

*Government Organization*

only look at a map of Canada and the redistribution of seats to see what a cynical waste of local talent it was not to consult the members of the House of Commons. The people of Canada have respect for us or we would not be here. Many of our constituents feel we are overpaid. I do not happen to think so. I think a good member of parliament is underpaid. A member of parliament who is not conscientious should not be paid at all. If we are going to be respected in our ridings, we must adopt this attitude and give the people service. If all members of parliament and members of the provincial legislatures in this country would do their work there would be very little need for an ombudsman. In my opinion there would be no need whatever for regional desks, more bureaucracy and more expense for the already overburdened taxpayer. There is no need for us to do our homework and keep in touch with our constituents if the government of the day cynically disregards the well-intentioned and detailed information which we are willing and able to give them.

I intend to write the Postmaster General in connection with the proposal to build a new post office in a village where the population is shrinking by the day. There are quite adequate postal facilities in that village. I personally canvassed at least half of the people of the village and most of those with whom I spoke were of the opinion that no local improvement whatsoever was required. A first class, up to date post office will probably be built even though it is not required.

Many post offices are being closed down. The over-all reason is economy. I plead with the Postmaster General that before any more post offices are closed a careful survey be made to ensure that veterans do not lose their means of earning a living. I know they do not make a very good living from these post offices but in a great many cases they also own little stores. Without the post office attached to it the store alone might be a very small drawing card. The revenue from the post office may be quite small and may represent only 20 per cent of the total revenue. Nevertheless the post office is a drawing card and sometimes the additional revenue keeps the person from going broke and having to move to a city only to become yet another statistic on the relief rolls of our ever-burgeoning cities.

● (4:10 p.m.)

These are examples of the just society about which the people on the hustings think. This is not an election year and I do not

[Mr. Bigg.]

suppose next year will be either. But these people do not forget; they are looking for the just society not only from members of the Liberal party but from all politicians at all levels. I say, for goodness sake let us not be cynical about this. The Liberal party is a great party, but if its members reach the point where they think they are the only people who have an interest in the future of Canada the nation will suffer and we will all go down the drain together. There are a great many people who, although they do not happen to be associated with the Liberal party, have the welfare of Canada at heart. It would be a great mistake for anyone to think that any party in Canada has a monopoly on these sentiments.

I should not have to say this but I believe it is necessary because of the way I am treated. I have not had even one letter in six years in which my opinion regarding the Post Office has been requested. I represent a big district with 58,000 people. During the 15 years I have been there I have visited almost every home in the area. Because of this I have detailed information which is at the disposal of every minister of the Crown. If they do not use it, it is they who are delinquent, not I nor the people whom I represent. If that has been the standard in the past and is the standard now, then new trails should be blazed; we cannot start too soon.

Far too much cynicism is contained in press reports and in other media. It is pouring in over the borders from other countries. Democracy has strong enemies at home and abroad. Unless we stick together and close our ranks I think they will get us one at a time. In the world today those people with really democratic ideas are hopelessly outnumbered. We will have to work very hard during the next 25 years if there is to be any democracy at all in the 21st century.

If the regional desks which are being set up are to work and not be negative they should contain research facilities which would be available to hon. members as well. I do not pretend to know all the answers in respect of my district. If there is to be a federal government agency in Alberta to keep the Prime Minister's office properly informed in respect of information which I do not have and which I perhaps cannot obtain, such as specialized information in respect of soils or social conditions, there might be occasions when I would be very happy to use these facilities. I do not think these regional desks should deteriorate into a means by which the government could