

Government Organization

other hon. members, who should be given information even when the news to be conveyed is bad. When a member does not receive the kind of information I have been speaking of he should raise hell. That is exactly what I am trying to do.

There is an alarming trend in this parliament toward emasculating the backbencher. May I remind the minister that I was elected exactly as he was elected. Rules or no rules, I will bring forward whatever concerns my constituency. I was sent here to do that. I hope to represent my constituents as well as anyone can, or even better.

I do not intend to dwell on the labour troubles within the Post Office. Major and wildcat strikes have occurred since the minister put his hand on the helm, demonstrating that everything is not well in the Post Office. Since other speakers have discussed Post Office troubles at great length I will not be repetitious. I simply say to the minister that on the third strike he will probably be out because he has hit many foul balls already this session.

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières referred to certain union officials and their responsibility to the public. I suggest to the hon. member that certainly there are irresponsible union officials, but there are also irresponsible members of parliament and cabinet ministers.

Mr. Orlikow: Union officials do not change sides.

Mr. Rose: No, they do not. I remind hon. members that neither cabinet ministers nor union members like to be pushed around. If union officials feel they must act in a certain way to receive the kind of justice they consider they deserve, they at least take those steps they feel are necessary whether or not there is legislative support for them. We have seen that sort of thing happen throughout history. Such activities are carried on not only by unions but by all groups with aggrieved members.

In justifying his new satellite program the minister said to members of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications on December 9, 1968, as reported at page 163 of *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence No. 9*:

Mr. Kierans: Our purpose in going into this satellite is social objectives; they may be political too, but let us say, social objectives as the way of unifying the country, that that one satellite as far as we are concerned just blankets the whole of Canada—

[Mr. Rose.]

That satellite would be devoted to Canadian aims and objectives and will be programmed, I would imagine, in a way that is acceptable by the Canadian people and their cultural requirements or needs.

I do not object to that kind of outlook. I think the minister will agree that Canada has a long history of undertaking costly programs for social objectives. Some examples are protective tariffs for central Canadian manufacturers, the Canadian National Railways, equalization grants, the seaway, the maritime freight rates legislation and, finally, the C.B.C. Expenditures in these areas were undertaken for social objectives. Why, then, must the minister feel that Post Office operations must function on a ruthless balance sheet? Surely there are good social reasons for considering the Post Office as primarily a service to meet the social and cultural aspirations of the Canadian people and not just as a business. Do non-profit cultural, religious, union and scholarly papers and journals not rate higher in bringing about Canadian unity and identity than *Time* and *Life* magazines? To that argument advanced by other hon. members the minister replied in the typically flippant way we have come to expect, and I paraphrase his remarks: "Certain publications want to continue and have the public of Canada pay the shot." What is so unusual about this? How can we have discourse on a political, cultural, religious or social level in this country if non-profit publications in these fields cannot be supported for the public's good or for social reasons? Why does the government pick on the Post Office particularly when attempting to balance its books?

I must protest against the way in which the Post Office has treated box holders, especially those living in rural areas. This year they face double the charges they paid last year. When postal rates went up we knew that rates for Post Office boxes would also rise. But increasing those rates by 100 per cent is far beyond the increase contemplated by many. After all, those who buy stamps have not had to pay double for their stamps. Box holders also buy stamps, but they do not have the privilege of rural route services, nor do they have a householder service. These large rate increases discriminate against those who do not have any alternative postal service available to them.

Finally, I submit that the minister is moving too rapidly and is not consulting sufficiently those who will be affected by government policies in this field. He does not seem