

Postal Service Policies

helpful. At least the Post Office does not do any harm to the country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nesbitt: It gives us the means of communicating. However, the same cannot be said of the CBC. The Prime Minister himself was so dissatisfied with the French network of the CBC that he threatened to put it under trusteeship. It was not holding the nation together; it was pulling Canada apart. Yet we are subsidizing an institution like that with tremendous amounts of money. It is like paying for your own funeral. If we want further examples of the way the French network operated, we need only remember that one of the leading people on the French network was Mr. Rene Levesque. When some people in this House pointed out what the French network was doing and where the views of Mr. Levesque were leading us, everybody said, "Tut, tut! Nothing can happen."

The CBC, of course, does other things. It spends a lot of its time on so-called news broadcasts and public affairs programs which promote the foreign policy and foreign policy aims of the Soviet Union and China and little else. If that is not enough, you will find that quite a number of people in the CBC, to say the least, are rather individualistic or eccentric, to put it in a kindly way, and spend most of their time promoting their own personal eccentricities with the youth of the country—eccentricities such as the use of drugs and things like that. They try to mould the young people of Canada to their own peculiar shape. And for this we are putting up \$160 million a year.

Where postal services have been cut off in the rural areas, newspaper mailing rates have been increased and people have had to pay twice as much for receiving their daily paper. I can only say it seems very strange to many of us that the users of one of our essential communication services, the Post Office, should be discriminated against. The minister has told us that the Post Office is supposed to pay its way; that is the ultimate objective of the operation. Those who use its services will have to pay for them. But that philosophy does not apply to the CBC nor to the railways, where there are equalization payments, and so on. There we apply Maritime freight rates, the Crowsnest Pass rates and the like. Why do we invoke one principle for one of the essential communication services in the country and another principle for the others?

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

The government has never answered that question. Maybe the Postmaster General has no choice; perhaps this is what he must do. Perhaps this is a cabinet decision. Perhaps there are dual policies for our means of communications. Perhaps the Postmaster General is not in a position to tell us why the means of communication over which he has responsibility are being treated in a special way. Perhaps he will tell us about this later. In the meantime, the members of the House want to know why there is special treatment for the postal service and not for our other means of communication.

● (4:00 p.m.)

In conclusion, I hope we get an answer to this question. I hope that when the Postmaster General is implementing his policies he will try to implement them with a little more tact and will pay a little more attention to the suggestions that have been offered by members on both sides of the House.

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, in taking part in this debate on the motion proposed by the official opposition I wish to say that our party agrees with the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) that a most efficient postal service is necessary for Canada. The New Democratic Party will cooperate with the Postmaster General when he starts treating people like human beings and not like stock-market ticker-tape. In Canada today people are considered in light of their economic situation in the community.

We believe it is necessary to have an efficient postal service of which Canadians will be proud. The moral issue must be considered rather than the discipline of the balance sheet. I personally like the Postmaster General. I think he is a very congenial individual. Unfortunately, he is a victim of the position in which he now finds himself. I am sure the people of Canada wonder how in the name of heaven he finds himself in so many damnable situations. No individual should be subjected to so many of these situations unless he is being used as a guinea pig by the cabinet, trying to put up the balloons to his and the public's detriment.

The Postmaster General must realize that the role of the Post Office is to provide efficient service. Communication between all areas of Canada is one of the most important factors with which we must be concerned in this debate. Our nation is far-flung. If we do not have efficient communication, we can