

*Post Office Act*

listened to the debate that the proposed legislation should have a thorough review. It seems to me that it would be very foolish to push this legislation through in haste and then find we have created more problems than we have solved.

• (4:10 p.m.)

At this time members are receiving communications from their constituencies which make it crystal clear that there are many side effects to this legislation about which we should have some information before we make it law. There is nothing wrong with the idea of a committee examination of this legislation. Surely this is the way democracy works. We have all heard both inside and outside of this house what people think about this legislation and how it will affect them. Many of them have asked for a review by a committee. They want to express their views and explain their positions. Frankly, I am of the opinion that they should be given every opportunity to do so. Every organization in this country should be given the opportunity to express to the Postmaster General its feelings as to the effect of this legislation. It is for that reason I plead with members of the house and the Postmaster General not to be stubborn but to allow the referral of this matter to a committee where a proper study can be made.

Quite frankly, I am not opposed to an increase in postal rates in certain categories. Practically every member of this house is, I believe, of the same opinion, that an increase can and should be effected. Let me point out, however, that to increase rates and reduce services at the same time is not the way we in Canada wish to see postal services operated. Some increases in postal rates will have a very detrimental effect on certain segments of our population. It is not my intention to repeat the details that have been pointed out by hon. members before but there are one or two aspects of this legislation I intend to draw to the attention of the minister.

It seems to me that sometimes we do not pay enough attention to the effects that certain legislation will have on the rural areas. I represent a riding in British Columbia of which a large part consists of rural communities. That is one reason I want this legislation to be reconsidered by a committee. We should certainly determine whether these rate increases are to be passed on to the consumer, particularly whether the increases in newspaper rates will in turn be paid by the rural readers.

From the information I have received from my own constituents and from other people in Canada I gather there is going to be a very sharp increase in the cost of newspapers, and I refer primarily to daily newspapers. I am told that the Nelson *Daily News* has been in contact with the department and has indicated that the newspaper rate is going up by at least 25 per cent. This increase will be paid primarily by the people in rural areas who must receive their papers by mail.

I subscribe to a number of daily newspapers. When I am at home I like to read the papers of larger urban centres like Vancouver. This increase in postal rates will almost completely eliminate my subscriptions to these newspapers. Surely this must be true of many people in Canada if this increase is to be passed on to the consumer. These people are not going to be in a position to pay the increased rates. The fact is as simple as that.

One example of this feeling was expressed in an editorial in an Ottawa newspaper. It was suggested there would be a \$20 per year increase in cost to rural readers. The members of this house know what will happen. Hundreds of these rural subscribers will cancel their subscriptions. Whatever enjoyment can be obtained by reading these newspapers will be denied to those people who live in rural sections of Canada. I object very strongly to this.

People living in rural areas are the last to receive adequate television and radio coverage, the last to get good roads and educational facilities, but they are the first to be hit by increases of this type. Surely we should examine thoroughly all aspects of this legislation in a committee. These people should be allowed to make representations to us. We should have another look at the legislation to determine whether there is something we can do.

There is no doubt that the Postmaster General and his staff examined this legislation before bringing it before the house, but surely they did not thoroughly examine the problems which will arise. Had they done so they would not at the last moment have announced to the country that the government had changed its mind in respect of rural Saturday delivery. At the outset the government indicated it intended to stop Saturday delivery throughout Canada. When the Postmaster General began to realize the problem this would create in rural areas he changed his mind. So as far as I am concerned, Saturday mail delivery in urban areas should also be