

Post Office Act

should have chosen as his aim the reorganization of the Post Office Department.

He must be congratulated.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ricard: I see that the surplus of Liberal members sitting on this side of the house have been well trained, because every time the word "congratulate" is mentioned, they immediately becomes noisy. They do it by nature.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ricard: You see, Mr. Speaker.

The minister must surely be congratulated for trying to save up tidy sums for the Canadian people. However, he should also take that opportunity to practise what he preaches and encourage his other colleagues of the cabinet to do likewise, because we now have a cabinet which has already gone down in history for allowing exorbitant and rising expenses.

If we compare, Mr. Speaker, the statements made this afternoon by the Postmaster General with those made by his predecessor during the first months of the year, we are justified in pondering over the matter.

Contrary to his predecessor who said that first class mail did cover its cost and even brought profits to the government, the minister claims that first class mail bring no profits. Mr. Speaker, it will certainly be agreed that we are right to demand more information, more light on that question, and it is strange indeed that the minister does not comply with the request to defer the proposed measure to a committee so that those who are the most interested get the opportunity to air their views. We would benefit, I am sure, of the mass of information brought to light by businessmen, newspaper editors, newsmen, in a word, all the people who will have to foot the bill of the increase of rates the hon. minister is proposing.

The proposals made by the minister are so unpopular among the people that, as soon as they were announced, they were met with a general outcry. I have here an article from the Granby newspaper, *La Voix de l'Est*, which reports the conclusions drawn by Les Quotidiens du Québec Inc., at a meeting held recently. Here is the heading.

"Mr. Kierans must respect the right of the rural population to be informed".

Mr. Speaker, responsible people such as newspapermen and newspaper owners do not make such statements lightly and they claim

that with those proposals Mr. Kierans would like to deny the rural population the right to be informed.

There is in that measure something which must necessarily stir up the population and which gives us the opportunity to make representations on behalf of the rural people and, at the same time, say that the people who live in urban areas are entitled also to be informed.

Mr. Speaker, the people who would have been willing to accept a certain increase, if it had been reasonable. But the increases proposed by the hon. minister are simply extravagant. When we refer for instance to 100 per cent, 375 per cent, and 150 per cent increases, there is a reason not only to be concerned but also to object. Besides, it is our right and our privilege in this house, and we are using it at this time, because we want the honourable minister to realize that he is about to do a disservice to the people.

With its majority and the docility of its members—we have not heard a single Liberal member who dared protest—the government is going to use the steam-roller in order to steam up all its supporters and compel them to vote for the proposal which is before them. It is not the first time that we see such a complete reversal of opinion among government members, and we will surely see it again before long.

With regard to the brief recently presented to the Postmaster General, for a minister who wants to make every effort to establish a just society, it is surprising to see that he makes no bones about increases.

I have here a table of the increases proposed by the minister, and I would like to quote a few:

For instance, the *Sherbrooke Tribune* which is now paying \$32,099 a year for the forwarding of its mail will have to pay \$59,599 a year for the same service. I say for the same service provided that it is maintained as it is now. If the minister's suggestion is carried out, some readers will not be able to read, as they used to, their daily paper on Saturday, since there will be no distribution in urban districts on that day.

With regard to *La Voix de l'Est de Granby*, they now pay \$12,970 to get their paper delivered; with the rates proposed by the one who would establish a just society, they would have to pay \$35,647. Who, in the final analysis, will have to pay the cost of those increases?