

*Post Office Act*

tell the minister that I am not very friendly, politically or personally, with the Thomson publishers, the Sifton publishers, the McConnells, or whoever publishes the Montreal newspaper. They are much more accustomed to supporting his party than my party. They are not very poor. They have done very well. They have done very well, partly because of the fact that for 17 years or more we have left untouched the postal rates for mailing newspapers and magazines.

I am not for a moment suggesting that those rates must never increase but, Mr. Chairman, I believe that if we are to have a country which has a national identity it is necessary that we have living newspapers, effective newspapers and magazines.

I would like to know whether the minister has really given consideration to what this kind of increase means to newspapers, not so much to daily newspapers because the bulk of their circulation is not delivered by using the mails, but the weekly newspapers, the small town, rural newspapers. How many of them will survive, with the kind of increases which the minister is proposing, increases which run from 200 per cent to 300 per cent?

Last week I had a talk with the editor of the *Manitoba Co-Operator*. There are some Liberal members in the house from rural Manitoba. I am sure they know much more about the *Manitoba Co-Operator* than I do, but the editor of the newspaper told me that the mailing charges for a 20 page issue have been \$148 and those charges will now be increased to \$375. I am not a professor of economics, as the minister used to be, but I can quickly calculate that that increase is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 250 per cent.

I am told that the *Western Producer* is in the same boat. I am sure the farm union newspapers are also in the same boat. Important non-profit organizations which form such an integral part of our democracy, our democracy about which the Prime Minister has so frequently and eloquently spoken, will not be able to function as effectively as previously. Non-profit organizations, trade unions, co-operatives and professional organizations will have to curtail the frequency of the publications that they issue.

At present university publications such as the quarterly put out by Queen's, the magazine put out by Dalhousie, and the University of Toronto quarterly are hanging on only by the skin of their teeth. None of them is making money. In fact, all the time, they teeter on

the brink of going out of business. I suggest to the minister it is extremely likely that what he proposes will drive the last nails into the coffins of those publications. Is that what the minister wants? I don't think many members of this house want it.

What about the other non-profit organizations? Some days ago the minister received a delegation consisting of editors of labour newspapers who discussed their problems with him. The editor of the machinists union paper pointed out that their publication, which is sent to every one of their 37,000 members in Canada, has been mailed at a cost of \$154 per week, but under the new regulations the cost will go up from one fifth of a cent per copy to two and a half cents per copy. This is an increase from \$154 a week to \$925 a week. What this means is that in all likelihood the union will cut back on the publications it sends out to its members. I suggest to the minister this means that the membership will be less informed than it has been up until now. It will be much less knowledgeable about the problems of the union and the industry.

● (9:00 p.m.)

The situation will be similar in respect of many other unions in this country. The minister heard representations by the editor of the *Canadian Labourer*, the official organ of the Canadian Labour Congress, which publication was in the same situation. I am sure this is the position of many professional organizations, not just trade unions. It will include credit unions, co-operatives and organizations such as teachers associations, medical associations, nurses associations and so on.

What about the newspapers? I do not hold a brief for them in any way. It may be that the time has come when the charges against them should be increased. But, should they be increased in the amount the minister proposes? I suggest that many of them in all likelihood will be forced to the wall. I do not have the figures—the minister may have them—about the large number of weekly newspapers in every province of Canada which have gone out of business in the last 15 years. I am certain the increases the minister has in mind will mean that another batch of weekly newspapers will be forced out of business. Is this what we want? I am not suggesting the rates should remain as they are; but where is it written that rates which have existed for 17 years must be increased in one