

Postal Services Continuation Act, 1987

hearings and brought forward recommendations that were initially given credit by the unions.

In the key area of the union dispute, that being franchising and job security, let it be clearly understood—never mind the smoke and mirrors—that the recommendation and the offer by the Corporation and in the Foisy report was that existing jobs would not be in jeopardy—no existing employee would lose his or her job. This gives the Corporation the latitude and liberty to run the Corporation in an efficient way to ensure better service to all Canadians, and more accessible service, may I say.

In my own community I can drive around the corner and go to a convenience store with a postal outlet. I can pick up a parcel on a Saturday. The service available is second to none compared to what the Post Office has offered in the past.

Indeed, Canadians will benefit. We have to be physically responsible. We cannot continue to guarantee any number of jobs at any cost. We have to attempt to run an efficient business operation. Bear in mind that this is a Crown corporation, one that was incorporated in 1981. There is a perception that the Government is running the Post Office. We are trying to do the opposite. We are trying to allow that Corporation to run efficiently and economically and, I am happy to say, it would be making significant progress if it were not for these unfortunate strikes and disruptions of service.

My own personal Bill, C-269, goes beyond the Minister's Bill. The Minister's Bill is essentially calling for the parties to come back to the negotiating table and have binding arbitration. However, my Bill not only calls for that but it takes from CUPE the right to strike and, for all intents and purposes, declares the Post Office an essential service. I feel this is necessary.

As I said in my earlier remarks, I feel that the uncertainty of postal service, the growing lack of confidence and cynicism among Canadians about the service and the Post Office's unreliability is hurting the Corporation in a dramatic way. Businesses are starting to use alternative services. People are saying that they cannot be sure that if they send a cheque, a contract or a very important document, that it will get to its destinations on time.

The concept of taking away the right to strike for postal workers is not new. It is not as though I were inventing the wheel. The situation has existed in the United States and it has worked very well. You can mail a letter in Buffalo and it will be delivered, virtually guaranteed, in Florida the next day. If you mail it on Monday it will be there on Tuesday. This speaks volumes.

As I say, the Minister has appointed a very noted labour negotiator, Mr. Bill Kelly, to try to bring the parties together. As capable as he has shown himself to be in the past, he has expressed his frustration with the attitude of the parties. In view of that, it is very clear that the the Minister has no

option. The Minister must take the action has taken in bringing this legislation before the House.

• (1210)

I commend the Minister for assuring Canadians that the mail will be delivered and that there will be continuity of service. Pensioners will not have to go to bed at night wondering if their cheques will be there in the morning, wondering whether they can pay their rent or buy their food. The Minister has given reasonable assurances to those small businesses that so desperately wait for cheques to come in to pay their employees, to pay their payables, to pay their taxes and indeed to be good corporate citizens.

As regrettable as such legislation is, I do commend the Minister for showing the resolve and the determination to protect all Canadians.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the remarks of my hon. friend. He referred to replacement workers. The first instance I can recall of replacement workers being used to a large extent was during the strike at the Pocklington plant, which resulted in violence. Even though the workers were in a legal strike position, the company brought in strike-breakers, scabs, replacement workers.

With some pride, the Hon. Member indicated that in his community of London there were 2,000 people who wanted to be scabs and to do the work the inside workers were doing. I know my hon. friend follows labour relations, and he knows that in his part of Ontario there have been labour disputes at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. I wonder if he can think of any other instances of replacement workers being brought in.

It seems that the Government is saying it supports scabs who cross picket lines. When there are management-labour disputes in the City of Kamloops, replacement workers are not used to run the city. When the pulp and paper mills there have labour disputes, they do not bring in scabs to continue the operations of the mills. However, Canada Post does this.

Does the Hon. Member believe that that is the appropriate thing to do? Could he describe for us other labour-management disputes in which replacement workers have been brought in on a large scale? At the same time, could he tell us if that is because the management of other organizations are much more sophisticated? I am thinking of management that recognizes the validity of a management-labour dispute and the workers' right to withdraw their services and bring pressure on the bargaining process. I would enjoy hearing the Hon. Member's comments on this.

Does he think that it is progressive labour relations for management to bring in scab workers on armed, steel-plated buses with blackened windows? Is this the Government's impression of a progressive management team, is this what we want to see as a model for the rest of Canada? Could he outline where this is used in other jurisdictions?