

Government Organization

have been in existence for 50 or 60 years. They have resources other than the rural economy to support them and therefore, in most cases these communities will have a future; but for the sake of economy many of their addresses have been cut out. Today, I received a notice in respect of the closing of the post office in the village of Charlton. This town was incorporated in the very early days of northern Ontario. It is true there are only 2,000 patrons of the post office. The present suggestion, however, is to get rid of the post office and the postmaster because the expense involved is \$2,600. I do not know why he was paid \$2,600.

An hon. Member: He was a Liberal.

Mr. Peters: Of course he was a Liberal or he would not have had the job. Now, I understand the post office will be located in another store where there will be boxes. This will mean that the people there will have to pay \$4 for a box. They not only will lose the service they had but in addition they will not have the privilege of buying money orders. This would seem to be very unfair. I believe the minister should consider the aspect of rural community life that has centred around the post office and what a postal address in effect means to the people in a community.

A similar situation occurred in the past in respect of the railway. When rail lines were abandoned the centres no longer had a station. Many people would like to maintain the communities which are in existence. It is my opinion that many of them will have a future in any event. I do not believe the minister intends to do anything about this. He has already made the decision, and therefore no appeal that any member makes in the back room, in the caucus or any place else, in my opinion, will make any difference.

I think, however, I would be remiss if I did not lament the passing of many of these post offices, especially when the expense involved is not sufficient to warrant the curtailment of the community activity which would be the result of the removal of the post office. I think the elimination of these post offices is another step toward the end of rural communities.

I do not know whether this has been mentioned by the minister, but I should like to refer to the matter of educational television. I believe this is an immense field and one which we should not enter lightly. I am very surprised that in recent months and recent years the federal government has been very

[Mr. Peters.]

anxious to refer to the limiting influence the constitution has in respect of the federal government becoming involved in any type of education. In view of some of the things which have been said in recent months in the province of Quebec, for instance, which has entered this field, and also the interest of the province of Ontario in educational television, as well as the great emphasis that has been placed upon the educational system for the beatification of a provincial government, it would seem to me there is a great deal of merit in the federal government playing an important role in this field. Through educational television, there would be an opportunity for the retraining and scholastic advancement of people who have dropped out of school. People would be in a position to take advantage of the educational programs to upgrade their education. Therefore, I believe it would be in the interest of the Canadian public to have this programming controlled by the federal government. I realize there are the arguments about the holy cow aspect of the provincial jurisdiction in respect of education.

An hon. Member: Sacred cow.

Mr. Peters: Whether it is a sacred cow or a holy cow, I fail to see the difference. Which ever it may be, I believe the provision of a standard across the nation is a good deal more important than the satisfaction of certain provincial educational systems which are not providing a national standard. Eventually, we will be involved in types of technical educational training by which tradesmen and technicians will be able to take advanced courses by means of television. In my opinion, it would be very foolish for us to allow the provincial governments to control this type of education when by this means it would be very easy to provide a standardization in technical and trade education across Canada. I hope the minister will consider this. I know he has great capacity in this field. I know also that once he has made up his mind there is no point in saying anything about it because he is not likely to change his mind.

● (8:50 p.m.)

If he has not already done so he should consider some of the statements which have emanated from the general conference in Montreal this week, as well as some of those made by leaders in the province of Quebec, educational people in the province of Ontario and other provinces, in respect of what they intend to do with educational television.