

Post Office

appear to be the case. The Prime Minister saw fit to remove from the Postmaster General the responsibility for conducting the negotiations which lead to the current series of rotating shutdowns across the country.

Mr. Osler: Will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Forrestall: I do not know whether the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Osler) has anything to contribute at this time, but if he has a question I will entertain it.

Mr. Osler: If the hon. member is advocating parliamentary intervention in this labour dispute, would he suggest here and now a figure at which he would make a settlement?

Mr. Forrestall: I indicated that if the hon. member had a question, I would entertain it. Of course, I shall not entertain that suggestion at all.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Forrestall: We have more to do here this afternoon than listen to spurious comment. Of course the postal people have the right to strike. But the postal employees have bent over backwards to give an opportunity to the government to arrive at a reasonable formula for resolving the problem. Don't talk to me about the academic exercise of a 6 per cent guideline. I have had my fill of that and so has the rest of the country. We have had our fill of public apologies, of wishy-washy government statements. The last thing I expected to see in this House the day after the election in 1968 was another government of crisis to crisis, so preoccupied with its own ineptitudes that it could not find time to iron out day-to-day problems with the compassion and understanding that the people of Canada want. We still have not got a half decent government.

Mr. McGrath: The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) does not help when he uses wrong figures.

Mr. Forrestall: The Prime Minister may not know the situation. He relied on the advice given him. I am not at all sure he is particularly interested in the factual details of the situation. I give him some credit for being aware that difficulties may evolve as time goes on if this question is not resolved. But the fact is that the Prime Minister is so vain that he does not want to see any more resignations from his government because it might reflect on his ability to choose men.

[Mr. Forrestall.]

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, is it any wonder that the Prime Minister and his colleagues from Montreal, excluding the hon. member for Westmount, run this country and do not permit very much to get out of their hands? We had a classic example this afternoon in the Postmaster General, who caused me to abandon the notes I had carefully prepared. We did not come here to hear the Postmaster General's observations. We came here to be told by the government what it is going to do about this problem and when it will bring a little compassion and understanding to the negotiations. When is that going to take place? Don't talk to me about mechanization. The problem centres around the inability of the ministry. The Prime Minister has to rely on members of his cabinet. No wonder he will change half the cabinet this summer.

• (6:00 p.m.)

An hon. Member: Which half?

Mr. Forrestall: I tell members on the back benches, including the rabbit from up the valley, that they could probably make a much greater contribution than the Postmaster General made this afternoon. We are discussing this matter in the House, where it ought to be discussed. We ought to see some evidence of some semblance of organization and reason on the part of the government. Its supporters should not be permitted to go home for the summer until the government has agreed to introduce a little compassion, not to mention honesty, logic, reason and reasonableness, into the negotiations with the postal workers of Canada.

This situation cannot continue, Mr. Speaker. I think the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) should get up this afternoon and fill that great vacuum which has been left by the remarks of the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans). His remarks this afternoon were totally irrelevant to the situation. The House should not adjourn for the summer until the situation is corrected. Perhaps the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) can display a little compassion and understanding. Perhaps he will inject himself into the debate. We should know whether the government intends to act honestly, reasonably and responsibly in this matter. The people of Canada are entitled to adequate and continuing postal service. Also, the people who provide this service are equally entitled to reasonable consideration from the minister and the government. After all, they work for the people of Canada.