

report of the conciliation commissioner, one is left with the distinct impression that if the two sides would channel the same energies into the resolution of the issues in dispute as they spend now in criticizing each other, the consumers of postal services in this country would indeed be much better served.

In his report, Mr. Foisy describes the relationship between Canada Post Corporation and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers as one which is characterized by profound mutual distrust. While this revelation basically serves to confirm that which has been known for some time, it is of particular concern to the Government which has set specific goals and targets for the corporation to achieve in the coming years.

Let it be clearly understood that this Government is firmly committed to providing Canadians with a postal service which offers an effective and cost-efficient service. The clock is running and it is time that labour and management exhibit of some proof of the ability to come to grips with crucial issues which impact on the Corporation's very *raison d'être*—the efficient collection, processing and delivery of the mail.

In his remarks at the beginning of second reading, the Hon. Minister of Labour (Mr. Cadieux) referred to comments contained in the report of the Review Committee on the Mandate and Productivity of Canada Post Corporation, otherwise known as the Marchment committee. I think it would be appropriate, in light of the proposed legislation before us, to reflect upon the main findings of the Marchment committee as they related to labour relations at Canada Post Corporation.

The Review Committee on the Mandate and Productivity of Canada Post Corporation was established on June 20, 1985, by the then Minister responsible for the Corporation, the Hon. Minister of National Defence (Mr. Beatty). The committee, whose membership was composed of business, labour and agricultural representatives, was charged with consulting extensively with all interested groups in assessing the corporation's legislative mandate, policies and practices, and to report to the Minister responsible for the corporation on the future requirements for a national postal system. In addition to a series of hearings held across Canada, the committee, chaired by Alan Marchment, visited postal facilities in Canada and consulted widely with officials in the Australian and United States postal services.

The initial observations of the Marchment review committee pertaining to labour relations at Canada Post Corporation are worthy of note. The report states:

The members of the committee are unanimous in agreeing that they have never seen labour relations in any jurisdiction that are as acrimonious as those that exist between Canada Post Corporation management and the postal unions. They are poisonous to the point of the potential destruction of the enterprise. There is a clear lack of trust on the part of each side—management and labour. The relationship is more reminiscent of a class war than any kind of pursuit of mutual objectives.

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This sounds all too familiar to me. It is as if time has stood still in relation to hoped for improvements in the relationships between Canada Post Corporation and its unions.

In its recommendations, the review committee suggested various initiatives to remedy the corporation's labour relations problems. These included joint involvement of the corporation and its unions in developing new methods of consultation and co-operation to permit the settlement of important issues outside of the grievance procedure; joint exploration of opportunities for improving the quality of working life in postal plants and possible incentives for improved productivity; co-operation in identifying and improving hazardous work areas and conditions in the workplace; and negotiations between the corporation and its unions to eliminate restrictive clauses impeding the achievement of efficiency in operations.

Other recommendations include joint co-operation in reducing absenteeism to normal industrial levels; that high priority be given to job training programs; and that action be initiated to consolidate the number of unions within Canada Post. The report also recommended that the corporation continue to contract the operation of sub post offices and explore the feasibility of contracting out more of its ancillary services.

Again, I feel it is worth-while to quote directly from the Marchment review committee report which, in its conclusion and summary of recommendations, states:

Most fundamentally, if the Corporation is to survive into the next century, it must have real collaboration between management and labour and a complete change in the attitude of hostility and distrust which now prevails. Both management and labour must recognize that their futures are intertwined. If Canadians are not soon given, at fair cost, the level of service they need and want, they will increasingly continue to turn to alternate if not competitive modes of communication to the detriment and ultimate demise of the Corporation. Some people have already characterized the Canadian postal system as a dinosaur *en route* to extinction.

As Hon. Members are aware, the main concern in the current dispute revolves around the issue of preserving job security for its members while management is seeking to open additional sub post offices and award franchises, while gaining increased flexibility in laying off surplus employees. The conciliation commissioner, while acknowledging the right of management to open new sub post offices and award franchising in keeping with its corporate plan, also recognized the right of unionized employees to some sort of job security and recommended accordingly. Despite what has been viewed as a relatively balanced approach to the dispute, the Foisy report has not resulted in a resolution of the issues.

As has been indicated, the Bill before us today will bring about an immediate restoration of postal operations as well as providing for the settlement of all issues in dispute through the appointment of a mediator-arbitrator. This method of dispute resolution will provide the parties with one final opportunity to come to grips with the issues themselves and arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement. Otherwise, the task will fall to the mediator-arbitrator appointed under the terms of the legislation.