

Supply—Post Office

Tomslake in the Peace river country at the present time. This man has been relieved of his job as postmaster because of age but he cannot draw unemployment insurance benefits even though he has stamps in his book. He is not available for work unless he moves away from his home to another area where he would be available. Because he is in a farming district there are no jobs available there.

I should also like to ask the minister if the air mail contracts between Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal are let by tender or how they are made. I am interested in this matter because both Canadian Pacific Air lines and Air Canada touch down at these various points. Before sitting down may I say that if the Postmaster General gets the Post Office Department in shape perhaps the government would see fit to pay him another \$10,000 a year over and above the salary of the head of the C.B.C. at the moment and give him the job of running the C.B.C. If that were done I think we could save a lot of money there and have plenty of money available to subsidize the Post Office Department.

[Translation]

Mr. Perron: Mr. Chairman, at the outset, I must, like those who spoke before me, commend the minister (Mr. Nicholson) for the attention he pays to that important department, the Post Office Department. Therefore, our criticism will be very limited, because we know that having replaced, not very long ago, a minister we liked to call the minister of patronage, he certainly could not have rectified all the wrong that occurred before his appointment. However, I shall make a few observations about the patronage which seems to continue to exist in certain regions of the province of Quebec.

I wish to air some grievances on behalf of my constituents who recently reported to me that in regard to second class mail that we send and for which, as members of parliament, we pay no supplementary postal charges, because they are circular letters on which we only write the name of the recipient, a great number of those letters do not get to the post office box of those persons or families to whom they are addressed.

According to the complaints, in St. Honoré, a community in my riding, over 12 per cent of the families did not receive the letters I had sent them. Therefore, it means that in certain cases, there is still some patronage going on in that department. But I am sure the minister would like everything to be all

right since that service is called the "royal mail" and since the delivery of first or second class mail was always made as honestly as possible.

It is important that those letters should reach the people to whom they were sent. I will make a complaint about that and I will submit supporting evidence because several of those who were supposed to receive letters and who did not get them are having a complaint signed in that connection. The same thing happened in another parish, that of St. Benoit Labre, where the post office serves a population of over 400 and where 10 per cent of the families did not get the mail I sent them.

I know the minister will not consider these remarks as criticism and I hope that when he gets official complaints from my constituents, he will take action against those who treat the royal mail in that fashion in the province of Quebec and Canada. I am convinced that this situation deserves careful consideration.

As regards the rate for mail indirectly subsidized by the taxpayers, as the hon. member for Danforth (Mr. Scott) indicated, for second class mail, like newspapers and especially large newspapers, although it may have been necessary in the past to subsidize in some way those publicity mediums and large newspapers, I feel that today, in 1964, they do not face the same conditions as when they were established and they should no longer enjoy special rates.

I think that if postal rates have to be reviewed, they should be reviewed especially with respect to second class matter. In my opinion, the government is no longer justified in granting this subsidy which results in a \$20 million deficit which has to be made up by the Canadian taxpayers.

Like the previous speakers, I congratulate the Postmaster General for using his businessman's know-how in the administration of such an important department.

I hope that we will not have to air grievances as we did last year with respect to a patronage postmaster general who was responsible for this department for a few months.

I wish his next appropriations will be passed as easily as it seems these will be today.

[Text]

Mr. Weichel: I should like to express to the minister my appreciation of his fine remarks. It is always a privilege for me to take