

*Postal Services Continuation Act, 1987*

against the letter carriers but was unsuccessful. It thought it could win by provoking a national postal strike, which quite frankly the Government did provoke because it was only after this legislation was tabled that the rotating strikes and lock-outs escalated into a national strike. It has to accept the responsibility for that. But it will not win this one either. There is not the hue and cry out there. People see through the activities of the Government. They know what it is up to and, just as in everything else, they will not support the Government now, and certainly not at the next election.

**Mr. Murphy:** I wish to thank the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan (Mr. Angus) for his very fine speech on this issue. I know that in the past he has been involved in back-to-work legislation, especially in opposing the back-to-work legislation of the railway workers. I wonder if the Hon. Member would spend a few minutes explaining why this legislation is much worse and more pro-management in the manner it is structured than other back-to-work legislation that has come through the House of Commons.

**Mr. Angus:** I thank the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy) for his question, and I wish to publicly thank him for the work that he has done in regard to this legislation and the other back-to-work Bills that we have seen from the Government; we have probably seen more from this Government than previous administrations over the years.

As one looks through these Bills, one begins to pick up the pattern and understand how this Bill relates to the over-all plan of the Government, and the over-all plan of Canada Post, which are one and the same. We have heard in the House that Canada Post refused to do anything until the Cabinet adopted its business plan. The business plan was predicated on the whole concept of franchising out, of carving out components of the Post Office and turning them over to the private sector.

The Foisy report was incorporated into this legislation. It came down clearly on the side of Canada Post with regard to franchising, in spite of a remarkable willingness by CUPW to modify its position and say yes to franchise outlets in areas where there are no services. CUPW wishes to see a strong Post Office because it is important to their members. With a strong Post Office there is better job security, workers get a fair share of the revenue, and there are opportunities for advancement.

I do not know if you have ever gone to a sorting plant, Mr. Speaker. I have, and have seen those areas where people are stuck in front of pigeon-holes sorting the mail day after day, or night after night. I think they do an incredible job, I really do. But it is a job that eventually creates problems for them. It is tedious, mundane, and repetitive. Consequently, there are two realities. We have to reward them for that repetition and the mundane aspect. I do not mean to demean it, because it is an important job. But to keep people in that job we must pay them a decent rate of pay. We must also give them an opportunity to move out. I have seen press reports, and I know a number of people in the Post Office, so I know what those day jobs at the wicket counters mean to them. It means a sane

life-style. It probably means that the marriage will survive. If a person works from twelve to eight five days a week for six or seven years, and his or her spouse is working an eight to four shift, something has to give. This hope for a move allows some stability. It is almost like a carrot out there to give the person something to look forward to. I think the media have done a very good job of portraying the importance of the 4,400 wicket jobs.

• (1150)

If we allow the Government to franchise out that aspect, to eliminate the front line or the human face to human face contact, and turn it over to minimum wage employees who come and go, we lose something in the over-all system.

I think the Bill is weighted much more in favour of management than was the railway legislation or the longshoremen's legislation. The Government must give further consideration to the kinds of changes we have been suggesting.

We recognize that a Bill will pass this House which will force men and women back to work. However, let us make it a fair Bill. Let us not give Canada Post the option of when it has to bring back its workers. Let us make sure that the rule applies to management as it does to the workers. Let us not have unfairness. Let us remove the penalty clause which is clearly aimed more at the union than at management.

Will the President of Canada Post be turfed out of his job? If he violates the law, yes, but I somehow suspect that the Government would find another Crown corporation to put him in, as opposed to Jean-Claude Parrot who cannot go to another union; he is a postal worker.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, in view of my colleague's comments on the penalty clause, particularly the penalty which provides for the prohibition of a union officer belonging to a union for five years, I would like to ask him his view on it in terms of constitutionality. Is there anything at all in the legislation and in what the Government has said about equivalent penalties for everybody from the president down to the most junior foreman of Canada Post who fails to recall employees immediately upon passage of the legislation?

**Mr. Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) for his question.

Those people who are familiar with legislation will know that Bills contain marginal notes on the left-hand column which explain each clause. Clause 11(1) has the marginal note "Additional punishment—union" and Clause 11(2) has "Additional punishment—employer". The wording of the subclauses clearly indicates that they are not balanced. I have seen press reports that indicate that very knowledgeable people in the civil rights field feel that this penalty is in conflict with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I guess one would only know that if the law is passed, if somebody violates the law and is found guilty of violating it, and a challenge is taken to the