

*Postal Service Policies*

justified. But when their party governed the country, what did they do to establish on a sound basis everything related to the conditions of the employees of the Post Office and Communications Department and to improve the mail services which must be provided to the Canadian people? They provide no solution and I certainly do not intend to copy them. On the contrary, I shall supply the solution to the thorny problem facing both the government and the Canadian people at large.

This morning, I read an editorial from the Quebec television station concerning strikes, especially in the post office, and I quote:

Methods for consultation need to be reappraised.

On Saturday and Sunday, May 16 and 17, 1970.

A strike vote is an extremely important occurrence—

One was taken recently among the postal unions.

—not only for the workers involved and their employers but also for the public at large, it being sometimes severely affected by a prolonged work stoppage.

● (2:20 p.m.)

What does this mean? A strike and finally, it is the people who suffer from it; the strikers are always the most hard hit, never the union leaders who are still being paid during a strike. I never saw any of them paying for the milk required for a family of eight or ten, or helping a family in any way.

Those labour leaders, as are found in Montreal and elsewhere in Canada, instead of always handing out boxing gloves in order to pit the workers against the employers, and the employers against the workers, should act as conciliators and thus make it possible for them to enter into a dialogue. But union leaders are not interested in that. It seems that they are afraid of losing their jobs. This is why the situation deteriorates both in the postal service and in other services.

What we are now concerned about is the situation prevailing in the Post Office Department. I go on with the quotation:

It is clear therefore that such action should be taken after due consideration—

—that is, a strike vote—

—by those concerned and in a context that enables them to express their opinion freely.

We were present at strike votes where a man opposed to the strike was termed a scab, a blackleg, a rat, and what not! Then, those

[Mr. Caouette.]

men become afraid and do not even show up at the poll. I could give as an example a recent strike vote taken in the postal service. Out of 27,000 workers, 5,000 abstained from voting; 22,000 did vote; out of these 22,000, 15,000 voted for the strike and 7,000 against; 5,000 did not vote at all. And they say on TV that 74 per cent of postal workers want to strike. It is not true, because not 60 per cent of them want it. And I challenge the Montreal union leaders to tell me that one single mother in Montreal is for a postal strike, even if she is the mother of a postal worker.

They don't want to strike. It is the union leaders who create a strike atmosphere. They have been preparing that strike three weeks to a month in advance in Montreal. And we hear them say: We urge our members to vote hands down in favour of the strike. What will the strike settle? It is depriving the population of essential services and will bring about another increase in postal rates, to be paid by whom? By the Canadian taxpayer. Union leaders have not grasped that yet. Nor have Canadian newspapers.

The high flown statements of the trouble-mongers make the headlines. But when solutions are put forward, the newspapers publish them in the obituary column.

Mr. Speaker, we can't go on letting those people take us for a ride indefinitely. I will point out to my colleagues that I am entirely in favour of unions, provided their members have the right to speak up, reveal their innermost thoughts, say they are men and not rags, not sheepish followers who are told to place bombs, blow up trucks, break the windshields of cars or vans. But the people should be free to express themselves and should be respected as human beings, instead of being treated like animals, or being ordered around and sent packing at every opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I shall go on with the quotation:

—the current methods of consulting organized labour are too much questioned for them not to be thoroughly reviewed by the proper authority, in this case the new Minister of Labour, Mr. Pierre Laporte—

—as far as the province of Quebec is concerned.

Let us first consider the case of the information received by the workers on the negotiations and their results. It is conveyed to the union people in an atmosphere that is not always conducive to sound and responsible thinking.

This is a fact. We only have to listen to Michel Chartrand when he talks to the Montreal construction workers to realize in what