

Post Office Act

spent whole days putting questions to the Postmaster General—who was not the present minister—about the settlement of the strike while the postal workers were asking for rather high salary increases. The Conservatives were saying: Settle the strike, grant salary increases. The Conservatives knew then that salary increases would lead us inevitably to Bill No. C-116 now under consideration.

● (9:50 p.m.)

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

The member for Témiscamingue should tell us when and what members of the Conservative party urged the government to grant increases to postal workers. That is not what we said. We told the government that it had to intervene and settle the postal strike as soon as possible, for the good of the people. Nothing was said about salaries. We said that the government had to develop a salary policy.

When the member for Témiscamingue tells us that all Conservatives—

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Charlevoix is in fine fettle tonight. That is exactly what I said a while ago. The Conservatives badgered the government with questions, to settle the strike as quickly as possible when the only way to bring it to an end was to agree with the salary increases. This the member for Charlevoix is well aware of. Only, I would like to know why, when the Conservatives were in power, they did not then solve the postal problem? What about the way Canadian postal employees were treated?

The Conservatives were in power from 1957 to 1962, that is five years, and we had strikes at that time. There was unrest amongst postal employees throughout Canada—

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): No strikes.

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, no strikes. There was a strike as soon as the Conservatives came to the end of their mandate, and there was unrest amongst them at that time. What did the Conservatives suggest to the government to solve the last conflict? Absolutely nothing. But today they are willing to say: We are against increases.

It is obvious that salary increases granted at that time are part of the present costs of
[Mr. Caouette.]

the Post Office Department. We know that, and the minister is right on this point. However, that does not mean, for example, that the Canadian people are able to pay more in taxes than they do now, and that is why we are always saying that we should balance the budget not according to the taxes we collect, but according to the various commodities we are able to produce in Canada, according to the number of services we can provide, and by means of new credit. The Postmaster General is not considering that possibility. Indeed, he told us this afternoon: The only means at our disposal to increase our revenue is to ask the taxpayers for more money. That is the only way we can operate and raise the salaries of Post Office employees.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot accept such a reply from a responsible minister of a federal government which claims to be sovereign. A sovereign government does not grovel before those who control the economic blood of a nation. If you are sovereign, you manage to control your own economic blood, and this is what the Créditistes ask for. We are not surprised at the protests that came from Canadian and Quebec newspapers. We are not surprised to see the Liberals rooted to the spot. We are not surprised to—

Mr. Cyr: Would the hon. member allow me a question?

Mr. Caouette: Certainly.

Mr. Cyr: Does he also take the defence of the owner of the *Vers Demain* newspaper?

Mr. Caouette: The hon. member's question shows beyond doubt, Mr. Speaker, how much intelligence is to be found between his two ears. Never mind. If he were a reader of *Vers Demain*, he would have shown perhaps more shrewdness in his questioning.

Mr. Speaker, I see that the newspaper *Vers Demain* is not even published in my constituency. In fact, it was in a nice Liberal constituency that the Blessed Virgin was recently supposed to appear, that is in Saint-Bruno. She probably did not appear, because the constituency was too Liberal.

Some hon. Members: Ha, ha.

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, in the Montreal area, there is not a single member who is not