

*Government Organization*

It is my belief that the Postmaster General sat down with a number of people to draft ways of putting the postal operation in the black. The blueprint they devised is now being superimposed on every aspect of the Post Office operation. If people were sheep perhaps he would be successful, but they are not sheep. They have been trained in a certain way over a long period of time and now find it difficult to change, particularly when they realize that the change is not advantageous to the Post Office Department or to themselves. They are opposed to a general making decisions for soldiers in the field he has never seen. I suggest that the minister should concern himself with this type of criticism. The Prime Minister and other members of the cabinet should also be concerned with this problem.

When the postal rates were increased I was surprised there was not more complaint. When Ontario brought in a 5 per cent sales tax I thought it would mean the defeat of the provincial government but that was not the case. Money does not mean everything. The price of things has gone up so fast and so often in this country that no one seems to be concerned.

A viewpoint was presented on television last night in the form of a letter to the Postmaster General to the effect that this country could stand a 10 cent charge for first class mail. I certainly think we could raise the rate, but I suggest to the minister that he cannot do this while at the same time allowing the service to deteriorate. There is absolutely no excuse for having less efficient mail services in northern Ontario than were provided 40 years ago. Mail service has deteriorated tremendously in the last five years, and I think every member of the house has received complaints in this regard.

Let me give an example of the kind of complaint we receive. I had a conversation recently in an elevator. I asked the operator how the mail service was in Carp. He said he did not live in Carp but that he had recently experienced some difficulty with mail services. He informed me that he received rent in respect of a house he owned. About the third or fourth day of each month he would complain to the man paying the rent because he had not received the cheque. He said that the individual would then tell him he had sent the cheque on the 26th or 27th of the previous month. This mail would travel from Eastview to Cyrville. On one such occasion

the letter was dated on the 27th of the preceding month and was delivered on the 9th of the month for which the rent was due. Had the individual given the letter to the carrier it probably would have been delivered the same afternoon. The most recent example he gave related to a cheque mailed on January 27 and delivered on March 9. The distance involved was no more than five miles. I am sure every member of the house is aware of the fact that the postal service has deteriorated at a time when we are paying more for the service.

We are entitled to know why postal employees are upset and why there should be strikes. The department is providing these employees with more money than ever before. We are not providing them with more money with the expectation that they should go on strike for some other reason. Surely these things can be settled.

• (3:10 p.m.)

The Post Office Department has always stunk to high heaven, and we have always hoped this would be corrected. The department used to be the source of the greatest patronage in the government. Political rather than competent people were appointed. Despite this, the movement of mail from point A to point B was carried out in the most economic and speedy way possible. That is not happening now. In my area the postmaster allows the transportation of air mail, yet only one municipality has air mail service. The air mail service is much slower than that provided by train or truck if it were handled in the proper manner. This used to be the situation. I am not suggesting that the minister should go backward in this respect. However, I think we made a very bad mistake when in many areas we took the sorting cars off the trains. In the case of some railways, the money paid for the sorting cars constituted the difference between making and not making a profit. The service provided in this fairly elementary way meant that a letter sent from point A to point B was delivered in the most economic and speedy manner. We have never been able to duplicate that service.

The people in my area say there is no point in sending by mail cheques for an operation if they have to establish in the area a sum of money that has to be related in a general way to their computer system or if they have to supply two cheques, one of which is issued from a local bank account and finally brought back, attached to another cheque and run through a computer system. They say they cannot send money from Toronto to northern