

policy formulated by elected representatives who are free to express the views of their electorate without being silenced.

I feel that the present government is setting a dangerous precedent in its over-use of closure. It seems that every time the government gets embarrassed or frustrated over an issue, regardless of the importance of the issue to the country and the people, we see the increasing use of closure. This is unacceptable and an alarming abuse of Parliament.

We are here to represent Canadians, and the government should respect that fact. The government should also deal with the real concerns and issues facing Canadians in a direct and fair approach.

**Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane-Superior):** Mr. Speaker, as the House grinds finally to a close until the fall, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on a few current issues. As we sit here in Ottawa even in the full bloom of summer, it is not too difficult to recite these issues. We all know them and perhaps see them a little differently. Some are distressing in varying degrees, vexing, troublesome and disturbing. Others, if we take the time and have the capacity to examine them objectively, do give us cause for some hope, even if not full-fledged rejoicing.

On balance, I think we can say that ours is a very favoured and fortunate nation, but is it not rather strange that it never seems very politic to remind our citizens that such is the case? I am not sure why. However, many people say it for themselves, especially those who have had the opportunity or the privilege to travel outside Canada. Upon returning from abroad they say, "It is good to be home; ours is a great country; we are a fortunate people." It seems as if they return to see life around them with fresh eyes.

Nevertheless, it is distressing to be in the midst of yet another postal strike. Small and medium-sized businesses are hurting, and they are hurting badly. These businesses are the economic life blood of this country and, with accounts receivable choked off and facing a serious cash flow problem, these small and medium-sized businesses are in serious trouble.

At current interest rates it is not a very attractive proposal to suggest that they take a trip across the street to visit their friendly neighbourhood banker, even if his door is wide, wide open—and it seems to be these days. I cannot confess I have ever heard them, but I have listened to hear if anybody can come up with strong, counter-arguments against the view that our banks today are the most greedy, grasping institutions in our society. Well, let that be for now; back to the Post Office.

Nearly everyone agrees that the only way to get a decent contract is by way of collective bargaining. It is not always efficient as a method, but it is usually effective. It does seem to me a pity, however, that some union leaders are so quick—so trigger happy—to deploy their ultimate weapon of strike, sometimes even before talks get under way or even before real negotiations have begun in earnest.

**Mr. Gamble:** Remove the right.

### *Summer Recess*

**Mr. Penner:** My hon. friend says "remove the right". I will come to that in a moment.

**Mr. Collette:** Go fight Joe instead.

**Mr. Penner:** I do not accept his position at all.

The costs to all concerned of deploying the ultimate weapon too quickly are terribly high and often unnecessarily so.

I am sure there is much within the Post Office which requires urgent attention. In fact, in a recent interview, Mr. Warren, the man who will head the new Canada Post Corporation, referred to some of these problems, and I would like to quote just a little from that interview. He said he is convinced that one of the fundamental problems with the Post Office is a lack of pride and job satisfaction on the part of the postal workers. Often, he said, that mood has been manifest in demands at the negotiating table for unreasonable salary increases and substantial improvements in fringe benefits. Postal workers, he said, might not be as strident or inflexible in their demands if they were happier where they worked. Mr. Warren said one of the things he is considering as part of his corporate strategy is a series of sweeping measures to improve working conditions. He said that when money becomes so centre stage, you have to ask yourself if there are not other things and whether the work environment, the safety environment and other things do not come into it.

The postal workers have the right to strike and the right to collective bargaining under law. A positive step has been taken with the appointment of a mediator. I believe we now should be able to adjourn this House in an optimistic frame of mind, optimistic that a fair and just settlement will be negotiated quickly. That is what the postal workers want, that is what the people of Canada want and that is what the Government of Canada wants.

The postal strike, high interest rates which hurt home owners and small businesses in particular, and the rate of inflation are distressing, troublesome and extremely serious issues. It is illusory, however, to lead people to believe that solutions are either simple or readily available. The British government's hard line on inflation is creating serious social unrest in that country. Great Britain today has more than its share of problems. British members of Parliament have their hands full, more than they can cope with.

● (0020)

Recently at a parliamentary Commonwealth Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, the President of the Republic spoke to the delegates quite frankly about some of the problems on his island. The hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) who is sitting opposite heard the speech. The president referred to violence in the northern part of his island and to the efforts of his government to restore peace and order. There has been looting, murder, raping, wanton destruction of property, and all that accompanies violence and disorder. President Jayewardene noted that a number of British members of Parliament had become deeply concerned about the problems in Sri Lanka. Some of them had even sided with those who were