

Postal Service

Many small journals and periodicals are no longer able to get their point of view across. Some have ceased to exist. Those that do exist have had to cut down content and reduce frequency of publication. This means that essentially the power of the press is being concentrated in fewer hands in Canada. Consequently, there are fewer dissenting voices in the communication industry today than even four or five months ago, so, public participation and involvement in many of the issues important to us has also been reduced. This is happening at a time when the opposite trend should be encouraged and pursued in this country.

One of the essential factors in democracy is to have people participating and involving themselves in all levels of society. People should be encouraged to criticize institutions. The basic right of dissent should be protected. We must fight for the voices of the minorities. It is even more important now; in an age that is affected by automation and technology because in this automated world people are often dehumanized and depersonalized. Cities are often concrete jungles with the result that many people are frustrated and alienated. People want a purpose. They want some part in the decisions which affect their lives. They want equality of effort and a purpose for their life. They will not tolerate a denial of their rights. If they are denied participation and equality of effort, they are going to criticize. This is a natural psychological phenomena.

It is only about 14 months ago that I was a university student, and watched the Liberal leadership campaign with some interest. All of us interested in political and current affairs on the university campus were quite in agreement that the present Postmaster General was one of the more progressive people in the leadership campaign. He seemed to have a social insight and understood some of the basic problems confronting us. He has been a big disappointment to me, for now he is one of the most conservative people in the government. In fact I think the Leader of the Conservative party (Mr. Stanfield) would agree with me on that. I often wonder whether the minister is not just a Joe boy to the system, because this is what we have all around us. Today power is controlled by fewer and fewer people. It does not matter what field of jurisdiction is involved. In foreign affairs you see a government that does not want to become involved—

[Mr. Nystrom.]

• (9:30 p.m.)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but we would like to see him come back to the Post Office.

Mr. Nystrom: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The point I was making was that what is happening in the Post Office today is not isolated from what is happening in other aspects of government. You see this refusal to get involved on behalf of people in almost every field. I have mentioned foreign affairs. Those of us who come from the west know it is happening in agriculture. We heard the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) say, "Why should I sell wheat." This is just one example of what is happening, and where the government refuses to involve itself.

Now, returning to one of the basic issues that are important in this debate, the denial to minorities of the voice that they should have, I point out that the increase in postal rates is more than 2,000 per cent in some cases. These increases have caused many journals to fold up. Others have had to cut down on frequency of publication and others on content. In this connection I should like to quote from the *Canadian Railwayman* of April 12, 1969 an article headed "Labour Papers Hard Hit by New Postal Increases."

The increase has forced the *Labour Statesman*, official organ of the B.C. Federation of Labour, to cease publication on a regular basis after 45 years. It now will be published periodically on special occasions.

Canadian Transport, official journal of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers, which formerly was issued twice monthly, now will appear only once during June, July and August... the official publication of the Quebec Federation of Labour is to appear only six times a year instead of monthly.

We deplore the philosophy behind the legislation: profit-making periodicals such as *Reader's Digest*—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. The hon. member for Madawaska-Victoria.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief so as to give the hon. member opposite the opportunity to take the floor in a few minutes.

However, I should like to state quite simply that I have every reason in the world to believe that the new policy of the Department of Communications is the best one ever insofar as it meets today's needs of the Canadian Post Office.