

*Post Office Act*

efficient and businesslike basis. I suggest to the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour that if we were to follow the lead he suggests we would not cut services. I do not think there is any private, businesslike operation in this country today that would deliberately cut services to the people it is serving and expect to stay in business. I submit that if the Postmaster General would really take this into consideration he would realize that it is not businesslike to cut services.

Another point brought up by the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour appears at page 956 of *Hansard*. The hon. member suggested there were certain inefficiencies in the postal service but that the Glassco royal commission was highly complimentary of the Canadian postal services. Naturally the commission would be complimentary because the service was and could still be a good service if the bill before us is not accepted. The hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour said:

But I am sure I speak for the majority in this house when I say that the minister is to be commended for acting decisively to make one of the world's greatest postal systems even more efficient.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is a similar situation in the province of Saskatchewan to which I might refer. At one time the province of Saskatchewan had the best mental health plan in North America; it was considered to be one of the best in the world. People came from all over the world to see this program in operation in Saskatchewan. I suggest that with the advent of a new government in that province this program deteriorated to the extent that a commission is required in order to find out what has happened. I suggest once again that this is exactly what will happen in respect of our postal service unless the Postmaster General takes a close look at the situation and at least delays the passage of this bill until it has been examined in its entirety by a committee. We know that if this is not done it will be necessary to set up a royal commission in order to find out what has happened in respect of our postal system. Today we still have an opportunity to do something about it. I suggest that the logical way to handle this situation is to refer this whole matter to a committee.

I realize there are many things one could say about the merits of this bill. Naturally there are some things in the bill with which we do not disagree. Yet it has been suggested that there is to be a deterioration of the service in order to benefit the people of Canada as a whole. I am sure members of this house

[Mr. Skoberg.]

do not want to see a service of which we have been proud deteriorate to the extent it is likely to if this legislation is passed in its present form. We know that only before a parliamentary committee can we have a full debate on this bill and an intelligent consideration of it.

I should like to refer briefly to some of the direct implications which I consider are contained in the bill which is before us at this time. We know there are many labour and other periodicals and publications which are caught in the cross-fire when the big advertisers and promoters who have been subsidized by the taxpayers too long are being clipped. I do not suggest there is no need for some review but I do suggest that whenever there is a cure it generally is the public who pay the shot. I am referring to trade union and medical publications, for instance, many of which carry no advertising. Church publications and many other publications mentioned by hon. members receive no revenue through advertising.

It is my belief that such publications should be given a postal rate different from that which applies to publications that derive considerable revenue from the advertising contained in them. There should be some allowance or consideration given to any publication which provides a direct service to the people but derives no return from advertising. I am sure no one would disagree that a direct service to the public is the utmost we expect to have in an educated democratic society. It has been pointed out very well by many other speakers that in order to have a democratic society there must be people who participate. One who plans to participate must have the knowledge and material before he can participate in a particular area.

I agree that some of these matters could be left in the hands of the Postmaster General as in the past in respect of certain mail. However, I am sure that the bill before us is too rigid. There should be some leniency in respect of granting concessions to certain publications. In some respects there may not be too much wrong with the bill, although there are certain points with which I do not agree. I feel sure there must be relief from some of the statutory provisions contained in the bill. I believe this is something even hon. members opposite would give consideration to.

I know suggestions have been made that if this bill is allowed to pass in its present form it will mean an increase of 500 per cent—