

Adjournment Debate

with post office work are dedicated people who endeavour to be honest. However, sometimes one bad apple in a barrel will turn every apple bad, and let those who deny that the things I will be dealing with tonight are happening come forward and explain these people's serious and real grievances.

What are some of those grievances? Separate from the main post office in Calgary and the distributing centre near the old air depot we have what we call mail depots at Ranchlands, Beddington Heights, Dealcourt, Edgemont, Pineridge, Temple, Rundle, and so forth. As these mail depots are only open from eight in the morning to four in the afternoon or, as some of the letters show, from 8.30 in the morning to 3.30 in the afternoon, if both spouses in a family are working it is impossible for them to get their mail. In the rest of the city there is mail delivery, that is, in the old parts of the city. There they pay the same taxes as those people who live in the new areas and who are getting a different service. Therefore there is discrimination, because they all pay the same taxes.

● (2205)

People in my city are pretty reasonable and if they could get their mail and get proper and honest delivery of mail after working hours out of boxes when the depots are open, then I would not be receiving a petition with 240 names on it asking their member of parliament, that is myself, for some action.

Last February 4 two employees came to me on Sunday morning and disclosed certain grievances, other than those I have discussed, concerning certain things that are taking place in the Post Office at present. They dealt in particular with what is happening to fragile parcels which are posted in various parts of Canada, or indeed in Calgary to go to other areas. They asked me not to use their names because they were frightened of what might happen to them if I disclosed their names with reference to the information they gave me.

I just want to deal with some of the grievances which were related to me. Here is a letter written on August 25, 1978, and it is rather symbolic of the Post Office. It is written by Mr. Doolittle. He writes:

This past week here in Calgary the "special delivery" service arrived at our establishment at approximately 6.30 p.m. and found the place closed and the door locked as we are on summer hours and are closed between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. for supper.

The mail was the payroll for a large company. There was a kid in his early teens outside. An envelope with many thousands of dollars was handed over to him to hold until the place re-opened. Luckily the kid, with true western character, was honest and the people got their payroll.

Let me read from another letter dated August 24, 1978, written by W. R. Porteous. He writes:

The problem is that a duly stamped first class envelope clearly addressed was posted at Sarnia, Ontario on the 4th day of August containing business documents one of which was an invoice for \$198,000. This envelope was lost by your department until today, August 23, 1978.

It is signed W. R. Porteous, Assistant Division Manager and Division Engineer of Halliburton Services Limited.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

I have one more letter of grievance dated April 4, 1978, written by Vernon E. Sills, and the Calgary address is in my riding. He writes:

As you are no doubt aware, it is not uncommon for mail to cross Calgary in roughly five to seven days, however, one item that may have escaped notice is the fact that some of my subscribed hobby magazines always seem to arrive opened.

The Calgary North *News* finds that its subscriptions are being cancelled by the dozen because people receive this weekly newspaper three weeks after it is posted in the same city.

I have another letter here dated April 4 which again refers to the Post Office situation. The minister says that I exaggerate the situation. Just listen to this letter which reads:

In light of the fact Rev. E. Lindenburger of Fort MacLeod received a parcel of clothes mailed from Sudbury, not only was this parcel inexcusably damaged and mutilated, it was also soaked with what appears to be kerosene and placed in a plastic bag in Winnipeg and stamped "repaired".

● (2210)

I could go on and on. A newspaper clipping deals with what I have said about depots by stating:

With several new developments just opening up, the post office estimates that by 1979 some 20,000 Calgarians living in 6,200 households could be getting their mail from the six depots and three postal stations now handing it out.

It points out the fact that these people are not able to get their mail because these places are locked up when they get off work. I have many letters with evidence that indicates that the people have talked with the postmasters or postmistresses at these depots where parcels are damaged. Some employees have even admitted playing hockey with the parcels, and doing other things.

I am asking for an independent investigation. If there is nothing wrong with the Post Office, and the grievances of these thousands of people are not true, why is the minister refusing us an independent investigation? That is all we are asking.

Mr. D. M. Collenette (Parliamentary Secretary to Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to assure the House that virtue is not a characteristic confined only to western Canadians. I am sure the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. Woolliams) did not want to mislead the House in that respect.

The Postmaster General (Mr. Lamontagne) is fully aware of the situation in Calgary, a situation that is also occurring across the country. Calgary, riding the crest of a buoyant economy, has expanded rapidly. This expansion has made it impossible for Canada Post to react as quickly as we would have liked to the needs of new suburbs in Calgary.

It is well known in this House that the government is committed to restraint in its spending. While it is popular to clamour for cuts in government spending, it is inevitable that when cuts are made some people will be adversely affected. We cannot have it both ways. Obviously the hon. member for Calgary North and his colleagues in the Conservative party do not believe that.