

*Post Office Act*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The amendment is before the house. With the indulgence of the house I will take it under consideration and report later.

**Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey):** Mr. Speaker, it is customary sometimes to summarize one's point of view and one's ideas at the conclusion of one's remarks. The press of the country uses an entirely different procedure; they summarize right at the beginning what was said or proposed. In my case I intend to summarize my ideas at the start of my remarks. To put the position of my party and my own on this important subject on the record I summarize our position as follows:

First, we wish the proposed post office legislation referred to a standing committee of this house for detailed study and report.

Second, we are opposed to the increase to six cents in the ordinary or consumer mail rates of Canada.

Third, we welcome the move to increase the second class rates on publications published for a profit as being generally in the right direction, but here again we wish a committee study to be made to ensure that the proposed rate increases are sufficient and are borne by those by whom they should be and do not fall upon publications which are not published for commercial profit but rather for the service of some particular educational, health or co-operative association or union.

While welcoming the announcement made today by the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) that rural mail delivery will be continued on a six day a week basis, we oppose the reduction in delivery service in urban areas. We think there is no reason in this year for a substandard service such as would result from reducing delivery from six to five days a week to be inflicted on the urban areas or any other area in Canada. On this point it seems strange to us that while we as a group of people meeting in the house are entitled to discuss what is proposed in the way of legislation on rates or prices, we are actually not able to do anything right now in regard to the service that those rates or prices are going to buy. Something along that line could well be studied by a committee studying the whole postal situation.

Mr. Speaker, this is a personal proposal by myself. I should like to see a study made of what is in effect a subsidy in the form of an exemption from taxation which is given to advertisers. Advertising, of course, is the

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

very lifeblood of many publications in this country. This exemption from taxation for advertising would have an effect on what the public is called upon to pay, either in the form of a subsidy or increased postal rates.

• (5:00 p.m.)

The post office legislation before us is massive and yet very detailed in all its respects. The proposals made are of such a nature that in my view they should be referred for detailed study by a standing committee of the house, where adequate representations could be made both by the post office officials and those who are going to be affected by the principal changes in postal procedures. I believe it is true to say that the post office handles, and does it very well, something like 5 billion pieces of mail each year. It employs approximately 47,000 or 48,000 people and deals with a great many categories of postage. The whole matter, therefore, is technical.

It would make a great deal more sense if we and the people of the country had more time to delve into all the aspects of what we are being asked to do. It is all right to say that we in this house can meet as a committee to discuss what is being proposed but really, as I say, the matter before us is so technical that it is very difficult for us in an assembly of this type to come to any real decision on these detailed proposals.

In the previous parliament when we dealt with matters affecting broadcasting in the country, the whole set of recommendations was referred to the standing committee on broadcasting. That committee, of which I had the honour to be a member, met many times, heard many witnesses and finally brought in its report. We believe the same sort of thing could logically be done with regard to this other important channel of communications, the postal system.

For many years my party and its predecessor, the C.C.F., have urged the government and specifically the Postmaster General to take one of the steps he now proposes to take, namely, to bring about a realistic rate for business mail, periodicals and publications published for a profit. I am glad to see that finally, after all these years, the logic of what not only my party but many other groups in the country have long urged has gotten through. I am glad to find that among the proposals, some of which we do not approve, the Postmaster General is saying that while the commercial press of Canada will not be asked to pay their full delivery costs they will