

Post Office

being followed, then there is some criterion upon which the government can rely. I must say that it seemed to me the President of the Treasury Board spoke with great confidence, if I may say so—I do not wish to be personal in this regard—about his wisdom and objectivity.

Mr. Drury: It is certainly justified.

Mr. Stanfield: He says that it is justified, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Baldwin: He was laughing when he said that, too.

Mr. Stanfield: I want to make the point that all there is is his own personal judgment, and the judgment of those associated with him as to whether he is being reasonable. The vehemence with which he attacked, not his opponents, but the union, and the vehemence with which he attacked their motives makes his own objectivity a little suspect, as far as I am concerned, and I am putting it very mildly when I say that.

I do not want to take too much of the time of the House, but the position is this: The government is taking a fixed position which it has convinced itself is reasonable, and it refuses to go beyond that. It takes the position that anybody who suggests that it should go beyond that is being completely unreasonable. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, there is surely no longer any collective bargaining in the ordinary sense of the term. If the government likes, it can blame the post office employees for being unreasonable. It can blame the post office employees for refusing to accept what the government is proposing. But the President of the Treasury Board is caught on the horns of a dilemma. He has had to concede, as he conceded in response to my question, that the government is not prepared to exceed the 6 per cent guideline. I simply say to the President of the Treasury Board, and to the other members of the government, that if this is to be the guideline for the whole country they should see that it is followed.

The minister produced nothing in the way of information this afternoon that was at all convincing with regard to objectivity. There may be stubbornness on both sides, but we have had a pretty good display of stubbornness and sanctimoniousness here this afternoon.

● (6:40 p.m.)

Mr. Drury: I wonder whether the hon. gentleman would permit a question?

[Mr. Stanfield.]

Mr. Stanfield: Yes.

Mr. Drury: The suggestion was made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) that the government was wrong in insisting that the offer it made was reasonable and insisting on reasonableness. He apparently does not share the view that the offer made by the government is a reasonable one, and feels that by sticking to it and assuming it is reasonable, the government is behaving less than wisely. I am not sure that he wants us to be unreasonable and go beyond what we consider to be reasonable. I ask him then, if the government offer is not reasonable, what would be a reasonable offer? Given the fact that before the proposed increases the current wages of postal workers exceeded the average of hourly earnings and hourly rates in Canadian industry, what would be a reasonable offer if the offer made by the government is not reasonable? The hon. gentleman tells me that what I have described as reasonable is not so.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, let me say first of all that if the hon. minister wants me to settle a dispute, he better move out or move over. Let me say secondly, that the minister himself said a little earlier that one ought to be a little careful about making comparisons. He has given no indication at all this afternoon as to why it is reasonable to compare the wages being discussed with a Canadian average. There has been absolutely nothing said by the minister that would indicate this is a reasonable comparison. This is a comparison that the minister and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) have been flinging around. They themselves are always careful to say that one should always exercise some care with regard to what one is comparing. The minister simply said that the postal wages exceed the average wage, but what reason have I or has anyone else to believe that this is a reasonable comparison?

Mr. Olson: You looked into it far enough to call it unreasonable.

Mr. Stanfield: What I said, quite simply was that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) is taking the position that he is infinitely reasonable and the other fellows are infinitely unreasonable. Don't bother shaking your head, I listened to the minister tell us how reasonable he is. I am simply saying that it is clear the government is adhering to the guideline policy and, therefore, there is not