

The Chairman: Shall clause 4 as amended carry?

Some hon. Members: No.

Clause 4 as amended agreed to: Yeas, 47; nays, 24.

• (4:50 p.m.)

On clause 5—*Invitations to tender where amount over \$1,000.*

The Chairman: Shall clause 5 carry?

Mr. Skoberg: Mr. Chairman, I asked the other day whether the Post Office Department terminated rail mail contracts, or whether the railways themselves terminated their own contracts and served notice that they wanted to get out of the mail handling business. I think the question should be answered at this time because it falls under the clause with which we are dealing.

Mr. Kierans: Mr. Chairman, the answer is no. Nobody wants to get out of the mail handling business; everybody wants to get into it.

Mr. Skoberg: Then I would respectfully suggest that this is where the over-all problem of the unity of Canada comes into the question. Hon. members know that if the postal department decides it is going to cancel a mail rail contract, immediately following this the rail line which is affected applies for the abandonment of that particular service. I respectfully suggest to the Postmaster General that he give serious consideration to this factor, because it is the start of a chain of events and carries on down the line.

Mr. Kierans: I will, Mr. Chairman.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

On clause 12—*Coming into force.*

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, clause 12 determines the coming into force dates of certain clauses of this bill. It is noted that the increases for newspapers and periodicals and mail of that kind do not come into effect until April 1, 1969, but that the minister would have the new 6 cent first class rate come into effect on November 1, 1968.

As the minister knows, some of us have tried to persuade him not to go to this 6 cent rate. It has even been suggested from

Post Office Act

this corner that he might have settled for a 5 cent rate across the board. The decision, of course, has been made by the action of the committee in adopting clause 3, to which I was opposed. I wonder whether the minister would relent at least to the point of not having the increase for ordinary people, in respect of first class letters, come into effect until the same day as the increases for mail of other classes, namely April 1, April Fool's Day, 1969.

Mr. Kierans: Mr. Chairman, I would dearly love to have those rates that are coming into effect on April 1 come into effect on November 1. I would prefer to do it the other way around. However, this is impossible. In the clauses of the bill which have been passed thus far there is a wholesale regrouping of the second class mail structure. A number of publications which at the present time enjoy statutory privileges will no longer enjoy them; others move into third class, and so on. This entire restructuring of the second class mail will take my officers several months to sort out, and of course a great deal of information will have to be given to the publishing associations and people affected. I regret very much that I cannot accept the suggestion of my hon. friend.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, believing that the minister still has a heart somewhere inside him, I wonder if I can try another request.

An hon. Member: It is not a heart; it is a water-pump.

Mr. Baldwin: He is awaiting a heart transplant.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): They are doing that in Montreal these days. Nowhere in this bill can we reach a parliamentary decision on the question of the suspension of the Saturday delivery service. The minister does that under his authority as Postmaster General, with all the rights and privileges pertaining to that authority. There has been a fair amount of discussion of the matter, however, and the minister has relented so far as rural areas are concerned. He knows that some of us still feel he might reconsider the position of people in urban residential areas. I recognize that he has taken certain steps to try to make sure there will not be inconvenience caused by non-delivery of the mail on Saturday to residential areas. Even so, there are bound to be many cases of privation.