

*Inquiries of the Ministry***POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT****ALLEGED DETERIORATION IN POSTAL SERVICES**

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Postmaster General. In view of the fact that, in common with a great many other members, I am receiving complaints from across the country about the distressing deterioration in the postal services, and since this seems to coincide with the new regulations, may I ask the Minister whether he is reviewing the regulations and is planning any changes in them with a view to improving the postal service?

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, we are doing a great many things to improve the organization and the services of the Post Office, but we are not planning any changes in five-day mail service or in single mail processing. As a matter of fact, as the hon. member knows, the adjudication is presently proceeding, and I expect that this will clarify a great many points.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister has referred to the five-day delivery service. Is he satisfied with regard to the letter sent to him, a copy of which I have, which indicates that an individual in Montreal received a letter on April 10 which had been mailed in Toronto on April 1?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: A good service!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, in view of the statement that the minister wishes to improve the efficiency of his department and bring closer together the relationship of costs and revenues, would he now advise the house why overtime charges are mounting and service is diminishing? This is an admitted fact.

Mr. Kierans: Mr. Speaker, that was an erroneous report in the *Globe and Mail*.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kierans: Overtime charges were on the increase during the fall and prior to the introduction of the five-day week. Since the middle of February, that is, since the introduction of the five-day week, overtime has been very considerably on the decrease. At the

[Mr. Trudeau.]

same time I might correct another report I was reputed to have—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Perhaps we could straighten out some of the difficulties encountered in the department if the minister would clarify whether the five-day system means a minimum of five days in the delivery of mail.

PROTESTS BY WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS RESPECTING RATE CHANGES

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister whether he has received any protests from the traditional weekly newspapers which have been operating in western Canada for a number of years, and have gone bankrupt because of the new regulations. Also, many people have had to give up their subscriptions to the daily newspapers.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Rose).

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, the minister wanted to answer.

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. member resume his seat, please. The minister might want to answer his question, which might be answered at the same time as the one which the hon. member for Fraser Valley West wishes to ask now.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I submit, with the greatest respect, that this seems to be completely out of order. My question is either in order or not, and there is no reason why it should be answered at the same time as another question.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Fraser Valley West.

ENGAGEMENT OF CASUAL EMPLOYEES

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): My question is addressed to the Postmaster General. In view of the fact that he just reported that the charges for overtime have been diminishing, may I ask him whether this is due to the overwhelming presence of casual employees in the various post offices across Canada?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to rule at this time that the minister should not answer either question.