

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

The new policy was announced in a flurry of publicity in newspapers, on radio, billboards and handbills. It cost the Post Office \$60,000 in Metro alone to tell you "Your Number is up."

The new system was supposed to have become effective May 1. But it isn't, and may never be. It seems somebody forgot to tell somebody else about a policy change.

And left holding the bag are hundreds of Metro firms who already have had new business forms printed to incorporate the change. All the Post Office can advise them to do is store the letterheads somewhere—maybe they'll be useful some day.

R. F. Horgan, acting director of information and public relations for the post office in Ottawa said yesterday that firms requiring new letterheads and stationery anyway should use the new three-digit forms. "But we certainly wouldn't advise them to destroy present stocks."

Then, in the *Toronto Telegram* of May 30 we read:

Local post office officials are telling confused callers they can use either of two sets of zone numbers, whichever they please. "Use the old one, it's easier," one official told the *Telegram* today.

As recorded at page 10742 of *Hansard* for July 2 I asked:

Is it possible that the 3 digit zone system now in force in these cities—

These are three large cities, including Toronto.

—will be dropped as a result of the review of zoning systems suggested by the Minister of Communications on May 29?

The answer was:

Yes, but not probable. It is expected that, if a national postal code is adopted—

And so on.

But, what do we do in the next two or three years? Are our numbers up or down, frozen or evaporated? Perhaps Vancouver is the scene of the most complete compounding of the confusion. The *Province* of May 23 provides some insight along these lines:

The post office department apparently is going to amend postal zone changes that were to become effective in the Lower Mainland on June 1.

The further change—possibly to a full, five-number zip code system—was hinted Thursday when local postal officials said the original change to three-number ones was being "deferred or postponed."

A telegraphed message from Ottawa suggested the change had been "deferred or postponed" and that "an explanation was on the way."

The explanation was expected to arrive today.

"We're in the dark on this," the Vancouver spokesman said.

The official went on to say:

The new system was described as one that would speed sorting and delivery of mail.

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

All this from the man who was going to make the Post Office businesslike and efficient. If this is efficiency, Mr. Speaker, give me some good old fashioned sloppiness. Doubtless the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) will tell us that all is well; that the numbers game is good for us; that the unofficial intercity guessing contest will give us some of the kick of a national lottery. The minister is expert at giving assurances and reassurances. I recall how confident he was when he said that the new rates would not injure publications and how pleased the carriers were with the new arrangements following the institution of the five day delivery. I need not talk about the debunking of the pre-conclusions. It would be amusing, even ludicrous, it would be a modern Gilbert and Sullivan. But it is also serious. It cannot be doing much to speed the nation's mail if the largest post offices in the country are in such a state of confusion and so much time and energy is wasted in such feckless planning.

Is it any wonder that our post office is becoming a source of derision? We read this in the *Dominion Travellers Association* magazine under the caption "Who trusts the mail anymore?":

Uganda, or whatever they call the place now, has a better postal system than Canada has. Afghanistan has a better system. Even the United States—once the unhappy owner of the world's worst postal system—has a better one than Canada has now.

They do a better job in Bechuanaland, using runners with forked sticks, than they do in Winnipeg using a computer and hundreds of poorly paid civil servants. The Pony Express defied Indians to deliver mail faster between San Francisco and Houston—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

**Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Minister of Communications and Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, I am frequently fascinated by the flowery phrases of the Falstaff of the Conservative court, a court that I might remind hon. members of the house is now in exile. If the calibre of his criticism remains at the present level, the court is likely to remain in exile. While the hon. member's criticism of the Post Office may indeed merit the term "flowery", it is certainly not factual.

I do not think the hon. member or anyone else can prove the statement that the post office departments in the United States, Uganda or Afghanistan are better than that of Canada. The confusion that exists about the