

Postal Service Policies

the postal employees are involved in this reorganization program. The formentation which has been caused by members of the opposition has made it most difficult for corrective measures to be taken. I believe corrective measures will be taken and that reorganization will take place. I believe, also, that the Post Office Department will be able to provide the necessary service to the people of Canada without becoming involved in an expense that would be almost impossible to recover.

We know what would have happened to the taxpayers of this country had not the Prime Minister and the cabinet in their wisdom decided that we must apply austerity measures. It is not right for one to say "Austerity, phooey" when speaking of a postal problem such as this, and then turn around and condemn the government for the additional expenses and capital outlays required to operate the country.

• (4:30 p.m.)

This is the time for co-operation. We do not need to get up in this House and insult the Postmaster General, to give a great oratorical speech which really is nothing but a type of condemnation which, I suppose, we are supposed to accept as being rather well put. Right now we need the help and assistance of everyone in the House of Commons to understand, first, what the problem is and, second, to provide some input instead of nothing but output and to support the Postmaster General in his efforts to reorganize and reform the postal system.

At the same time we must give due consideration to the fact that in the process of reorganization there is usually a natural resistance from everyone involved, as anyone who has been involved in reorganization within his own business or company will know. During this period it is very difficult for the people charged with responsibility to carry on the task of reorganization, and it is very easy for those who are dedicated to condemnation.

We are now at a crucial time in the life of the Post Office Department. We need to close some post offices, and many have been closed. Some of them might be reopened as times and conditions change and populations shift. Policies are being developed by the Post Office Department which will enable us eventually to provide a much better system of getting the mail to the people. I am not convinced that we are supposed to be operating a

town hall type of post office. I was raised in a small town, but the post office was never a place where we went to hang out. We would sooner go to the drug store to buy a soda. I can recall going into our small post office, but very seldom was there anyone there. Nowadays, however, the system is much improved. I am a young fellow, but I remember driving a Democrat into Dugald, Manitoba, with a horse and buggy. This is perhaps what we should be doing today if we are to meet the demands of members of the opposition.

Mr. Dinsdale: Close down western Canada.

Mr. Pringle: In closing—and here I hesitate because I usually get applause from the opposition when I mention I am closing—

An hon. Member: Only from your colleagues.

Mr. Pringle: —I would suggest that those people who are bent on destructing—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): That's a new word.

Mr. Pringle: —the postal service reorganization and who are dedicated to doing everything they can to obstruct reform in the Post Office, should supply us with a list of changes and reforms that they say should be made but of which they have not stated a single one today. I wish they would tell us how we can improve the postal system. I would like to see them going forward instead of putting on the brakes and attempting to go backward. In the first place, this government and this Postmaster General will refuse to drive in reverse. The government is bent on improving, reforming and reorganizing the essential service of the Post Office Department, and we are going to do it.

During this period there will be some inconvenience. There is always inconvenience when we make changes. But we will gradually, over a short period of time, prove to the people of Canada that we can improve and reorganize and that we have a Postmaster General with the courage to do it. I am convinced that when it is the duty and the privilege of the people of Canada to make their decision known in the future, we will find again, as we have time after time, where their support lies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Southam), I understand there