

Supply—Post Office

The question is now before the government as to what is best for the accommodation of postal and other federal services in the town of Napanee. Knowing that you are interested in the policies, expenditures and working of government, I submit the following to you that your wishes in the matter may be recorded and brought to the attention of the federal authorities.

We require in Napanee a building that will accommodate the postal, customs and unemployment insurance commission services. With this in mind, I respectfully ask you for your personal opinions in the following:

Are you in favour of the federal government abandoning the present post office at the corner of John and Bridge streets and building a new federal building at another location in the town?

Provision is made on the side of the sheet for people to cast their vote either yes or no.

Or are you in favour of the federal government maintaining the present post office at the corner of John and Bridge streets, acquiring adjoining property either south of or east of the present building and erecting an architecturally suitable addition to the existing building, the whole of which would then provide space for all of the abovementioned services?

I asked the citizens to state their preference. There was a very good response to this questionnaire. There were 640 in favour of maintaining the old post office, 116 in favour of a new building on a different site and 19 spoiled ballots in that we could not determine what they wished.

I remind the minister and the committee of the value of following, wherever possible, the wishes of the local people, and as the representative for Prince Edward-Lennox and the town of Napanee I must recommend to the minister that any building activity take the form of an architecturally suitable addition to the venerable building already there, thus making the whole, the old and the new addition, a credit to the community and to the town.

Third, I wish to refer to the plight, and it is nothing less than that, of the village of Rednersville with regard to a post office. The minister is fully aware of the situation. He will recall that last fall we both tried hard to grant the wishes of the community in that regard. I believe the department decided to curtail any more activity with regard to a post office for that community but, as I told him some time ago, I am still pressing for a post office in that village, and will continue to do so.

In that regard I would refer again to this historic directory which indicates that Rednersville is much older than Ottawa and contains the following:

Rednersville, a village situated on the bay of Quinte, in the township of Ameliasburg, Prince

Edward county, Canada west, distant from Picton, 22 miles, from Belleville, 5 miles. Population about 175.

I would estimate that the population of the village now, 112 years later, is probably around 300 people. It is not up to me this afternoon to prove to the Post Office Department that Rednersville needs a post office because it has always had one up to a few years ago when for some reason or other it was included in the Belleville postal district. This growing village needs a post office. It has been proven by petition that the people want one, and I still call on the minister to work toward granting their request in the immediate future.

I think that is all I have to say, Mr. Chairman, save that I made a note here that I cannot agree with the hon. member for Kootenay West who referred to the Post Office Department as a socialist enterprise. Its functions are of a social nature but the work performed by the Post Office Department is all done by private individuals who are hired to do it. I do not understand how this can be called socialism. The people who use the service pay a fee for each piece of mail handled. So, there is nothing politically socialist about it; it is just a service that the people require.

I have very little to say about rates, Mr. Chairman, except that considering the sound basis upon which this department has been founded we should make a concerted effort to set economic rates that make a more efficient service available to the public. We should open more offices and facilities for the use of the public, and I refer to my request for a new post office in Rednersville. More people will be able to use the facilities that the minister and his department have to offer. If we do open more offices and facilities for the use of the public, make it progressively easier for more people to use the mails, then the greater the revenues will be. The minister has stated he is losing a fraction of 1 cent on each piece of first class mail. I say he should not raise the rate because the additional patronage will take care of the deficit. I am not referring to the kind of patronage that has been bandied around here of late, but the patronage of the people who use the mails.

Mr. Aiken: I have a number of points to raise that might just as well be raised on the public works estimates. I understand we are going to try to conclude this department this afternoon, so I will let a lot of these things stand. However there is one item I should