

*Post Office*

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):**—from the government that money leaks out of the system at a ridiculous rate. It is always the challenge that cannot be met by any but an army of accountants. Now, of course, the army of accountants has reported to the general staff in the Auditor General's report, and that general staff happens to be the Parliament of Canada.

It is important, as we consider this amendment, that we understand the source of the problem. First, there will always be problems of cost control in organizations with goals other than the accumulation of a profit and with security of tenure as a necessary feature to prevent politically-motivated staffing. Prior to 1969 wasteful proclivities were kept at a reasonable level by the partnership of the comptroller of the treasury and the Auditor General. The former watched the funds as they went out, and the Auditor General scrutinized the accounts to make sure moneys at all levels were spent productively and in the manner authorized by parliament. The comptroller general was part of the administrative structure. The Auditor General reported to parliament, and his report was discussed in detail by the public accounts committee, as it is now. In response to a number of real and suspected problems, the Diefenbaker government in 1960 set up the Royal Commission on Government Organization, known as the Glassco commission. One of its several terms of reference was to suggest means of:

—improving efficiency and economy by alterations in the relations between government departments and agencies, on the one hand, and the Treasury Board and other central control or service agencies of the government on the other—

The commission's response to this challenge may be found in summary at pages 120 to 124 of Volume I. It was suggested that many of the functions performed by the comptroller of the treasury should be decentralized to the departments and that the comptroller should henceforth be called the accountant general, reflecting important but narrower responsibilities. As was said at the time, "removal of the administrative details which now swamp the board and frustrate departmental management will undoubtedly enable the board to discharge its important responsibilities more effectively."

I note that it is quite close to five o'clock, Mr. Speaker. May I call it five o'clock, sir?

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski)—Transport—Government acceptance of recommendations of Snavely Commission; the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Brisco)—Indian Affairs—Withholding of funds from National

Indian Brotherhood; the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp)—Agriculture—Price of herbicides—Steps to assist farmers.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, notices of motions (papers).

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Pinard (Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to proceed with notice of motion No. 53 and that all previous motions be allowed to stand.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Order. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

[*English*]

LEGAL OPINION ON POSTAL RATE INCREASES

**Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris)** moved:

That an order of the House do issue for a copy of the legal opinion concerning the legality of the latest postal rate increases, given by the Department of Justice to the Post Office Department.

He said: This motion, Mr. Speaker, is one of a series that I have moved in recent months in an attempt to pry information out of this most secretive of all governments. In every case the government's reply has been to the effect that the information, if revealed, would not be in the public interest. I submit right at the outset of my remarks this afternoon that it would be very much in the public's interest if some of the internal antics of the present administration could be revealed in the documentation that I have been endeavouring to obtain by the only method that is available to members of the opposition, the motion that is before the House.

• (1702)

Through this specific motion, No. 53, which calls for the tabling of the legal opinion behind which the government hides in refusing to explain its refusal to proceed legally in increasing postal rates, we have an opportunity once again to bring a vitally important issue before the House of Commons, that is, the current sad and deteriorating state of the postal service in Canada. Everyone agrees, the public, management, labour, and even the government, that the Post Office is in deep trouble.

Ten years ago Canada had one of the best post office departments in the world. I specifically state ten years ago because that was the beginning of the perilous progress and