

Post Office Act

same lines. He intends to increase the charges to Canadians who use the national parks and he said at that time that the people who use the parks should pay for them. How in Heaven's name would our parks ever have been developed if this policy had been adopted by the hon. gentleman's predecessors in this house? I say we are being asked to approve a hidden tax, and the Postmaster General is using this legislation to make the Minister of Finance look good.

I am sure that had the Postmaster General been in this house prior to the last election he would agree with me that spokesmen for the government did not use the same argument in connection with the medicare bill which was being put through. I think it is ridiculous for the Post Office Department to say now that those who use the service should pay for it. If that is right, then why not let the people who use the C.B.C. pay for it? The principle could be followed right down to the old age pensioners. I represent a large area of western Canada where people have been paying for the C.B.C. ever since the service was started to the tune of \$20 a year. Yet they are not able to get television service even though it is possible to provide it there. Using the same argument, the people who use the services of the R.C.M.P. might be expected to pay for them. To me, it is a ridiculous argument.

Again, as reported on page 2016 the minister had this to say:

But try and show that some of the figures or information presented to the house are wrong.

I hope in a few moments to show the minister that some of the information provided to this house by his officials is wrong. I have written proof of this. The hon. gentleman went on to say:

Try to do so with the help of the tremendous resources which you have behind you and which you have been using to create a considerable delay over the passage of a bill which the people themselves recognize as being timely and appropriate.

The minister was addressing members of the opposition. In other words, he was implying that we have powerful resources behind us, and I assume he meant that the daily press is trying to help us. Very few of the daily newspapers support the party to which I belong. If the minister will recall the last election he will agree that the daily press supported the party to which he belongs. For my part, if I were sure that the charges which the minister is imposing would be absorbed by the daily press I would say: Let them stew in their own juice; they deserve to do so for supporting this government.

[Mr. McIntosh.]

I suggest too that the rural people of Canada do not agree with the minister. They do not recognize these postal increases as being fair and appropriate. In fact, I should like to read to the minister an article which appeared in one of the daily newspapers which he implied were supporting us. By no stretch of the imagination could the *Winnipeg Free Press* be thought of as supporting the Conservative party. This very interesting article appeared in the issue of October 21. It is headed "Mr. Kierans' Statistics" and I think the minister should hear it all. It reads:

• (3:00 p.m.)

Postmaster General Kierans has been attempting to justify his proposed increases in second class mail rates by statistics which purport to show that this operation of the post office has been heavily subsidized and those who have been using it have been getting the service for much less than it costs to provide it.

Like any statistics, those of Mr. Kierans are open to question and interpretation. For example, the post office must carry first class mail and must provide facilities for handling it. The increased personnel and equipment needed to handle second class mail must, by comparison, be relatively slight. From second class mail the post office receives revenue. If this mail were discontinued, the post office would not save much in operating costs and certainly would lose the revenue it now derives from second class mail.

Everyone to his own statistics; Mr. Kierans' could probably be used to show that far from being subsidized, second class mail is paying its own way.

This is one of the reasons that the opposition wanted this bill to go to a committee.

But if the Postmaster General wishes to insist that there is a subsidy, then it is not a subsidy to newspaper publishers. It is a subsidy for the benefit of readers of newspapers and journals who live in remote parts of Canada. These are the people that a subsidy, if there is one, benefits. They are the ones who will be hurt by increases in mail rates.

The article goes on to give a comparison of the increase in the United States postal rates with the proposed postal increases in Canada. The increase in the United States is about 13 per cent. In Canada the increase varies between 100 per cent and 275 per cent. The minister had better start reading his daily newspapers before he makes another statement that the public recognizes this bill as one which should not be delayed.

The minister stated, as recorded on page 2015 of *Hansard*:

Although this debate has been drawn out over the last four days, a number of points have emerged of which the Canadian people were not previously aware. One of them is that there have been all sorts of hidden grants made to all sorts of bodies to meet increased costs.