

Postal Service Policies

penetrate to the cabinet. But I do not rush to embrace such a pessimistic view. I have devoted little time to the issue, for two reasons. First, I still think that the fundamental question is the over-all conduct of this department and, second, it is also my hope that all will go well with the negotiations. And while I am not enamoured of the sensitivity and imagination of the Treasury Board or the President of the Treasury Board, I can only become enthusiastic about his possibility of success when remembering how much better it is that he should be at those negotiations rather than the Postmaster General. I say to him and the unions that while there are only two negotiating groups in the room, there is a third one in the picture. That is the group which I and every member here represents, the public of Canada.

● (12:40 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: I say clearly and definitely, and I am confident that in this I speak for Canadians generally, let there be no strike. No matter how well armed one side is to bring about a strike quickly and the other side prepared to sit one out because they have sent out a few cheques, let there be no strike!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: The people of this country have endured enough poor postal service in the last 23 months. They endured a three-week long strike only a short while ago. They have endured a diminution in service daily. They will not countenance another disruption which would have grievous effects on all aspects of our national economy and bring injury to every Canadian. They will thank no one who forces a strike on them.

In issuing this warning, I am sure that I speak for hundreds of thousands of Canadians who do not want this strike to take place and who want to see that it is avoided. What is wanted by the people of Canada is reason, flexibility, good judgment and good sense, not bitterness, arrogance, hostility and bullying. With this reason, flexibility, good judgment and good sense, a serious blow to the nation can be averted. It must be averted.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in this debate, I join with the hon. member for Hills-

borough (Mr. Macquarrie). I agree that the people of Canada do not want another postal strike. There is no reason for another postal strike. I believe that postal employees do not want a strike and are more than willing to reach an agreement on reasonable terms.

If we are close to a strike, it is because of the stubbornness and incompetence of not only the Postmaster General and Minister of Communications (Mr. Kierans), but as the motion states, it is the stubbornness and incompetence of the ministers responsible. I agree with everything the hon. member for Hillsborough said about the incompetence of the Postmaster General. I do not agree with him that we can have more confidence in the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury). The constituency which he represents probably has a higher per capita income than any constituency in the country. The people in his constituency do not know very much from personal experience about unemployment and low wages. They do not have to worry about where their next meal is coming from. I do not have much confidence in that minister or the Postmaster General.

This is not a new situation. It is possible to be sorry for any Postmaster General, although it is hard to be sorry for this one, because of the situation in the Post Office. We know that traditionally the Post Office Department, to a large extent, was staffed through patronage. Recently that department has been a mess. It is inefficient and mismanaged. There is resentment and conflict on the part of the employees. Although the minister inherited a bad situation, he has done everything possible to make it worse.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Orlikow: The record is clear that the minister has had innumerable warnings about the situation. I wish to briefly put some of these warnings on the record. A few years ago, prior to this minister taking office, there were difficulties. The Liberal government at that time appointed Mr. Justice Montpetit to inquire into the Post Office situation. In his detailed and damning report of the Post Office because of the way it was being operated, Mr. Justice Montpetit stated that his investigation revealed mismanagement, incompetence, ignorance of basic human relations and that the Post Office was living in the middle ages. Why have all the recommendations of Mr. Justice Montpetit not yet been implemented?