

Post Office

and as making the Post Office a more attractive place for new people, obviously he cannot impose it. That is a matter for the unions themselves. If they are unwilling to, or if they remember the days when it took 15 years of night work in a post office to qualify for day work, that is their problem. But approximately 50 of the 282 recommendations have not been implemented and, as I said, 238 have been implemented in whole or in part. Since that time the government and the Post Office have invested tremendous amounts of money, and I am willing to invest as much more as I possibly can, in the human capital that is in the Post Office that has been neglected for so long by Liberal and Tory governments of the past. There is now consultation, and there will be consultation before major moves are made in the Post Office.

The purpose of putting in mechanization is not to eliminate jobs, and I repeat here that it will not. If there are any lay-offs this year in the Post Office, they will be due to the decline in demand created by the present situation and by nothing else. Unfortunately, it means that those who have newly entered the Post Office, the last in, will be the first out, the first to be laid aside. But mechanization will not lead to any lack of job security. It is meant to meet problems, and the problems are those of performing the same tasks in exactly the same way as they were performed under the Tories or the way they were performed two generations ago. Mechanization is designed to make more complex work easier, to eliminate drudgery and routine, not to eliminate people. As I have said, people will not be eliminated for these reasons.

I have described what the future is with regard to mechanization—the introduction of new and easier methods. I have looked at the production. I appreciate the fact that an inside worker does not handle as many pieces as he did before. I can understand this because I am not anti-labour, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North would have the House believe. If nothing is changed in doing things in this age when everything else is changed in the world and a man is sorting and turning over letters in exactly the same way, it becomes more boring and tiring. This we can overcome by modernizing, by investing in training on the job, in making available courses at all levels so that people can move up more rapidly in the service than ever before.

With respect to the general position of job security about which so much has been said, I

[Mr. Kierans.]

would just like to say the following in French:

Les facteurs et les commis des Postes par la loi sur l'emploi—

The letter carriers and mail clerks of the Post office under the Employment Act—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret having to interrupt the minister, but his time has expired. The minister can pursue his remarks, with the consent of the House. Is this agreed?

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, we certainly would not prevent the minister from completing his remarks, but there are a number of hon. members who would like to speak and I would urge the minister, if he has considerably more to say, to give his notes to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) who might complete his speech for him.

[Translation]

Mr. Kierans: I am very grateful to my colleagues.

Job Security—The permanent letter carriers and mail clerks of the Post Office are protected under the Public Service Employment Act to the same extent as all other permanent employees of the Public Service of Canada. A check of the records of the last twenty-five years has not revealed a single case of a Post Office employee belonging to those bargaining units who had lost his job in the Public Service because of technical or operational changes.

[English]

Since my time is up, I simply want to make one plea. All of us in the Post Office have an obligation. We are facing a situation which carries in the long run a great deal of risk for all of those who work inside the Post Office. If there is a lack of security in the Post Office then it seems to me, after listening to the various motions of non-confidence, that I am a member of the Post Office who probably has the least security of all.

But what we all have to do in the Post Office is work together to regain the confidence of the people of Canada and to put the service on its best footing so that people will believe in it and want to use it. If we do that, if there are just rewards for their work of the employees and returns for their productivity, and if we can accomplish this in such a way that we can be an example to all of what a department can do, then I think the Post Office will have not only increasing security for those who work in it but, even more important, an expanding growth curve which provides opportunities for self-advancement to everyone working in the Post Office. It will also provide them with an opportunity to