

*Government Orders*

I would think that the minister and the government may want to consider a different process. It is a process that we follow with other legislation. I offer as a recommendation for all parties' consideration that some time later today we give this legislation second reading, we send it to a legislative committee and invite representatives of the union, Canada Post representatives, the minister and perhaps one or two other groups like Rural Dignity to look at the legislation and make sure that as we go through this clause by clause we are aware of the effects of that legislation.

We are not saying that we would unduly stall the legislation. We are not saying that we would speed it through. What we are saying is that there are methods of making sure that we deal with this legislation in such a way that we, as people who were elected to the House of Commons, know what we are doing.

There are some new clauses in this legislation that we are not familiar with and have not been in other back-to-work legislation.

I think it is only fair that we understand those clauses before we vote on them, that we make amendments that are reasonable and will improve the legislation.

Someone later in the day, I am sure from the government side, will get up and say: "Well we must pass this legislation or there will be a postal strike". That is a possibility, we may have a strike for one, two or three days and it is true it would inconvenience many Canadians but on the other hand we have an obligation to make sure that we are not just a rubber stamp for whatever the government proposes but that we in our role as a court actually look at what is before us and make a reasonable judgment on the merits of legislation.

My understanding is that there are other ways of preventing this strike. Even as we go through the passage of this legislation there are items out there that could be dealt with that would actually prevent a strike as we go through the various steps in order to pass this legislation. I know that the company and CUPW have basically agreed to the wage package, that there is an agreement on the salaries and on the COLA clause. Perhaps one of

the things that could be done is that we amend this legislation so that those wage increases come into effect immediately instead of waiting for 90 or 180 days when the arbitrator finally gets around to making a ruling. That is one way of showing good faith, that is one of resolving some of the issues in dispute, and it is one way of making sure there is more harmony and more peace in the post office.

Another suggestion is that we treat those people who have been disciplined in a fair manner in the same way that our court system would, in the same way that they would be treated if there were actually a collective agreement in place, and that is that they are presumed innocent and that they, too, would be expected and entitled to go to work. That is a suggestion which would help to prevent a postal strike. Another is to deal with the wage issues which have already been agreed to by both parties, make sure that those wage increases are implemented immediately and that the workers are not forced to wait because it might turn out to be three or six months prior to them receiving any pay increase. I remind people that this collection agreement is three years out of date, so those people have been waiting a long time for this pay increase.

We should make sure that those workers whom the company has decided to discipline are given a fair trial, that they are allowed to go back to work with their other employees. If the company decides at that stage that it wants to take disciplinary action then at least there is a process put into place that provides for fairness.

Those are two suggestions and we may have other suggestions as we go through the legislation. At this point, we are not willing to give immediate passage to this legislation. What we are saying is let us look at the alternatives, let us look at a referral to a legislative committee which could meet tomorrow morning, which could come back to the House later tomorrow. Let us look at those things that might prevent a postal dispute to see if we can get the company and the union to agree not to have a strike if certain clauses or certain changes are made to this legislation. Let us look at those items and let us see what can be resolved.