

Post Office Act

• (10:40 p.m.)

I also say that if this legislation is not passed this house will be responsible to the Canadian people for a deficit next year of \$130 million. The Canadian people can think of very many choices for making far better use of \$130 million than to continue to subsidize those who use these resources.

Mr. Chairman, we have not yet got past clause one, though we have ranged widely across this bill. I think this is about the third time we have done this.

An hon. Member: Stick around for a while.

Mr. Kierans: I think I can sense something of the unhappiness of the Canadian people about the manner in which parliament sometimes functions.

Mr. Baldwin: If we had considered this in committee we would have been finished by now.

Mr. Kierans: But nothing would have come out in the committee that you do not already know. All of you have been quoting from every brief that has been made.

Mr. Baldwin: We would have been able to test the accuracy of your statements.

Mr. Kierans: Well, you have not found out that anything I have said was untrue, although this was put into doubt by the hon. member for Edmonton West the other evening when he said that because a minister said a thing it was not necessarily the whole truth of the matter.

I am not accustomed to having my word doubted publicly or privately. However, I did not rise on a question of privilege. If that is the fashion of speaking which the hon. member adopts, so be it; let him speak that way. But try and show that some of the figures or information presented to this house are wrong. Try to do so with the help of the tremendous resources which you have behind you—and which have been using you to create a considerable delay over the passage of a bill which the people themselves recognize as being timely and appropriate.

Mr. Woolliams: We have just listened to a most surprising explanation. In fact, I shall have to leave undelivered the speech I was about to make in order to answer the minister. When the hon. member for Edmonton West said we could not accept all the facts given by the minister he was not calling into question the minister's integrity or honesty.

[Mr. Kierans.]

All we wanted from the minister was to get the facts.

Mr. Mahoney: You already have the facts.

Mr. Woolliams: Oh, you will have your chance. You have been sitting around without saying a thing since you were elected the member for Calgary South. The minister has set out certain facts and told us that those costs were correct. If he had nothing to fear, why did he not allow this matter to go before a committee, where members of the opposition and members of his own party could have asked questions? After all, it was his own supporters who in caucus last week complained that this was an unreasonable piece of legislation. Had the hon. gentleman followed the course suggested to him he would not be in difficulty now, and he would not have to make explanations tonight.

After all, we asked only for what was reasonable. We said: Let this matter be brought before a standing committee. The minister has set out certain facts. But we all know the manner in which costs can change in one way or another.

Take the case of railway costs. There are some fixed costs and some changing costs. You can draw up a balance sheet and say these happen to be the costs; the costs happen to be this or that, or the costs can change. There can be floating costs. We wanted to find out what the costs really were so that we could have gone into a standing committee and asked intelligent questions of witnesses.

If the minister had sent the bill to a standing committee we could have heard from the people who are in the business of publishing daily and weekly newspapers. They could have said, "The situation will affect us this way, or that way." We could have questioned them. Then we would have had the facts, instead of having them swept under the carpet as the minister has done.

I am surprised that the minister has taken this attitude because we heard of the new deal for his party, we heard that it was going to function with efficiency. But this is a case where they will not allow the use of a committee so that we can get the facts and intelligently accept or reject the minister's case. What the minister is saying is, "There is a loss allocated to the daily and weekly newspapers of \$37 million, and I have got to make it up."

Tonight he was asked a question about subsidies and he replied, "We are not going to