

Post Office Act

of the week would be less inconvenient than Saturday.

I am pleased to say to the minister that I appreciate the fact that he reversed his decision on rural delivery. It must be remembered that in my riding alone, for instance, out of 36 parishes, 30 do not even have post-office boxes. Well, it is obvious that from the day this legislation comes into force, 30 municipalities will not be able to get any service on Saturday; it is too bad and it is regrettable. That is why the fact of selecting another day than Saturday would seem more acceptable I think than the measure before us.

● (10:20 p.m.)

I should also like to say to the minister that as a new member of parliament, and I do not want to miss this opportunity, that I am a little surprised and even disappointed at the carelessness with which all these commitments have been made by the government, or the party, that took office on June 25. They were assuring us they would cut expenses and limit the increase in taxes. Therefore, I am most unhappy to see that after five or six weeks at the most, they have already announced a tremendous increase in postal rates.

The budget has revealed another, and the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) assures us that the ceiling on the interest rate will disappear. I wonder whether this is the just society we were led to expect. I am sorry, and others in the house with me, to see the government increase taxes that way.

Once more, I appeal to all members of the government party, because I do not think they are happy with such a large increase. The extension of the reimbursement of the deficit over a period of a few years has been refused, on the grounds that, three or four years from now, nothing will have been gained.

I would rather see the increase distributed over two, three, four or five years, which would make it less painful this year. Perhaps, with time, we would arrive at the same increase, but people would know in advance and could accept it more easily.

Again, I take this opportunity to invite all the hon. members to plead with the minister to show greater understanding for the electorate and the whole Canadian people. I have to do that. Naturally, much has been said. Some hon. members have a talent for expressing this sort of thing better than I can, but I think the minister understands me. I also think the hon. members understand me and,

in my opinion, every one of them should plead for a slightly more humane policy than the one expressed in this bill and a more humane attitude on the part of the minister.

I hope this exhortation will lead the minister to be a little more understanding, and perhaps allow the Canadian people to accept a raise somewhat less steep than the one which the minister is now suggesting. I also hope that some consideration will be given to reducing expenditure in other departments, so that the Post Office Department, which is in the first place a public service, may be more protected than it seems to be at present.

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Chairman, I would like to direct a question to the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle).

I have heard my hon. friend say that there are four weeklies in his riding. Is he not convinced, supposing that two of them should go bankrupt, that the other two would manage much better and would be able to pay their due to the Post Office Department?

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Chairman, I shall reply to the hon. member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Mongrain) that I would not at all like to see two weeklies go bankrupt.

The question he is asking leads me to think that he already foresees the bankruptcy of the two weeklies; that would be very unfortunate.

The attitude of the present government might lead some weeklies to bankruptcy. That is the reason why I intervened in the debate and asked the minister to change his mind, so that weeklies will not be forced to go bankrupt.

[*English*]

Mr. Ritchie: Mr. Chairman, I would like to address two points to the Postmaster General. In his definition of weekly and daily newspapers there is a class of newspaper he has not considered, and that is the triweekly newspapers usually published in small towns. Often they are only overgrown weeklies, and they are not in the class of large city newspapers. The postal rate on one of these newspapers of which I know is at present \$30 a month. Under the new rates it will be \$120 a month. This is a substantial increase. There are not many of these papers, but there are a few and I think they have probably not been considered. So I would suggest to the minister that he make another classification between the daily and the weekly category. I believe that many small town newspapers would fit into this category.