

Post Office

why is there not such a suggestion made to the workers? Of course, if some attempt is to be made to qualify the effect, why is it not suggested that workers with a minimum of two years or five years seniority be given the security they request. It seems to me this would be the type of positive proposal the government could make if it wanted to deal meaningfully with the matter of job security. No such offer, however, has been made, and I believe the postal workers are absolutely right when they suggest the government is not seriously negotiating on the question of job security.

• (6:50 p.m.)

Let us look at the other so-called reason brought forward by the President of the Treasury Board. He trotted out statistics. He charted a list of specific wage increases, claiming of course by implication that the list of figures he was giving the House represented a very substantial increase in wages for the workers involved. What he did not tell the House, of course, is that when one analyses the figures he presented they really amount to the 5-5-5 percentage formula that has already been suggested. In other words, it is not even up to the guideline proposal of 6 per cent. It is 1 per cent below it. It is not up to the proposal of Judge Lippé, but is 1.1 per cent below it. So, it is well within the guidelines and well below any acceptable standard I would suggest for workers in the postal service. In other words, the President of the Treasury Board in his wonderful contribution to this debate in the name of reason has really trotted out the old arguments and has provided no new information. In fact, he is misleading the House about what actually has been happening.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Broadbent: That is the case. You can get up and refute what I say with facts later if you like. I suggest he not only has misled the House with what he presented to us but has revealed the kind of attitude with which obviously the workers in the postal service had to deal. It is an attitude which assumes that some kind of a national guideline of 6 per cent has been established, and that any reasonable man in any part of the government service, or indeed in private enterprise, should accept it. But as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) pointed out the government has not at any time in this debate, or at any other time, attempted to

[Mr. Broadbent.]

present a rational economic justification for the 6 per cent approach. I say to the President of the Treasury Board that there are women workers in my community who are receiving \$1.30 an hour now. They are on strike and are being offered 2 per cent by their wonderful employer. I would suggest to him that 6 per cent would not be adequate for these workers and that something like at least 15 per cent might be justifiable.

If the government is to bring in any kind of guidelines, it makes no economic sense whatever, if any degree of equity is to be considered, to impose a uniform standard upon workers across this country. To conclude my remarks, I should like to return to the point raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). It would seem to me to be quite clear now, especially following the observations of the President of the Treasury Board, that the government is using the postal workers as an example for all workers in Canada, public or private, and is imposing the 6 per cent standard on them. I say it is about time the government brought before the country, either in this House or in some other forum, serious economic reasons for its program in an effort to justify the 6 per cent guidelines. It should go beyond its rhetoric of reasonableness. I suggest beyond that, that if we are to have any kind of guidelines as such, they must take into consideration prices and profits. We in the New Democratic Party would participate in the development of such a program in this country. We would participate if the workers in this country were involved in such an effective policy which would include prices and profits and differentiate between levels of incomes among different workers and in different sectors of the economy.

I say that the postal workers are justified in their criticism of the government's general handling of the negotiations, and are justified in their specific demand in respect of job security and wage policy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters).

Mr. Osler: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Chair has already recognized the hon. member for Timiskaming.

Mr. Osler: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the point that was brought forward by the previous speaker appears to me to be off the