

When these men were taken back they were put on their old jobs. Those who had been sorting mail, were put back at sorting; those who had delivered mail, were put back on delivering; those who had been supervisors, were put back at supervising, and those who had been clerks, or had served in capacities requiring experience, were put back in those positions as vacancies occurred. But when these men were taken back they were paid as postal helpers, the lowest grade known to the post office, and some of them are still being paid as postal helpers. The Dominion government has taken advantage of their training, of their experience, and of their services in the respective classes to which they belong, and yet has only paid them as postal helpers. There is one case in the city of Winnipeg of an ex-striker holding a position as supervisor, and having under him four or five men who were not strikers. The four or five men under him were receiving the maximum salary while the supervisor, being an ex-striker, was receiving the salary of a postal helper.

I would not approve of this vote if it justified the strike in any way. I think there has been a good deal of nonsense spoken with regard to the strike. I think at this time we can view the strike and what happened very calmly and dispassionately. It has not been suggested that this item involves a justification of the strike; it does no such thing. If it involved a justification of the strike I would not have approved of it. The men who have been taken back have freely admitted that they were badly advised in going out on strike, and they have undertaken that there will be no repetition of the occurrence in so far as they themselves are concerned. This proposal does not involve the reinstatement of striking employees; it does not involve the restoration of seniority right. It is necessary to keep faith with the men who took the places of the strikers, and no man who is now in the Winnipeg post office or in any of the post offices affected by this vote is going to lose any rights of seniority. He will not be prejudiced in any way, and he will not lose the position he occupies. While it is necessary to keep faith with the men who occupied the places of the ex-strikers, it is also necessary that this committee and the parliament of Canada should recognize the great principle that services should be paid for according to their value. That is all that is involved in this vote, namely, that we should pay these men in accordance with the services which they rendered to the post office. Nothing else is involved in this vote except the

preservation and application of that great principle and those who have been advocating that this be done, have done so with a desire to see applied to these men the elementary principles of justice of which the leader of the opposition spoke this afternoon. This is not a justification for the strike.

Mr. MANION: It is a palliation.

Mr. THORSON: It is not an attempt to reinstate the rights of seniority that were forfeited and lost through going out on strike. The sole and only purpose of this vote is to pay the striking employees of the post office who are back again in the public service in accordance with the value of the services which they were rendering. It is not giving them something to which they are not entitled. They have already earned what it is now proposed to pay them. There is a great principle involved. Since the Dominion government has taken these men back into the government service, the Dominion government should pay them in accordance with the value of the services rendered. I could quite well understand the position that might be taken that the Dominion government should never take these men back. That would be a perfectly understandable position to take and there would be some justification for it. But once having taken these men back into the public service, and having used their services, the Dominion government should follow the example of other employers and pay these men according to the value of their services.

Mr. BENNETT: It perhaps will clarify and simplify the discussion to ask: Are they not being paid according to the terms of the contract of their employment when they went back?

Mr. THORSON: I am glad the leader of the opposition has asked that question. It is a pertinent question to ask. But let me answer it by asking him another question. Many of these men had been in the service of the Post Office Department for ten or fifteen years; they were not fitted or qualified for other kinds of work; there was an odium attached in the city of Winnipeg to all ex-strikers, and they found it difficult to get employment. I ask the leader of the opposition whether it was a fair offer to these men to say to them: We will take advantage of your services; we will take advantage of the fact that you have been for many years in