

*Canada Post Corporation Act*

That is what we wanted. We did not want that monstrous, hybrid two-tier system which was first contemplated and would have been forced upon the public without the consultation of either unions or postal users.

It goes on to say:

—and other related acts and to make related amendments to other acts

I missed the Postmaster General's reference in what must have been sotto voce tone when he was complimenting the former postmaster general.

My great concern is that what we are contemplating with this new legislation might have come too late. As the hon. Postmaster General said, the Post Office has been the symbol over the years of the federal presence in every community across Canada. It flies the Canadian flag. Whenever the good citizens of Canada saw the Post Office and saw the flag, they said, "Well, we are safe under the very competent federal government of ours". Unfortunately that has not been the case in recent years. The very presence of the Post Office, as the hon. gentleman knows—and I see that he is smiling—has been the symbol of deterioration in government competence and government efficiency. He knows the Post Office became somewhat of a national joke. The "Canadian Air Farce" got some of its best humour from the tragic deterioration in postal service.

● (1450)

The Post Office Department, once the symbol of the stability and integrity and the competence and the efficiency of the federal government, became the standing joke of the nation under 12 years of disastrous Liberal administration. I think we all have to admit that when an institution of this importance becomes a national joke, that is an indication of the failure of the Government of Canada.

I have looked carefully through the information that is available in the bill, and it seems to me that it includes most of the recommendations this party has made over the years, as well as the recommendations that were included in all the many studies done over the years.

Another great tragedy is that not only is this government incompetent but it is also a government of secrecy. On this side of the House we were never able to get past this barrier, and I am sure the NDP will support me in this statement. When Mr. Rodriguez represented that party in this House, he used to blow this trumpet as loudly as I but unfortunately he was defeated. While he was here, however, he was a good spokesman for the Post Office. He still had fire in his belly.

**Mr. Knowles:** I think some of his ballots got lost in the mail.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** He did not become a Conservative! The reports that contain so much valuable information and which were propounding the solution that is finally emerging—almost too late—have been available over the years to ministers and successive postmasters general. The minister went back as far as 1962, to the Glasco commission. That was a great commission authorized by the great Diefenbaker govern-

ment to look into and reorganize government administration. Unfortunately, however, that great government fell from power in 1963 and so it was not able to implement the recommendations.

**Mr. Knowles:** It fell apart.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is becoming a Liberal at heart. I can see that. He says it fell apart. Mr. Speaker, we were defeated in Ontario and Quebec but we were never defeated in the west and we were never defeated in eastern Canada. This is the battle that we are fighting on the constitution today. The Conservatives came back to power in Manitoba in 1977, if the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) is not aware of that.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Then what happened in the last federal election?

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Let us not get into that; we are not discussing the election. I just want to make the point that we lost power for the same reason that we are struggling with this present arbitrary action on the constitution, which does not take into consideration the wishes of western Canada and the maritime provinces.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** That is not so.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** It is purely oriented toward the continuing control of the two central provinces, Quebec and Ontario.

This tendency towards secrecy is regrettable. It is no wonder that a former member, Hon. Jed Baldwin, fought for a freedom of information act for years. Had this information been available to the House and had it been referred to a committee, the problems of the Post Office would have been solved long ago. Now I come to the Montpetit report. I have them all in front of me, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Postmaster General may wonder how I gain access to all these reports. We get them because there are leaks, Mr. Speaker. Through the years this has been the only way we could obtain information that should have been readily available to spokesmen in this House, representing the people of Canada. We should have had access to them by some means or other. This is why it is so important that we proceed with Mr. Baldwin's information act as quickly as possible.

I did not hear the hon. minister refer to the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser), and I do not think he referred to the Hon. Eric Kierans either. Mr. Kierans was a strong catalytic force in trying to get the Post Office Department on an even keel. He was ahead of his time, however. Not only was he postmaster general in 1969, he was also minister of communications. That was a recognition that the Post Office Department was one of the vital communications links in this country. It was recognized 11 years ago, although this government still has not appreciated the fact that the postal service is inevitably closely related to the revolution in communications technology. Canada has developed the Telidon. Electronic mail is just around the corner, and electronic funds transmission is also just around the corner.