

Post Office Act

encourage that industry to develop. It seems from all appearances to be growing somewhat stronger. I am asked whether in a certain class I am going to single out certain weekly newspapers because they are Tory, Social Credit, or for whatever other reason. Will I in a certain class single out this or that magazine because it is a U.S. magazine such as the *Reader's Digest*, which is doing a tremendous job in Canada with the number of people it employs, its record of business and so on? I am not discriminating against a class; I am discriminating between classes by saying to the daily newspapers that although they have the peculiar situation of urban and rural distribution, this particular rate will apply to them.

I will say to the weekly newspaper that, as the hon. member has pointed out, they are in a difficult situation, they are running a marginal business, and this is taken into account. I say again, I am not discriminating against members of a group. The class as a whole is charged 33 per cent. It happened by accident that the two classes come out to the average of a class.

Mr. Chairman, is the first clause adopted?

The Chairman: No, not yet.

Mr. Macquarrie: Mr. Chairman, I will certainly not repeat what I have said in the earlier stages of the debate on this measure. I should like to thank the minister for answering my question about the mail service being two and a half million ton miles. This is a most impressive expression. As I was looking over his statistics I noticed that the air mail over eight ounces was one of the few items in the whole draft which showed a favourable balance of about three quarters of a million dollars projected for 1968-69. That will be gone. I may say that when I asked the other day about U.S. publications I was not asking the Postmaster General to count the number that came in. I was impressed by the figure that was given as to how much it would cost the Canadian postal workers to sort these U.S. publications, this very precise figure in table 12, and I am still impressed by the prevision of that interesting little calculation.

It will be difficult to deal adequately with this very complex measure in committee of the whole. It is a source of great regret that the people vitally concerned and the people with an intimate knowledge, which members of the House of Commons could not possibly have and which I doubt the minister's officials would have, are not able to present their case

[Mr. Kierans.]

directly to a committee. I regret also the suggestion which has been made that this very important matter must be dealt with in an expeditious way because of the deadline which the minister has placed in his legislation. I may say that, considering the parliamentary timetable and the presentation of this particular piece of legislation to this house, the imposition of the deadline of November 1 was, to say the least, a little presumptuous.

I feel that we must ask general questions because we must deal with this particular piece of legislation against the background of some fundamental changes which the minister on his authority has already taken action upon, or made decisions upon. This is why it is going to be extremely difficult to confine oneself to the legislation that is set before us. For instance, I would be interested in having the minister's revised estimate on the savings which will result from what I suppose we will now have to call the semi-Saturday closing. I would like to know how much he anticipates the Post Office Department will now save with the limitation of the service to rural Canadians, and the exclusion of urban Canadians. I would like to know also the effect of the change upon his projection in reference to personnel. I am interested also, as I looked over some of his figures and some that I have found in annual reports, in the drastic increase in the deficit on the first class mail operation. We seem to be zeroing in on the second class with a vengeance, and yet proportionately the increase in the first class mail in the last three fiscal years has been phenomenal.

I should also like to know whether the Postmaster General has any changes in mind, other than that which he told us a while ago he would have a colleague move. I am wondering if he has found a way to respond favourably to the suggestion and indeed the pleas of the church press, as we know he has yielded to some persuasion in other matters.

Another matter which has already been alluded to by the hon. member for Winnipeg North is the question of the learned journals. I think this is an extremely important matter. The minister is a former academic and he knows it has been a grim struggle to keep learned journals, such as quarterlies on science and the humanities, going. They have asked for relief from a particular section of the proposed bill, and I would hope that even at this late date the Postmaster General could find room for another change in his attitude, and in the direction of his legislation.