

Actually, the first initiative to achieve what the bill purports to do came ten years ago from the then postmaster general. I refer to Mr. Eric Kierans, who departed in disgust from the government because he could not get anywhere in his attempts to make rhyme or reason in the Post Office situation.

● (1652)

Just to show that I am not expressing a partisan bias in this regard I will quote from the excellent article covering the Post Office problem written by Mark Nichols in the *Maclean's* magazine of July 11 of last year. It appeared under the title of "Dissatisfaction Guaranteed", and it reads:

The cure suggested by *Canada Post '75* might be to cut the Post Office loose from Ottawa's close embrace and turn it into a Crown corporation that would be able to function, like any other business, on a profit and loss basis—and without constant bureaucratic intrusions. Eric Kierans, during his stint as Postmaster General between 1968-1970 championed the idea—he told Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau that "if you don't make the Post Office a Crown corporation nothing is ever going to change"—and came closest to bringing it about. He successfully pushed the principle through cabinet, and, by the fall of 1970, a bill was ready to be tabled in parliament. At the last minute, Trudeau backed off, on the grounds that once the bill was tabled, no other legislation would have passed through the Commons during the session. Since then, the idea has been resurrected periodically.

I spoke on this subject as recently as last Thursday in the House and I pointed out that Treasury Board was very concerned about the problem because the report, known as *Canada Post '75*, which was produced by members of the Treasury Board and officials of the Post Office, indicated in one of its recommendations that there must be a further study in this regard if the difficulty were going to be resolved. The Postmaster General (Mr. Lamontagne), who is not with us this afternoon—he was here for a while, but perhaps he does not want to get involved in the discussion today—said that it was not possible to make that report available to other members of parliament because it would be embarrassing to members of the Post Office in that it dealt with internal matters. The document has been leaked, of course, and has been widely circulated since that time. Those of us who have had a chance to read it consider it a searing indictment of management within the Post Office Department.

Remarkably enough, to show that what we are doing here this afternoon is more a political gesture than anything else, a document has been circulated which, I think at this stage of delicate and critical contract negotiations, should be regarded as being in the same category as that in which the department places *Canada Post '75*, because the document which was circulated, dated April 10, 1978, is the preliminary submission of the employer to the negotiations that are going on now with respect to the dispute with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. This document, of course, is a searing indictment of the labour side of the conflict, and it is significant that while the government refused to table the indictment of management, it is quite happy to release, while the negotiations are going on, a searing indictment of labour.

Obviously there is not much desire to bring about a reconciliation of the alienation and confrontation that have brought us to the impasse where it becomes necessary for the govern-

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ment to rush through parliament, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said, a specific item dealing with a particular area of the problems of labour-management relations in the Public Service; problems which require broad consideration. We had the recommendations of the joint committee which studied the Finkelman report. They have been in the hands of the government for two years and nothing has transpired. As a result, there has been a continuing deterioration in relations between the government and its employees.

As I have already indicated here today, I will not prolong the debate, but I think it should be pointed out that the Canadian Union of Postal Workers is, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre pointed out, a militant union. That is true so far as some of the top leadership is concerned, but there is also a growing movement in CUPW towards a more moderate posture with respect to labour-management relations, realizing that unless there is a reconciliation of the confrontation and polarization which exist at present between management and labour, there will be a complete breakdown in the Post Office service, which is of course essential to the economic well-being of Canada as well as to national unity. This emerged incidentally, during the great crisis to which reference has been made, that is, the 42-day strike in 1975, just before Christmas.

I was involved in the discussions in the early part of the negotiations, and hon. members might recall that just as they reached a critical stage I had to retire from the scene for hospitalization. But before that happened, I sent a letter to the leadership of CUPW which indicated that it was essential for the well-being of Canada, and also in the interests of resolving the growing crisis in labour-management relations, that a strike be avoided at the time. Shortly thereafter my office received a call from the then president of CUPW, the well known Joe Davidson, who asked to speak to me. When he was informed that I was not available, that I was in hospital, he asked, "What is his trouble, is he sick in the head?" That represents the militant side of the postal union.

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## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard)—Health and Welfare—Establishment of geriatric chairs in medical schools; the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Foster)—Health—Availability of saccharin; the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon)—National Defence—Government policy on acceptance of neutron bomb.