

Post Office Act

He takes a quotation and serves it up according to his whims. To my mind, he has no right to say that when I mentioned the proverb: Too many cooks spoil the broth, I was alluding to the fact that there have been so many Postmasters General in recent years, that this explains why things are in such a bad shape. My honourable friend is drawing a conclusion which is neither reasonable nor honest, and I should like to call him to order.

Even if my honourable friends resent my setting the record straight—

[English]

I will say it in English so I will be better understood. My hon. friend is trying to give a meaning to my remarks that I did not intend.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Mongrain: Do you object to my speaking in English? It is not as perfect English as your perfect French, but I have to say something.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Mr. Chairman, I am sure you will agree that the hon. member for Trois-Rivières has made my point for me. I started to talk about the resolution. This resolution including the newly proposed five day week, thus reducing the postal service available to the people of Canada and at the same time increasing the cost to the people, reflects a lack of capacity of the Trudeau government. It reflects their mediocrity; it shows their immaturity and lack of stature in their efforts to serve the Canadian people.

The Canadian people expected something far more efficient and dynamic than the measures we are getting. I can do no better, in order to make several other points—and I am sure other hon. members will agree with those points—than quote from the *Sault Star*. I do not often quote from the *Sault Star*, although the *Sault* familiar to me is a “suburb” of the place in which I was born, namely Plummer township, Rydal Bank, Algoma district, Ontario.

● (9:40 p.m.)

The *Sault Daily Star* of Thursday, October 8 states this under the heading “Post office service must improve”:

The national Post Office has been the centre of unfavourable attention from Canadians in recent months. Whether or not this situation continues remains to be seen. Certainly, there are avenues open for the Post Office to redeem itself. That is

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if it has the foresight and initiative to explore these avenues.

The events of recent months which brought the Post Office into disfavour started with the postal workers' strike. This strike lasted for three weeks through July and August and depressed and irritated a public deprived of an essential service.

With the settlement of the strike came the news there would be a hike in postal rates to offset the post office deficit and pay for the postal workers' wage increases. The word was that the postage rate for all first class mail—local and out of town—would be six cents.

Let me remind the minister that this represents an increase of 20 per cent in that service which adds to the cost of living in this country. Let me quote further from this newspaper:

Then, the other day Postmaster General Eric Kierans announced that starting Feb. 1, 1969 there would be no postal deliveries on Saturday and post offices will be closed on that day. This action said the Postmaster General was necessitated to cut down office costs.

Let me intervene briefly at this point to ask in what way this will cut down office costs? Thousands of people who work in the postal department will receive the same take-home pay after February 1, 1969. I am sure no one in this house wants to lower this take home pay, but I submit that administrative costs will remain about the same. This article goes on to say:

All of this has done nothing to win friends and supporters of the Post Office among the Canadian public.

The article also states:

However, while there may be justification for these moves by the Post Office the public has justification too in expecting that accompanying these unpopular measures there will be a diligent and conscientious effort by the Postmaster General's department to streamline the present Post Office operation.

I will not read the entire article, but it goes on to state:

If there are going to be fewer deliveries and higher postal rates the public has the right to expect there will be increased efficiency in the postal delivery system as a compensatory measure.

The last paragraph states:

If the Canadian public is going to have to pay more for its post office services, and if it is going to have curtailed services then the public should expect and should demand, that the service which is provided be made far better than the service it presently enjoys.

I disagree with that last word “enjoys” in the article, to the effect that the Canadian public presently enjoys the service it gets. Surely we do not enjoy much of the service we now have. I receive complaints regarding