

time. The advent of private courier service, including the attempts of the United Postal Service from the United States to come to Canada, and also the availability of electronic communications technology, all made it necessary for the postal workers to reappraise their militant position, and as I have indicated, responsible members of CUPW were expressing themselves publicly and have done so since that time in even stronger terms. I would say—and I think I can say it without fear of contradiction—that leaders such as Joe Davidson, who says that the public can go to hell, no longer carry the judgment of the great majority of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers with respect to post office matters. This was evident in the situation that developed in Toronto just before Christmas last year when it appeared there would be another pre-Christmas strike. Wiser sentiments prevailed and wiser judgments were listened to by the vast majority of the workers at this very critically important post office centre, and that strike was avoided.

● (2012)

Unfortunately, as has been said earlier during this debate, to bring legislation such as we are facing precipitously into the House of Commons on the eve of the dissolution of this House will do nothing to help this encouraging development within labour that has been emerging over recent years. I know that the government is attempting to create a law and order image, but the public of Canada can detect hypocrisy. The public was fooled during the last election by the hypocritical stand of the government in respect of wage and price controls. The hon. member who was then the leader of our party, the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield), said in a very forthright and honest manner that what Canada needed was restraint because public expenditure was out of control. That hon. member went to the people with a program of wage and price restraint that was ridiculed by the Liberal party from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) down, only to have that group reverse itself within a year. I do not think the public is going to be confused or fooled by the cynical turn-about-face in respect of its lackadaisical and delinquent attitude in failing to come to grips with the problem of labour management relations in the public service.

Perhaps I should read from an interesting *ComTeam Bulletin* that came to my attention. The *ComTeam Bulletin* represents an attempt by post office management to establish dialogue between labour and management in the Post Office Department. This bulletin was issued on February 8, 1978 under the heading "The Right to Strike in the Public Service". It states in part:

According to Prime Minister Trudeau, the right to strike isn't the problem. In a letter to a major mailing organization Mr. Trudeau said that stifling the worst symptom of the ailment is not a cure.

That is what we are trying to do tonight. The bulletin goes on to state:

He suggests that we must deal with the perceptions that labour and management have of themselves as adversaries. Mr. Trudeau sees the basic challenge as one of securing from labour and management a sense of shared responsibility for making sure the enterprise survives.

### Postal Service

Mr. Trudeau points out that, while cynics may scorn this approach in favour of a hard line, experience has proven that conflict between labour and management is neither inherent nor inevitable. Mr. Trudeau said, "Consider the more harmonious relationships that exist in some other countries, for instance, West Germany. And in our Post Office, the letter carriers union is participating with management in a problem-solving program, which has succeeded in defusing some potentially explosive grievances."

Mr. Trudeau closed by insisting that his government will pursue its efforts to get all participants in collective bargaining in the public service to make the process work so that increased regulation doesn't become necessary.

The Prime Minister has reversed himself completely since that statement was made and reported in the *ComTeam Bulletin*.

While it is necessary to go along with this arbitrary piece of legislation, it will do nothing to solve the long standing problems that were recognized ten years ago by the then postmaster general, the hon. Eric Kierans. An election is the only process that will resolve the problem, because it will provide the opposition, when it goes to the other side of the House, with an opportunity to consider the setting up of a Crown or public corporation, which we have been advocating for a number of years and which was advocated by Mr. Kierans those many years ago. This has also been suggested by a Treasury Board study and other documents well known to members of this House. It will then be possible to get management, postal workers and postal users working together on a management committee to resolve problems as they arise.

This is another recommendation we have been making repeatedly, and to which the Prime Minister refers in respect of the harmonious labour relations in West Germany. It will be possible to provide training for shop stewards and supervisors. This will provide them with the knowledge of industrial relations needed when dealing with sensitive people issues such as those at the heart of the present confrontation in the post office. Finally, it will provide an opportunity to establish a public interest disputes commission to help defuse explosive issues.

I have been in touch with members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers today in an attempt to get their reaction to this arbitrary piece of legislation. The majority group I referred to briefly in my remarks tonight has assured me it will obey the law provided the workers have the protection of the present contract until such time as a new contract is agreed to. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) has indicated he will be introducing an amendment to this effect before this legislation is approved. I certainly urge that he proceed in that direction. We will support him reluctantly, realizing it is stop gap and temporary, believing that the election will ultimately resolve the problem.

### [Translation]

**Mr. Charles-Eugène Dionne (Kamouraska):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on this new bill. This is not the first time that happens here in the House of Commons, but here we are again discussing a measure which shows that the labour legislation is far from being geared to present needs. I have already said that many laws are drafted and passed, mostly labour laws, much more out of a sense of fear of what