

Adjournment Debate

building measures. The texts concerning economic, scientific, technological and environmental co-operation have begun to be discussed at meetings this autumn of the Economic Commission for Europe. These texts, as well as those concerning co-operation in humanitarian and other fields, are also being reviewed at UNESCO headquarters in Paris with a view to accelerating implementation. In a slightly different application of the text, the formulation on family reunification allowed agreement to be reached between Canada and the German Democratic Republic on the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Officials in the Department of External Affairs and those from other departments are reviewing the implications for Canadian policy and practice of the terms of the Final Act in the various fields that it covers.

As to follow-up, Canada and its allies are considering methods for monitoring CSCE implementation with the objective of assuring participating states' maximum compliance with the provisions of the Final Act. We recognize, however, that in some areas a period of preparation and analysis is required before implementation can begin and participating states, including Canada, will require several additional months of study before priorities can be established and follow-up measures developed.

Monitoring the implementation of CSCE commitments will assist us in our preparation for the Belgrade review conference in 1977. Consequently, at Belgrade we should be able to evaluate with confidence the degree of adherence to the agreed provisions of the Final Act by the participating states and we will then be in a position to draw the appropriate conclusions, whatever they may be, regarding the success of the CSCE.

POST OFFICE—MAINTENANCE OF RIGHT OF CASUAL
EMPLOYEES NOT TO JOIN UNION

Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, my question tonight pertains to the Post Office. I am pleased to see that the reply to my question will be given by my colleague the hon. member for Fort William (Mr. McRae), the Parliamentary Secretary to the Postmaster General. The reason I say this is that my late grandfather, J.W. Alkenbrack, who many years ago was postmaster at Flinton, Ontario, later moved to Fort William, and some members of our family still live there on Francis Street, in what is now the new united city of Thunder Bay.

In the midst of the mail strike, which I hope has just permanently terminated, I rose in the House, on Tuesday, November 4, and on Friday, November 14, and asked the following questions, recorded in *Hansard* at page 8834 and 9062 respectively. My November 4 question was:

My supplementary is to the Postmaster General. Did the minister, in his deliberations with the union, maintain the freedom of Canadian citizens to accept casual employment without joining a union?

The Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) replied:

I should like to be very frank with the hon. member on this issue but I think I shall have to ask him to show some patience because, traditionally, terms or conditions affecting a collective agreement arrived at through negotiation are the prerogative of the union to announce to its

[Mr. McRae.]

membership at the time of ratification and I would not wish in any way unintentionally to jeopardize or prejudice this undoubted right of unions.

● (2210)

Again I asked on December 4 a supplementary question as follows:

Would the Postmaster General see that the rights of casual non-union employees are maintained in this dispute?

The minister replied:

Mr. Speaker, this is a little different question concerning casuals who are not members of the union. Casuals were always used to provide service when there was a high volume of mail. This right has not been eroded. Management has maintained that particular right, even though it has spelled out certain situations that limit the use of casuals.

The minister then went on to answer another question. I hope we can be assured that the right of these casuals to work under the prerogative of the postmaster in each post office has been maintained.

I did not wish to jeopardize or prejudice the outcome of the negotiations. My concern in this whole matter is that the right of casual employees be maintained in order that they can work in any post office that needs casual help, without having to join a union. That has been the historic right of citizens in all parts of Canada, and in busy periods, especially at Christmas time, casuals are brought in and hired. The prerogative in this regard rests with management and with every postmaster in Canada. His is the decision, and his alone, as to how many casuals he needs and which ones he will hire. That is why this evening, now that the strike is over, I should like the Canadian people to be assured that the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) in his deliberations with these unions has maintained that right. This is what prompted me to ask the questions on the two previous dates I mentioned.

I asked these questions because of the personal rights of the people involved. I have been quite concerned about this because one of the leaders of the union has treated the Canadian public very shabbily and in a very cavalier manner when he said in the heat of attempted negotiations, "To hell with the public." I caution parliament and the Canadian people here tonight not to forget this remark.

Mr. Prud'homme: We won't.

Mr. Alkenbrack: I ask that because the actions and manner of certain union leaders are detrimental to the maintenance of the fabric of our system, and even to our very society itself. No Canadian, no matter what section of our society he moves in, can make such a statement and be judged unaccountable, and get away with complete impunity.

Mr. Prud'homme: Right on.

Mr. Alkenbrack: I congratulate the Postmaster General, who is not here this evening but is unavoidably absent, on his good work throughout the difficult times of this strike. I know that he, in his deliberations with the union leaders, had to withhold certain particulars of settlement from the public, but now that the strike is over this would be a good time to report those particulars to the House. He can do so now without jeopardy to any of the parties involved. In