

Adjournment Debate

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

● (2200)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In accordance with Standing Order 40 a motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been made. Therefore, the question is that this House do now adjourn.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

POST OFFICE—NEW POST BOX PROGRAM TO EXPEDITE MAIL—REQUEST FOR POLICIES CONCENTRATING ON EFFICIENCY RATHER THAN IMAGERY

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I have a matter for the Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet) tonight. I am sorry that hon. gentleman is not in the House. In the past few weeks he has been as elusive and as erratic as the Canadian mails. I have been waiting for some considerable time to get specific answers to the questions I will pose tonight.

I understand the Postmaster General is preoccupied with the financing of the Olympics, and that fact has been commented on during other debates and in other places. I think he would be much more usefully employed in attending to the administration of the Post Office Department, that department which continues its downward slide so far as deteriorating efficiency is concerned.

This afternoon during the question period we had another example of the Postmaster General's failure to come to grips with urgent problems in respect of Canadian postal services. I asked whether the hon. gentleman was aware that a directive had gone out to the effect that directory services were no longer available. This directive dated June 25 was issued from the Calgary office and states in part:

All mail—(local or out of town) marked "moved" by the delivering employee or section is not to be given directory service but is to be block stamped and returned to the sender—

Having regard to this matter the Canadian Union of Postal Workers has noted that this is a negative approach to the problem. They state:

Rather than increase the number of man-hours required to eliminate this backlog of mail by adding, temporarily, to the staff of the Directory Section, or by offering overtime to the existing Directory Staff, they have decided, in their wisdom, to deprive the public of a service which they have come to expect, and rightly so, as part of a complete service paid for when they purchase a postage stamp, particularly for first class mail.

I would also refer the hon. gentleman to the classic case of Mr. De Marois who had been trying to get a birthday card delivered for two months. He appealed to the Post Office Department's customer services and was informed that the address should read "Mississauga" and should

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

include the postal code of the address of the individual to whom he was sending the card, a Reverend O'Reilly. Mr. De Marois conformed with those instructions, with no success.

Mr. De Marois then wrote to his member of parliament, the Hon. Robert Stanbury, who referred it to the Postmaster General. He in turn informed Mr. De Marois that he had referred the matter to postal officials, and around and around it goes.

Then there is the classic example of Harry Bruce, as reported in the *Globe and Mail* of April 19. He was supposed to be commencing on CBC "Capital Report", on editorials from across the nation, but these editorials did not reach him until long after his appearance on CBC. I suggest that both the CBC and the Post Office Department were deficient in this regard.

My real complaint arises from a question I propounded on June 22. It was responded to by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Stanbury) as the Postmaster General was not in the House on that occasion. In the interests of long-term planning and streamlining, the Postmaster General announced that new boxes and had been established. This is another gimmick designed to solve our mounting postal problems. There are no less than four boxes the good citizens of Canada have to sort out in order to be guaranteed assured mail. The Post Office Department widely publicized this with one of their elaborate documents which they send out from time to time. It is interesting to note there is no provision for mail proceeding outside Canada. I suppose we have become completely insular in this respect. A cartoon by Norris published in the *Ottawa Citizen* for July 10 shows confused Canadians gathered around a box. The comment is:

It's called "assured mail delivery"... unless one of the employees gets into a snit, misunderstanding, argument, bad mood, tantrum, rage...

This places the finger on the problem quite precisely. Morale is low among the postal employees and there will be no improvement in the service until the Postmaster General and his officials come to grips with these problems. I have had to outline the situation very hurriedly because of the lack of time in this period tonight, but there is nothing more important than efficient, fast, reliable postal service. It is more important than the ritualistic conferences now being organized by the government across western Canada.

I hope the Postmaster General, although he has not deigned to be with us tonight, will recognize that his primary obligation is not to solve the unsolvable problems of financing the Olympics. It is to ensure the increasingly exasperated Canadian public that the Post Office will fulfil the obligation it has long discharged over the years until recently, which is to provide an efficient mail service, an assured mail service, so that Canadians can keep in touch with one another on a regular basis and be guaranteed that reliable service is forthcoming.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Marceau (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I will not take up the nonsensical accusations of the hon. member for Brandon-Souris