

*Government Organization Act, 1970*

was empty. The 140 bags were found in November. That has been the checkered career of the Post Office to have a new minister of the Crown, a Postmaster General.

We did not really need this bill to appoint a Postmaster General. As I understand it, an order in council could have appointed him. True, we need some provision to increase his pay, and rightly so. He should be paid as much as any other cabinet minister, but I am sure that could have been done by amending the Organization Act, or the act dealing with the pay of ministers. But no, Mr. Speaker, it is done through this bill.

I am against the appointment of a Postmaster General. I am surprised that the government did not propose making the Post Office a crown corporation. The government had 15 studies conducted by six consulting firms over a 12 month period. I have one such report before me, that drawn up by Kates, Peat, Marwick and Co., the first page of which reads:

From these studies emerged the overpowering conclusion that the Post Office, as a Crown corporation, could better fulfil its role in the future. It cannot operate effectively as a department of government and serious reservations exist as to whether it can continue to meet the requirements of Canada within its existing framework of operations except at exorbitant cost to the people of Canada.

This is an opinion for which the government paid. Mr. Speaker, it is the opinion of the Conservative party that a crown corporation would be a better arrangement. The government paid for this advice but did not follow it. Now it introduces this bill to appoint a Postmaster General.

Again, I quote from the consultants' report:

The quality of the senior management group is the most significant consideration before the Post Office today. A transition to Crown corporation status and improvement of operating performance will place great pressure and demands on key executives during the next two to three years.

Yet in this bill the government proposes the appointment of a Postmaster General instead of turning the Post Office into a crown corporation.

What about the public service superannuation part of the bill? There are some good points in it. I am in accord with the proposed provision whereby any civil servant who has 30 years of service and has reached the age of 55 years can retire. That is a good idea. But nothing is said in the bill about the funded cost to the Treasury, and this will be considerable, Mr. Speaker. There will be a large price tag on that proposal.

Now, we go to deputy ministers. There is no reason given to indicate why the government wants this. I suppose one can only draw certain conclusions. The bill provides that any deputy minister with ten years' pensionable service at age 60 can retire and continue to pay contributions under the Public Service Superannuation Act. I cannot agree with that. It would be discrimination of the worst order. Why should a deputy minister have that privilege any more than an assistant deputy minister or other senior officials? Why shouldn't Members of Par-

[Mr. Hales.]

liament be allowed to continue to pay into their pension fund after they leave here? Why shouldn't the same provision apply to everybody?

Another reason I am strongly opposed to this provision is that I understand under the present arrangement the government pays a contribution of 6½ per cent and the individual pays 6½ per cent. Now, if the individual retires and continues to pay his contribution the government will also continue to pay its share. If I am incorrect I hope I will be corrected, but I would hope it would be the retiring person who would pay the full amount, and that the government would pay nothing.

**Mr. Drury:** That is right.

**Mr. Hales:** Anyway, it's a pretty good deal.

Then, there is the question of the definition of a deputy. According to the bill this means a president, chairman, or any other chief executive officer. The President of Air Canada will qualify for this. The President of the Bank of Canada will qualify just the same as a deputy minister. The President of the IDB, the President of Polymer, and the head of the National Capital Commission will get the same deal. Nothing is said in the bill about the cost of this proposal. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that funding the superannuation account for all those people will amount to a tidy sum of money.

What about the cost of this whole package? Not one word was said about that by the minister who introduced the bill. We are going to give the government a blank cheque when we pass this bill, and I would guess that blank cheque could amount to \$1 billion. Yes, Mr. Speaker, this reorganization is liable to cost the country \$1 billion. Increase the number of Parliamentary Secretaries from 16 to 29 at \$4,000 each, and you have an additional \$52,000 right there. You have five additional ministers at \$15,000, and there is another \$75,000. Then, you have an unlimited number of other ministers at \$7,500 each. Some of these ministers are not going to have deputy ministers but secretaries. Why does the government want to confuse the matter this way? Why not have deputy ministers in all cases? It's a real bag of tricks and you end up with a real mumbo-jumbo.

If five separate departments are set up, each with their own specific minister, their own deputy ministers and staff, the cost for each department will be in the neighbourhood of \$100 million. Look at what the cost was when we established the Department of Industry. If you have five departments, you will have a cost of \$500 million right here. Then, add on all the superannuation, the pension funding and the like, and I think you will find I am not too far out when I mention \$1 billion as the cost of this government reorganization bill.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I simply reiterate what I said at the beginning of my speech, that I am very much opposed to the introduction of omnibus bills. I find myself in the position of wanting to vote for something but cannot support it without voting for something which I oppose. Secondly, we are taking up the time of the House debating a government re-organization bill at a