. It is correctly addressed to me as a member of parliament at the House of Commons, and on the reverse is the cancellation of the House of Commons Post Office, and the date is May 6.

In this modern age of communication satellites, speed and explosions, with everything being instantaneous, it is pretty hard to comprehend why it takes six days for a letter to come by air mail from Winnipeg to Ottawa. In fact I could have gone out by train, got the letter, and come back in less time than that.

I have had many complaints from people who send me their own envelopes showing the extra time taken. I submit that the effect of this is not good. It is slowing down the service. It is taking away the concept of service altogether. The minister is engaged in other activities, in satellite communications, in computerization and so on, and he contends that we have got to speed up life in many respects. But what is the good of getting instant communication with a man on the moon when we get one there if we cannot get a letter from Winnipeg to Ottawa in less than six days? What is the use of air mail service, if the time saved in transit is lost in delivery?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I regret I have to interrupt the hon. member son temps de parole est expiré.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): That is fine, Mr. Speaker. I hope I get a reasonable reply.

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I realize that my original answer was too abrupt, but the hon. member ended on a note about the word service. I would like to emphasize that all of the 48,000 people who work for the Post Office are loyal employees determined to give the very best service they possibly can. However, I think we must look at the word "service" in its largest aspect. One can often compare the productivity of a large supermarket and say