

Post Office

collective bargaining in the ordinary sense of the term. I think those facts are completely undisputable.

Mr. Olson: Tell us what a reasonable offer is.

Mr. Stanfield: It is not for me to decide what a reasonable offer is; I am not engaged in the negotiating process.

An hon. Member: Oh, yes you are.

Mr. Olson: You are getting into it now. Tell us where we are wrong.

Mr. Stanfield: I am telling you that you are taking an arbitrary position which the President of the Treasury Board says is reasonable, although he has given us no reason to believe that it is. He has taken a position which we see being pierced all over the place. This puts the minister in a position that he has not justified.

Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): As the Leader of the Opposition has just pointed out, the President of the Treasury Board presented us with a typical Liberal view which defines reasonableness in terms of what the cabinet happens to believe at a given time. We need only wait for the President of the Treasury Board to make the equation between what the Liberal party believes, reasonableness and Godliness. I expect that in an age of prevailing agnosticism, we should forget the Godliness part.

The President of the Treasury Board claimed he was going to make a reasonable reply to emotion laden speeches from this side of the House. He claimed he was going to introduce some facts into an otherwise vacuous debate. I should like to deal very briefly with his purported facts which any reasonable man, according to him, should accept. I will deal with those and then sit down.

The President of the Treasury Board recognizes that there are two important questions involved here; the first concerns security and the second wages. Let me indicate why security is important to the postal workers. We have a man in charge of postal services in this country who has talked about the relevance and importance of introducing mechanistic and automatic devices into postal services. He talked very sensibly about these. The workers very sensibly, in turn, have also been quite concerned about the effects this might have on their jobs. Some of them quite properly have also referred to the Freedman report which this government has had before

it for five years or so, and which the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) says he supports philosophically.

Let me draw attention to the fact that this report suggests that the workers of this country have a vested interest in their jobs, as do owners and the government. A very philosophical distinction was introduced by Mr. Justice Freedman. The workers are concerned with the issue of job security and have referred to a government commission which supports their view that the government, of all employers, should be trying to do something about this issue of workers' rights and protection in their jobs. The report suggests that this government institution should lead the way in the country in bringing in progressive measures which would provide real security, worker involvement and opportunity. This government has not come up with an improvement in this respect over any which have existed, even among the most reactionary kind of enterprise in this country.

Let me be specific and refer to what the minister said a few moments ago. He said it was not the case that the postal workers were not presented with a proposal concerning job security. He told the House that, in fact, the government negotiators agreed to talk about control over the effects of technological change. The facts are, as I have been informed recently, that this is not being done or at least is not being done in any meaningful way. What the workers have been told is, on the one hand, that postal officials will agree to talk about the effects of the introduction of technological change, or at best it has been suggested that they could have a contract which would involve 90 days notice to any worker who is about to be laid off. Many private firms in this country are now willing to give up to six months notice to a worker who is going to be laid off.

Here we have a government which the Minister of Labour claims is progressive. Here we have a President of the Treasury Board who thinks that you deal meaningfully with the question of technological change by making the offer that workers will be given 90 days notice before being dismissed. I suggest that this amount is no offer at all. Of course, this could mean that workers who have held their jobs for 20 years or more could be laid off with 90 days notice. Why is not some proposal presented to the negotiators for the unions which would involve them in a much more positive way in the working out of the effect of the technological changes;