

*Adjournment Debate*

At the same time I must be very conscious of the fact that in 1972 the post office had a \$90 million deficit. In 1978 the projected estimated deficit was to be \$717 million. Our decision to increase the rate to 14 cents, still the lowest rate in the world, has enabled us to lower that projected deficit for the current year to \$505 million.

Always keeping in mind sound business administration principles, this action was taken in order to share more equitably our portion of the deficit among postal users and the general taxpayers. This is why we decided in 1976 to put a freeze on the extension of letter carrier door to door delivery services, and on the inauguration of the letter carrier delivery service in new towns.

In place of new door to door service it was decided then to provide alternative delivery service through the use of group mail boxes located on the side of the streets adjacent to the new houses. Under these circumstances no Canadians were deprived of an adequate delivery service.

However, I am sure members will agree that this level of service to new suburbs had to be viewed in light of the then financial situation. Naturally, this policy is under constant review and we must always keep under consideration the financial situation and service objectives of the post office.

Our past policy on this subject has always been a responsible one in view of our budgetary restraint and the will of our government to prevent any undue growth in our work force. If in the unforeseen future these two prerequisites can be reasonably attained, we will be only too happy to review our present policy and give our postal users still a better service by giving them door to door delivery. Let us hope we can do this soon.

● (2222)

TRANSPORT—GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS

**Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley):** Mr. Speaker, my comments this evening are based on a series of urban transit questions I put in this House, the latest being May 2 when the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) was his usual evasive self, while the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) at least said he would look into the matter to see if I had a point. The point is not whether the government is prepared to further a much needed urban expansion program in our nation's growing urban communities, but rather whether it would reconsider its position and abide by its 1974 election promise of \$290 million for urban transit, a promise that was assumed to have been made in good faith and then quickly withdrawn once the Liberals were returned to power.

There are many such examples of election promises which turn out to be outright political lies. The most famous, of course, is the government's vehement opposition to wage and price controls, also made during the 1974 election campaign—and we all know the history of that broken promise since it was made to the unsuspecting public.

The example I would like to deal with this evening, however, is the promised urban transit funds. It was during the last

[Mr. Lamontagne.]

couple of weeks in that 1974 campaign that the Prime Minister, a clutch of his cabinet ministers and a veritable array of executive assistants and hangers-on gathered in Toronto in order to beguile residents of that city with a promise of \$290 million to support urban transit. The Ontario government naturally welcomed that initiative.

As a result of that promise, the Ontario government, for example, ordered 80 double-decker railway cars for its GO commuter system in the metropolitan Toronto area. The cost of the contract with Hawker Siddeley for the cars was \$40 million. About one half of the \$40 million was to be paid by the federal government.

Unfortunately, as we have learned far too often with this government, it is not above bribing voters with their own money, because once the Liberal administration was returned to power in Ottawa, it began to renege on the promises made during the heat of an election campaign by announcing that the urban transit money proposed was no longer available. As a result, the Ontario government was forced to pay the whole shot itself so that the residents of southwestern Ontario would not have to go without a vital improvement to an important facility.

Another quick example, Mr. Speaker, as a result of this same promise, is the much needed alteration to Toronto's Union Station as part of a package to improve the over-all surface transportation facilities in and around Toronto. The federal government promised to provide \$100 million of the total cost of \$258 million. For Union Station, the federal share would have been \$26.5 million. Unfortunately, once again this Liberal government reneged on its promise and the government of Ontario just last month was forced to begin alterations to Union Station on its own, alterations that cannot be as far reaching as originally proposed because of the backdown of federal funds.

The promises, of course, prompted other improvements, including the possibility of improving and extending the GO system to various parts within the reaches of metropolitan Toronto. Quite clearly, promises should not be made if there is a chance they cannot be kept. Because without those promises the Ontario government could possibly have created plans of their own which may have gone beyond the efforts which they are now trying to achieve on their own. If this government is going to back down from promises made, then perhaps it should not involve itself beyond the reaches of federal jurisdiction in the first place and let provincial governments deal with provincial matters on their own.

Help is naturally welcomed at all times, but not when it cannot be depended on. In this instance of urban transit support, the government's excuse for reneging on its promise was fiscal restraint. But it is quite obvious that the priorities are somewhat confused because we still have a government which continues to hand out taxpayers' money in the form of grants for such things as the following. There was well over \$6,000 to investigate uses of the translation of human bio-electrical signals into music. There was a study on the fertility of families in Quebec which cost \$48,000. There was \$5,000 to