

Post Office

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Pinard (Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think there is unanimous consent to proceed to consideration of notice of motion No. 52 in the name of the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) and that preceding notices of motions be allowed to stand.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Is it agreed by unanimous consent that we allow item No. 2 to stand and retain its place on the order paper?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

[English]

POST OFFICE—CLIMATE ANALYSIS REPORT

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris) moved:

That an order of the House do issue for a copy of the Post Office Department, Climate Analysis Report carried out by Hay Associates Limited of Toronto, Ontario, in October 1975.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is one of a series of motions which I have placed on the order paper in an effort to open up the Post Office Department to the scrutiny of this House and to the public, because I feel that it is the responsibility of every member of parliament to endeavour to the best of his ability to come to grips with what is a growing malaise in the Post Office Department. I am not going to debate at length this particular motion this afternoon because I have brought this issue repeatedly before the House of Commons.

Motion No. 52 is particularly germane to the situation because it calls for the tabling of the climatic report that was prepared by the Hay consultant group, which was hired by the Treasury Board to do an in-depth examination of the problems besetting Canada's postal service. The Hay group produced a series of reports, including the one which we have requested for tabling. This one is particularly pertinent because it deals with the climate of the Post Office Department, that intangible psychological aspect of labour-management relations. It is in this area that the successive postmasters general have had the responsibility for administering the Post Office in the past ten years—although there have been repeated changes, seven in the short space of ten years—dealing with labour-management relationships which have continued to deteriorate ever since the process of automation and mechanization was announced back in 1970.

Unfortunately, instead of an improvement in this fundamental area of concern, there has been continuing breakdown of the climate of trust and atmosphere of good morale that is essential if the Post Office is to pull itself out of the doldrums

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner).]

and to operate as an efficient, reliable service, which is what Canada must have in the interests of unity and economic well-being of the country.

We know what has happened over the years. The successive strikes have constantly disrupted the delivery of mail, usually at the busiest times of the year—pre-Christmas strikes, both legal and illegal—and they have had a damaging effect on the business community. Strikes of this kind are always followed by a rash of bankruptcy declarations, and it has been of particular concern to the Canadian Independent Business Federation which is made up of small business groups in Canada. It has resulted in this association, under its leader, John Bulloch, making repeated attempts, by consultation with the government, by consultation with the opposition, and by attempts to arouse public response, to improve the efficiency of the Post Office Department.

I see no reason for the government to restrict a report of this kind which comments on the prevailing atmosphere and is a detailed discussion in terms of modern industrial relations. The Hay people are very skilled in this area. This report offers advice which, if available to the members of parliament and the people of Canada, would provide some of the answers for the long overdue solutions that would have to be put into play if we are going to solve the problems of the Post Office.

We now have a new Postmaster General, and he has made statements in his speeches which indicate that he realizes that this is the essence of the problem. You can transform the Post Office Department into a Crown corporation, you can reorganize management, you can do all the technical and administrative changes, but until you improve the climate, the working atmosphere of the Post Office, you are not going to resolve the malaise.

The Postmaster General made a speech on April 28 at the opening of the new post office building in Port Stanley. There are a few quotations which indicate that he has been reading the Hay report, and I wish that he would allow others to have access to the report. The reports do come to us because, obviously, when you have problems of the proportions of those prevailing in the Post Office, leaks occur, and we do get these reports regardless. What I am advocating here, however, is that he make it available to the people of Canada so they can understand the essence of the problem.

Here is one of the quotations, Mr. Speaker:

The post office is not only a place of business, but also a meeting place, a place where people like to go. And in this kind of office you get the best of service, personal service.

That is the ideal picture of what the post office should be, a place where there are cordial, good relations, in this instance with the public. He goes on:

These days, when everything seems to be big and impersonal, your post office is still a very personal place.

If the Postmaster General can convince the members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers that it is a very personal and friendly place, then he will have his problems solved. Turning it into a Crown corporation will not solve the problem