

make a contribution, not only on their own behalf but on behalf of all the people of Canada.

• (5:50 p.m.)

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in this emergency debate with feelings of ambivalence and trepidation. We are going home for the summer recess perhaps a little later than we expected this evening. We are doing so in face of what I believe has come to be a very grave national situation. For the last 25 minutes we have listened to the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) address himself to that problem which Your Honour held serious enough to adjourn the normal proceedings of the House in order to permit it to be debated. What have we heard? We have heard a minister publicly announce that he has withdrawn—as he is doing from the chamber now—I am glad to see him come back and sit down, because before he goes I want to say to him—

An hon. Member: Say something sensible.

Mr. Forrestall: I will say it behind his back, then, and he can read it in the record. He has lectured us like an associate professor lecturing first-year political science students, adopting as a model the difficulties of a particular department, with the lecturer describing the ineptitude, inadequacy and total rejection of acceptance of responsibility, outlining the dangers that can arise in such a situation as that which we are facing. Nobody objects to the Postmaster General modernizing and updating the Post Office—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Forrestall: Let the rabbits over there be quiet. Nobody in Canada wants an outdated postal system, least of all we in the opposition. We want to see a modernized, updated, or to use the minister's term, mechanized department. That is not what we are here for today, Mr. Speaker. That is not what is bothering us now. We are here to discuss why we have a situation such as exists, what has caused it, and why we have a government that will not deal with the postal workers with some compassion, understanding and feeling. Why do we have this rigidity of view? Why do we have a Postmaster General who presumed to tell us that the Post Office needs modernizing? The hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) told us that ten years ago. We do not need the Postmaster General to tell us it today.

Post Office

We are discussing this matter at five minutes to six o'clock on a Friday evening. The Postmaster General knows we will be out of here tomorrow, but I am rapidly coming to the conclusion that that would be a mistake. It is no wonder that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), in his academic arrogance, has seen fit to take the responsibility for the negotiating process out of the hands of the Postmaster General and place it in the hands of the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury). However, I am not sure that any minister who permitted the situation of the days of horses on the payroll, and continued to permit the situation with respect to the overhaul of the *Bonaventure*, is the man we want to hold negotiations with the postal workers. But I say it is better that he do it rather than the Postmaster General. It is time that the Postmaster General resigned.

How long is it since the Prime Minister went to the President of the Treasury Board and said, "Bail us out. For God's sake, bail us out of the difficulties we are in"?

Mr. Perrault: Tell us what you would do.

Mr. Forrestall: We would have settled it a little while ago.

An hon. Member: On what basis?

Mr. Forrestall: All you have done for the last six months is sit on your rear and make noises.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) has the floor. With all these interruptions it is difficult for the Chair to follow his speech.

An hon. Member: What speech?

Mr. Forrestall: I wish we could get rid of the rabbits in this warren so that I could get on with my remarks. The matter which keeps us here this afternoon, and which should bring us back tomorrow, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday until this matter is resolved, is the rights of the postal workers, the rights of the people of Canada, and the obligation of the Postmaster General and the Prime Minister to arrive at an honourable settlement—and soon, not next month.

Does the price of stability in Canada have to be unemployment? The President of the Treasury Board has told us that. I hope he is more often aware of what he says than would