

Post Office Act

of the problem causing them and of the opportunity and the possible application of corrective, efficient and just measures.

We express again our desire to participate in this study—

Mr. Speaker, if the Minister dutifully reads all those reports, as well as all the reports and letters we get, I don't think he can do anything else but accept that this proposal be referred to a committee. For the sake of democracy and of simple social justice, we ask of him this evening to allow those affected to be heard by a committee, even if his decision is irretrievable, even if there is nothing he can do about it, as we know that high officials—tools of Canadian high finance—carry more weight than a mere minister. Even if he has to get off the beaten paths followed by his predecessors, let him try for once, here in this house. Let him take his own decision, a human and democratic decision, by allowing this bill to be referred to a committee for study.

We know that the minister belongs to a majority government and that it is almost impossible for him to be a true democrat. However, if he bows to the opposition's wishes, there would have been at least a few hours of democracy in this house, and the people would be grateful to him for that, since they already detect the monumental blunder.

I sympathize with the big dailies who fought for such a government. As for those big daily newspapers who battled to the end in the last election, I would be inclined to apply to them La Fontaine's fable "The Ant and the Grasshopper" and to ask them: "What did you do when the election days were come? You sang? Well, now you go and have a dance."

[*English*]

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron): Mr. Speaker, the main purpose of this bill is to provide for the increase in postal rates in this country, and I can honestly say that in some respects I do not entirely disagree with that. I said in some respects, Mr. Speaker, because in the situation we are facing today we are going to get more and pay less.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McKinley: I mean, pay more and get less.

Mr. Asselin: The minister is smiling.

Mr. Kierans: He was right the first time.

[Mr. Gauthier.]

Mr. McKinley: The cost of our service is going to increase and the extent of the service will diminish. I think that we in this house must make a very careful examination of the course and conduct of the department and the minister in this respect. The minister has come to his department fresh and full of vigour, and for that I think we should commend him. I want to congratulate him and welcome him to this house.

• (8:40 p.m.)

Undoubtedly, as a result of his former association with the government of Quebec, with which he served as minister of revenue, he has become concerned with revenue matters. As a result he wishes to increase the revenues of his department and make it pay. In this regard may I suggest as a starter that he revert to ordinary black and white notepaper when sending out replies from his office, instead of using the expensive gold embossed paper currently being used. I also suggest that his previous association with the Montreal stock exchange may have left him with the impression that the suspension of Saturday mail deliveries would not occasion any hardship. I am happy that he has announced a change of policy in this regard.

In this connection may I read a letter I received, just to show the minister that he is heading in the right direction. It says in part:

We have had rural mail delivery for over fifty years. It has become a basic right. The Saturday newspaper is by far the most valuable newspaper of the week. We contract for its delivery by the year in advance and we resent the intrusion of the government into this contract. This is a retrograde step on the part of Mr. Kierans and will be resented by all who have been paying for rural mail delivery over these many years. After rural mail delivery had been established fifty some years ago it was found and publicly stated in the newspaper that the increased stamp sales more than paid for rural mail delivery. Mr. Kierans action is a betrayal of trust. He is being paid for Saturday delivery on routes but is refusing to make delivery.

Perhaps the suspension of Saturday mail delivery would not have caused hardship to members of the Montreal stock exchange, but it would have caused hardship to my constituents. We, in the rural areas, are a little tired of being made the goat every time this government decides to cut back on anything. A recent example of this was the measure to make the farmer pay a higher interest rate for farm credit. It was the government, not the farmer, which caused interest rates to go up to a high level in the first place. The spending policies of this government brought