

*The Address—Mr. Rynard*

will have to be put in order first. The government will have to straighten out its finances. This is an admission of the seriousness of the economic problems that have been pointed out over and over again.

If any proof of this fact were needed, all we would have to do would be to look at the savings bonds which will be put on the market shortly, carrying an interest rate of almost 7 per cent over the next 15 years. I am wondering if this is not a good time for this just society to take a look at the possibility of redeeming some of these perpetual bonds that were purchased in 1936-37 paying 3 per cent and upon the payment of which the Liberal government welched in 1965. These bonds are now worth 50 cents on the dollar. Even if the just society were to repay the bondholders 100 cents on the dollar, the resulting funds would purchase only about a quarter of what they would have purchased at the time the bonds were bought. I expect the Prime Minister to correct this injustice immediately. It is a blotch on our escutcheon. Those of us who were living and working then know how tough this problem was. If we fail to redeem those bonds, we are going to leave the parliament of Canada in a very unfavourable light in its handling of bonds.

I should like to deal now with a few problems that the just society might straighten out and which have shown up since the election. Several questions have been asked by members both on this side and on the government side of the house concerning the rural mail carriers. It is interesting to note that some of these rural mail carriers went about their duties during the period of the strike, and were paid. I put a question on the order paper inquiring as to how many were denied the opportunity to work, and how many were allowed to work and collect the money called for by their contract.

The question is, Mr. Speaker, why this discrimination? Some of these mail carriers were paid and some of them were not. Why were some of these rural mail carriers refused entrance to post offices during the strike, even though they were there and prepared to carry out their duties? In my opinion, this was rank discrimination. I do not believe there is anyone in this house who considers it just to deny some mail carriers the right to carry on their work while others are permitted to do so. I should like to know the answer to this question.

Some of these rural mail carriers commit themselves to monthly payments, probably

[Mr. Rynard.]

for the vehicle they use to carry this mail. They are dependent upon that monthly cheque. I believe the situation created by the strike is covered by their contract, because clause (b) states:

In the event of any conditions arising during the life of this contract which could not reasonably have been foreseen when the contract was made and which substantially alter the service and for which a pro rata adjustment based on distance or frequency is not equitable, the amount of adjustment in rate shall bear a fair relation to the amount payable under the contract and shall be fixed and finally declared by the Postmaster General.

All of us who were members in the last parliament recall that the postal workers did not have the right to strike until the legislation was passed during the last session. It is my contention, therefore, and I have received some legal opinion on this, that those rural mail carriers whose contracts were signed before that date have a right to collect. Certainly one would think that in a just society when a man is prepared to carry out his work, it would be only proper that he not be denied the payments called for by his contract.

While I am dealing with the Post Office Department, I should like to take a look at the policy of closing out small, rural post offices. The department makes no distinction whatever between summer post offices and post offices that should be operating in small hamlets the year round. I shall cite a specific case. Let us take the case of a post office which is established for the summer season in a grocery store. This service is usually provided for the cottagers, and terminates when they close their cottages. As a rule they open up their cottages the last week in June and close them on September 1. I have no quarrel with the closing of post offices in such areas as that, but I do quarrel with the closing of post offices in areas where several hotels and motels are open for business, areas such as Port Stanton. Many of the people who visit that area are tourists from the United States and the bookings are done by mail. These people are making the bookings almost a year in advance and are disturbed to find that the address on the letterhead is incorrect as a result of post office closing. In this particular case—and I am only citing one out of dozens—the post office is not Port Stanton anymore, but Severn Bridge. People living many miles away are thus confused.