

Adjournment Motion

Every time we have a postal strike there is an increase in shipments of about 35 to 40 per cent. When the mail tie-up finishes, 25 to 30 per cent of the new business stays with us and doesn't go back to the mail.

I understand that the United Postal Service is looking to Canada for business, so that is why I am suggesting the Postmaster General (Mr. MacKasey) should start negotiating with Canadian firms to transfer this business to them before the Americans walk in and take over. The bus company official goes on to say:

We are getting a lot of companies with 10 or 12 branches in one city packaging up their correspondence to these branches and sending it in one parcel by bus. It's cheaper than sending it by mail to the individual offices.

He estimates that Voyageur's parcel business has increased 400 per cent in the last five years, and we might as well give the rest of it over to the private mail contractors. We have an obligation to the business people of Canada not to slough them off and do nothing about all these postal problems.

Government departments, banks, the provincial police, credit companies, law firms, the communications media and private industry with deadlines to meet already use bus parcel express. Mr. Speaker, you will note that I said government departments. In Manitoba, Statistics Canada will not use the postal service. It uses a private bus company. Even the government cannot rely on the Post Office.

Some small delivery companies also use Voyageur. A small company will undertake to pick up an item locally, put it on the bus and have it met by an agent at the other end who will deliver it to the door. Voyageur's bus parcel express provides cross Canada service, with the exception of Newfoundland. A parcel or rush envelope brought to the Ottawa terminal can be in Montreal in 2½ hours, in Toronto in 6 hours and in Winnipeg in less than 24 hours. The parliamentary secretary may wish to read some of my mail—and I am sure he receives it too—from business people who have lost government contracts because their bids are lost in the mail or they arrive late and all the rest of it.

I would like to read a couple of quotes from the Samson, Belair report. It is unfortunate that the parliamentary secretary did not read this before he arrived tonight. It states that a contracted operation for mail delivery is less costly than a government operation. One does not have to be an expert to figure that out. The report also says that a payment on a point of call basis results in increased productivity and efficiency since the contractor is provided with an incentive to complete deliveries as early as possible. We certainly do not have that in the Post Office in Canada today.

Payment on a possible point of call basis is easier to administer because it eliminates the need to maintain a detailed record of hours worked by the contractor. A further recommendation of the report was that all mobile delivery contractors should be paid on the basis of scheduled possible points of call. Improved productivity resulting from a change in the method of payment could form the basis of negotiating contracted rates which could result in lower cost to the Post Office. The report went on to say that in future the department should contract for city services unless there is conclusive evidence as to the

[Mr. McKenzie.]

unavailability of this service on reasonable terms from outside the department.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I must say first of all that this report from Samson, Belair, Riddell and Stead never mentioned that private contractors should be entrusted with mail delivery. It rather recommended to have private contractors clear the mail boxes on the main streets of large cities.

The hon. member contends that private couriers could deliver mail more efficiently than the post office department. He may be right. But when he adds that it would also be more economical, I doubt it very much. Which private couriers would deliver a letter to the north pole or in rural areas for 8 cents? He mentioned earlier that students delivered Christmas cards for 5 cents, but in downtown areas. Would they do the same thing in rural areas? No private courier would accept to bear the cost of such a delivery service. Then delivery would only be efficient in cities, and that is far from sure.

No private courier could ensure mail delivery more economically than the minister and the Post Office Department. Earlier, I heard an hon. member—unfortunately he left the House—raise several objections, but one of the main objections that I see is that the Canadian Postal Service is recognized as one of the most efficient and the best in the world.

Could private contractors make up the deficits that the Post Office Department has to make up? I doubt it, Mr. Speaker. It is a public service like several others in Canada, like the CBC, the CNR and several government agencies. When we talk about public services, should we talk about profits and private enterprise? Mr. Speaker, I do not know what individual or what business it could be. I ask the hon. member, who unfortunately left the House so that he would not hear my answer, not only on behalf of the Postmaster General but on my own behalf, and I see that my time is much shorter than his, what will become of the thousands of postal workers, of letter carriers and post offices that the Canadian government and the Canadian taxpayers have here in Canada.

[English]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS—SHORTAGE OF MASON JAR LIDS IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. G. H. Whittaker (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to the question that I asked the other day about the problems in western Canada regarding wide mouth Mason jar lids, I am sorry that neither the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) nor his parliamentary secretary is present, even though I saw the minister flitting around the House a few moments ago. It is because of the answers that he gave to the questions asked by the hon. member for Okanagan-Kootenay (Mr. Johnston) and myself that I am prompted to speak tonight. It may be that the minister's reply will be that he does not have to listen to the problem, and does