

Earlier today questions were asked to the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) in connection with the CBC's striking NABET members. Those people have been laughing at the public for two months.

• (1530)

We know the public likes its special programs such as hockey games or popular series. On some Saturday nights when people were getting ready to view the hockey game on television we have seen NABET union members come to work for two minutes and then suddenly bring the broadcast to an end.

I suggest that union members have no right to laugh that way at the people of this country. We will have to find a means of avoiding strikes in public services. Some will say, but you would also have to take away the right to strike from employees in essential public services, but I do not think this would be the solution. If this Parliament has given public servants the right to strike it would be ill-advised to take it away from them through legislation because I believe in free association of union members who use their association as a means of pressure but with the proviso that these means of pressure be warranted. However, I suggest that this is not a solution to be considered.

We could, of course, talk about compulsory arbitration. Here again, this system has been tried in the past but failed to stop unions from striking, even illegally. We have often seen illegal strikes across the country; union members do not hesitate to leave their job and go on strike.

I am not a specialist in labour relations but I think it is imperative that we find a permanent conciliation mechanism that would keep employers and employees in constant communication so as to avoid strikes such as those which are disrupting public services.

The leader of the Progressive Conservative Party (Mr. Stanfield) has recently dealt in Toronto with this important question. He referred to the possibility of adopting a legislation similar to the Taft-Hartley Act providing for a period of 90 days during which union members would be compelled to go back to work while possibly resuming negotiations with their employer.

There is a host of systems we might put to the test, but it would be imperative for the government to devise a formula that would prohibit strikes, particularly in the essential public sectors. Actually, strikes are very costly to the Canadian economy and to union members themselves because it is they who, more often than not, have to foot the bill for the strike and not their union leaders.

As I have just said, Canadians are greatly concerned about the disastrous consequences of strikes on our economy and their financial repercussions on the family. Canadians will insist, at the next election, that all political parties take a clear and unequivocal position on this issue and we would be derelict in our responsibilities if we should allow the present situation in the public services to worsen by maintaining the status quo.

If I had enough time, I would have liked to deal with the question of passport delivery. It may be possible to say, in the light of the Geoffroy case, that order should be restored in this sector, and that the Secretary of State for

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External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) should establish another system to replace the present one. But I shall let other hon. members deal with this issue.

Mr. Speaker, may I say in closing that the whole system of social benefits paid to taxpayers by governments, both federal and provincial, must be totally revamped.

In many cases, especially with regard to social security, there is duplication and a considerable loss of public funds. The jurisdiction in that field could be divided amongst the various levels of government.

The solution to the problem must not be administrative only. Naturally, the present government sticks out its chest and says: We have solved the problem of family allowances. It is not a solution, although I do congratulate the government for having dropped its arrogance toward Quebec and having shown itself a bit more flexible; these are only administrative arrangements that do not solve the problem.

To my mind, the jurisdictions amongst governments should go further than that. Our jurisdictions must be thought out anew to prevent payments from ratepayers who often pay the provincial and federal governments for those same services. To prevent duplication, things must be straightened out, Mr. Speaker, and we will achieve that objective,—of that I am convinced—by finding a new formula for federalism.

The report of the Committee on the Constitution, in preparation for two years, will be tabled in the House tomorrow. New formulas will be proposed. Obviously, some hon. members will present minority reports, but I insist on saying this: If Canadian unity is to be saved, Mr. Speaker, it will be necessary to seek a new form of Canadian federalism advocating greater decentralization of federal government powers to the benefit of the provinces, and it is simply on that condition that we will be able to say that we are endeavouring to safeguard the Canadian unity and that we will continue to do so.

[*English*]

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that under the guidance of a government which was elected largely on the promise that it would bring about a just society, and of a Minister of Labour who has spoken so often and so honestly about his desire to protect the rights of ordinary citizens, we should today be debating a system which has created incredible hardship for tens of thousands of Canadians who find themselves unemployed through no fault of their own and must depend on unemployment insurance payments to provide the necessities of life.

Let me digress for a moment to say that the position of the government has not been helped by the strident partisanship of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Perrault) who has rejected the claims of members of parliament, who has virtually branded as untrue articles by newspaper columnists in almost every newspaper in Canada, both Liberal and Conservative, which have outlined the plight of those who are unemployed and who have not been able to get unemployment insurance, and has denied that there is much loan-sharking going on, one of the most despicable