

concern and interest to the Minister of Transport.

Mr. Alexander: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Am I to conclude from the minister's answer that Hamilton is not on the task force list for—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Alexander: May I rephrase my question, Mr. Speaker? Because of the peculiar situation of Hamilton in terms of its population and because of the uniqueness of the area, would the minister consider revising the itinerary in order that Hamilton may be placed thereon and briefs may be submitted to the task force? I believe the type of briefs submitted would be of help to the task force.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member will agree that the problems of one city are in many ways similar to those of other cities. The task force has a very tight schedule to meet. It simply cannot go everywhere. However, I will certainly bring the hon. member's representation to the attention of the Minister of Transport.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. In view of the continued absence of the Minister of Transport from the house, both on days that he should be here and days that he should not, will the Prime Minister consider making the Acting Minister of Transport, the Minister without Portfolio, the minister of transport, because at least he seems to want to come here and is not afraid to answer questions on this very important matter?

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have the honour to inform the house that a message has been received from the Senate informing this house that the Senate have passed the following bills to which the concurrence of this house is desired:

Bill S-9, an act respecting British North-western Insurance Company.

Bill S-11, an act to incorporate Aetna Casualty Company of Canada.

POST OFFICE ACT

AMENDMENTS AFFECTING RATES, ADMINISTRATION, SAVINGS BANK

The house resumed, from Thursday, October 24, consideration in committee of Bill No.

Post Office Act

C-116, to amend the Post Office Act—Mr. Kierans—Mr. Béchard in the chair.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. House again in committee of the whole on Bill C-116, to amend the Post Office Act. When the committee rose last evening clause 1 was under consideration. Shall clause 1 carry?

On clause 1—*Oaths.*

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Chairman, when I called it eleven o'clock last night I was in the middle of some remarks in reference to this bill. In summary, I had dealt with the question of the important functions of daily and weekly newspapers and periodicals. I pointed out that they represented an important function of democracy, that they were very essential in order to shape public opinion. This is part of our democratic process and is partly how we carry out our function as parliamentarians, because it is through us that the newspapers reflect public opinion and changes come about in government.

Yesterday the hon. member for Winnipeg North referred to the figures published by the Postmaster General in the Canada Post Office financial statements and details of proposed rate adjustments. I refer to these figures because last evening the Postmaster General seemed to take the position that to have this question reviewed by a standing committee would be somewhat ridiculous because he had already set out the figures.

Let us look at the figures of the Postmaster General. With regard to daily newspapers the deficit, which is paid by the nation, was \$5,637,197, and under the new proposal the Postmaster General hopes to reduce this deficit to \$1,632,333. It would appear from the figures that the weekly newspapers have come out of the situation a little better, that is, they fared better than the daily newspapers. The deficit paid by the nation in respect of weekly newspapers was \$2,106,669. Under this proposal the Postmaster General hopes to reduce this deficit to \$2,024,808.

It is the general feeling of the weekly newspapers that these figures do not reflect the true situation because some weekly newspapers are distributed through the mail and some are carried by agents. The main burden of the increase in second class mail rates will fall on newspapers in cities of 10,000 to 20,000 people, particularly in areas of western Canada. This burden will fall on newspapers in areas like North Battleford where the local newspaper has a large rural circulation and it