

now into 1978, and there has been no remedial action on the part of Canada's post office.

As I have indicated, when we discussed this subject some two weeks ago with respect to my motion No. 53, it is inevitable in circumstances of this kind that documents which are really in the public interest tend to leak from the departmental sources. Most of these Hay Associates reports are public property now, even though the Post Office Department still carries on the subterfuge that these documents are highly confidential and it would not be in the public interest that they be released.

Let me refer to some information which is available in these reports which, if the recommendations had been acted upon, would have long ago started the process of reform in the Post Office Department. We are now so late in the process that even postmasters general have been saying that if something is not done soon, the whole Post Office Department might be destroyed by the weight of its own incompetence.

As a result of the Hay Associates reports, an internal document was produced by one of the assistant deputy ministers of the Post Office Department. Among the many recommendations was the following very significant statement, and I am quoting now from page 4 of the so-called Uberig report, section 7, entitled "The Post Office Act". It reads:

Finally the Post Office Act itself seems outdated in certain respects and overly inhibiting. The process whereby parliament sets first class letter rates acts as a protection that over-zealous officials will not raise rates out of proportion to needs and service.

Perhaps I should interject here to say that this is at least an indication that in some parts of the post office administration they can only raise rates by amending the Post Office Act. The report goes on to read:

However, it also stymies deserved and needed rate adjustments by subjecting any proposals to the political arena.

The Postmaster General (Mr. Lamontagne) has got around that now. He just ignores the Post Office Act and goes merrily along his way raising rates at random without any restrictions under the Post Office Act. The quotation continues to read:

Attempts to modernize our authorities and freedom to respond to today's operating demands through legislative change have similarly been thwarted. For several years the government has not considered changes to the Post Office Act as having sufficient priority or being timely to debate in the House. Therefore, although times and needs have changed, post office legislation has not kept pace and deficits pyramided.

That document is dated August 11, 1975, some three years ago. Had it been acted upon, we would be well on the way to solving some of the mounting problems in the Post Office Department today. It might be coincidental that the Hay Associates were hired quite soon after the report of the assistant deputy minister was prepared. The Hay Associates document is dated December, 1975, so it went into operation quite soon after than and came up with a series of recommendations which are quite positive and would, I am sure, if they were acted upon, and if the high priority suggested in the Uberig document with respect to legislative changes had been accepted, have carried the Post Office Department along the road of reform at the present time, just as they did in the

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United States where they proceeded to grapple with their problems in a positive way.

There are still many problems, as the Postmaster General says from time to time in the House in response to questions. He says that the post office department in the United States is in a mess. Well, it might be in a mess, but if that is so, the Canadian post office system is in a greater mess because there has been no attempt at reform up to the present time.

Hay Associates operated on the basis of a 50-point questionnaire which was based on the experience they had gained in their examination of the United States postal service. Some 5,500 employees completed the questionnaire. Here are some interesting observations:

The Post Office is the most visible and universal area of government service to the general public.

That is why the report, in a later conclusion, notes that it is the most visible department in parliament as well.

● (1742)

There are more questions asked and more criticisms raised with regard to the post office than any other government department. That alone reflects the public concern expressed through complaints and criticisms from the elected representatives of the people. It should have been sufficient to encourage successive postmasters general to take some urgent action. Here is another interesting observation:

Departments performance reflects, to some extent, on the government of the day.

That almost goes without saying. This is an interesting report. Very often problems in the post office are laid on the employees. Hay Associates found, and I quote:

Group generally favourable impressed by the calibre and dedication of the people. As a group employees are highly committed to the P.O.

Perhaps I could add another reason for their declining morale and growing frustration at both the management and worker levels. It is because of the failure of the government to act to remedy obvious difficulties in the Post Office Department. It is not a very happy experience to work for an agency of government that has become the butt of jokes across the country. This was also referred to in this study, and I quote:

Majority feel very keenly the public criticism levelled at them from every direction. Embarrassed at image the P.O. has acquired of being an arena of union unrest and employee-management confrontation.

That is very good advice, yet no action has been taken to remedy the situation. Here is another interesting observation:

Most overriding problem over past several years is that of employee-management relations. Issue consumes disproportionate amounts of times, at the expense of other important areas of management.

It also notes that the post office is an extremely complex organization to manage. The Uberig report points out that there are no fewer than seven different government departments involved in post office administration. It refers to the Public Service Staff Relations Act, the Public Service Employment Act, the Financial Administration Act, the Public Works Act, the Supply and Services Act and finally the Post Office Act. Here is another interesting observation: