

Post Office Act

Ryan. Does the government intend to silence such a voice as this by ministerial regulation while at the same time heavily subsidizing the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to provide a platform for other voices such as that of Tiny Tim?

Whatever may be said by the minister about economies and savings in the operations of his department, these proposals smell of discrimination. The minister has boasted that his reforms will save \$13 million. But at what cost? One cost will be 1,499 jobs in the Post Office Department; at a time when unemployment is heavy and increasing, 1,500 jobs are to be thrown away just to balance the books.

The minister made some comments about changing the system of tenders in connection with rural contractors, bringing them into the just society. But the new measure still uses the tendering system which generally means recommendation by the local patronage chairmen. How many members of this house have seen the one-sided contract which allows the Postmaster General arbitrarily to cut off remuneration as was done by the current occupant of that portfolio? How many have seen the penalties for failure to get through impossible roads, and so on? Every postmaster general since I have been here—and there have been several during that time—has talked about a new deal for the rural contractor. But I submit it is all talk; the legislation has certainly not changed that much.

Normally a contract runs for four years. I understand from the minister's announcement today that a contract can be renegotiated three times. This is a tremendous change in favour of the rural mail carriers. But why, in view of all the information on costs which the department must have on hand, can we not do away with the tendering system and pay the rural contractors their going rate? Why should it be necessary for rural carriers to come on bended knees to the great white father and ask for relief? If the department really wanted to help it would establish rates and judge couriers on the basis of their dependability and integrity rather than on how little they are willing to tender for.

I do not wish to labour the point, Mr. Speaker. I could talk at length about the shortcomings in this bill and the changes it proposes to bring about. To sum up, I would say that the measure before us ought to go to a committee for the most exhaustive examination before any action is taken on it. It is a

hasty, ill-judged and misjudged piece of legislation, one which reflects the attempt of a new broom to make a dramatic sweep rather than a sincere attempt to run the essential postal services of Canada effectively and efficiently. I hope the minister will have the good judgment to suspend these radical and arbitrary changes until such time as those Canadians most closely affected have had an opportunity to be heard.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps hon. members would wish at this time to address themselves to the procedural aspects of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Hillsborough.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, on the basis of the principle that all things are deemed regular and in order until the contrary is shown, I suggest that if the government feels that the motion is not in order we might hear from one of the hon. gentlemen opposite.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Yes. It seems to me it is established—and I would refer to May, seventeenth edition, page 526, and to the current edition of Beauchesne, citation 386 and thereafter—that the procedures to be followed on second reading for amending the motion or expressing disagreement with it are relatively stereotyped.

The courses open to hon. gentlemen opposite are, first of all, to vote against the motion for second reading without proposing an amendment. Alternatively they could take a course of action which the editor of *Erskine May* refers to as being the most courteous proceeding open to them, that is, they could move that the bill be not now read a second time but that it be read six months hence. This has come to be accepted as equivalent to stopping further parliamentary action. A third course is one we have seen followed frequently in this house in recent years; it was used as recently as Friday last. It is the motion that the bill be not now read a second time but that the subject matter thereof be referred to a committee. It would have been open to the hon. member for Hillsborough to have moved an amendment of that sort, if that had been his intention, in line with established procedure. However, the hon. member has not expressed himself in that way. He has asked that further consideration of the bill be deferred until the standing committee on transport and communications has considered the subject matter thereof. Therefore his amendment has really failed to