

Postal Service

Committee when they made their recommendations.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

• (9:20 p.m.)

Mr. Cafik: I do not believe it is fair to the Canadian people or this institution for members to talk one way in committee and another in the House of Commons.

Mr. McIntosh: The hon. member says that because he has not been here long enough.

Mr. Cafik: The postal rates which have been talked about today are fair and reasonable. Frankly, I do not believe it is in the interest of the taxpayers of this country to subsidize to a greater extent than we are presently doing those people using second class mail privileges. I think most Canadians would subscribe to this principle.

The next point is with respect to services in the Post Office Department. We must bear in mind one other step the department has taken, that is not only to increase revenues which will reduce deficits to the taxpayers but also to decrease operating costs. To some extent this move has contributed to the present upset in the postal service in Canada.

The decision to close certain rural post offices because they are not paying their own way has disturbed some postal workers. The move to a five-day week has certainly upset other people. These two decisions, plus necessary changes in procedure and training, were necessitated by increases in the volume of mail. As Canadians we must face the challenge and realize we are moving into a new kind of postal era. We must be willing to face the temporary problems that these necessary changes inflict upon the people of Canada. We must be patient. I honestly believe the Postmaster General is a man with the courage and capability of seeing this problem through and that in the long run we will have less costly and better service in the Canadian post office.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Until the last speaker rose, I was wondering whether any backbenchers in the Liberal Party would participate in this debate. I was glad to see one member had the courage to speak in support of the Post Office Department. As the Postmaster General was not receiving unanimous support from his own party, I was sure he would be the candidate for the next Senate appointment for the province of Quebec.

I concur 100 per cent with the mover of the amendment, the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) and other members who have spoken, such as the hon. member for Surrey (Mr. Mather). They express the concern of the average citizen of this country as to what is happening in the Post Office Department today. I will not waste time by repeating arguments put forth by other hon. members.

I would like to mention one or two fundamental principles that have been violated by the Post Office legislation. First and foremost, there are minorities who have been throttled because of the increased rates in postage. I am speaking of some ethnic groups and church groups. Secondly, aspects of the postal legislation are contributing to the selling out of Canada, in particular to the United States. I refer, of course, to subsidies granted to *Time Magazine*, *Reader's Digest* and to other aspects of the bill. Even more important, the postal legislation is following the way of many other items in the government. What is happening in the government is summed up in an article, written by Steven Clarkson of the University of Toronto, which appeared in a Toronto newspaper. He said that the concept of participatory democracy has been changed by this government to that of participatory autocracy.

The decisions are made by fewer and fewer people every day in many fields of jurisdiction. As time goes on more and more people are expendable. Fewer and fewer people are making the decisions which count in this country. I agree many reforms have to be made in the Post Office Department. Many groups and organizations being subsidized were basically freeloaders. When making changes and reforms, we must be careful where the changes are going to be made and who they will affect. The financial burdens of some minorities should not be increased.

What is efficient is not always the most effective for all people.

Some of the most efficient organizations in the world are not effective for most of the people which they are supposed to serve. The basic priority of the Post Office Department is that it should be a service to the people regardless of the economic and social background of those people. The hardest hit were church groups, labour groups, farmers, co-operatives, the ethnic press, political journals and magazines. Many of these minorities do not have a voice in the big daily presses of Canada.