

in order to enable us, in all justice, to proceed with the closures in western Canada at the end of the fiscal year.

• (4:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** The amendment which the President of the Treasury Board has moved is of course in keeping with the commitment he made on April 7 as reported in *Hansard* at page 5013. But I wonder whether it would not also be necessary to make an amendment to clause 27(3), bearing in mind that according to clause 34, section 27 shall come into force on April 30, 1971. Clause 27(3) still reads "after the coming into force of this Act." Is there not a conflict which will have to be resolved by making a consequential change in subclause (3) of clause 27? Otherwise, you will have two different dates. You have clause 34 saying section 27 shall come into force on April 30, 1971, but over on page 12 in lines 3 to 10 you have a clause which reads that these benefits shall apply only in respect to persons who cease to be employed in the Public Service after the coming into force of this act. Do you not want that to read "after the coming into force of this section" as provided in clause 34? I seem to be having trouble getting my point across to the minister, though it is a simple one. I want to be sure that his commitment is to be carried into law.

**Mr. Drury:** I should like to be sure, too. But I have been assured by the drafters in the Department of Justice that the purpose we are trying to accomplish, namely, making available these early retirement provisions to those who would have retired before the date of the proclamation of the act as a whole, and subsequent to March 30—

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** April 30.

**Mr. Drury:**—will, in fact, be accomplished. Sorry if I got the date wrong. Yes, that is correct, April 30. I do not claim to be an expert drafter, but I am told it is not necessary to change the wording in subclause (3) to achieve this purpose.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Since I last rose I have done what I should have done earlier,—that is—I have looked at the second page of the document which was handed to us after the minister had moved his amendment to clause 34. I find the amendment to clause 27 is already there for the minister to move, that the bill be amended by striking out line 10 on page 12, and so on. I was more correct than I realized.

**Mr. Drury:** I stand corrected.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I take it, then that after we have dealt with clause 34 we shall revert to clause 27 and that the minister will move the other amendment which he has in his hands after all.

**Mr. Drury:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. McCutcheon:** Today we heard the shocking revelation that the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce has no faith in the operation of the Post Office.

#### *Government Organization Act, 1970*

This situation was brought about by letting a minister of communications look after its affairs. Clause 26 of the bill before us provides for a full time Postmaster General. Since the minister who is piloting this bill through the House is now prepared to amend clause 27, making it retroactive until April 30, I would ask him this question: why in the world cannot the government include provision for retroactivity in the case of the Postmaster General?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Chairman:** Is the committee ready for the question?

**Mr. McCutcheon:** I put that forward as a serious proposition because I have great respect for this minister's ability. He should be in that job and on it fulltime. I think the least the government could do for him would be to make his appointment retroactive.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Drury:** I share the views of the hon. gentleman who has just spoken in relation to the abilities of my colleague who has been carrying out the duties of Postmaster General. I, too, would like to see this appointment made retroactive. The fact of the matter is that the government feels, perhaps, it has greater obligation to those of its public servants who are being let out of work as a consequence of internal reorganization than it has to one of our own members in relation to retroactivity. I am not sure what date one would select for retroactive purposes. If we were to do this for a minister there might be suggestions in relation to those so close to the ministry that we were looking after ourselves and not doing so well for those for whom we are perhaps responsible. I should like to take advice, which I shall do, as to whether the kind of amendment proposed by the hon. gentleman would be possible without a further message from His Excellency. I will inquire about this.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 34, as amended, agreed to.

**The Deputy Chairman:** It is the understanding of the Chair that it might be desirable to revert, now, to clause 27, if I correctly understood the words of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. Does the committee agree?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

On clause 27

**Mr. Drury:** I move:

That Bill C-207 be amended by striking out line 10 on page 12 and substituting the following: "force of this section".

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Once again, I should like to say that I welcome the amendment. It is now clear that between this clause, as amended, and clause 34, as amended, the provisions for early retirement on immediate annuities will apply to public servants who were on strength up to and including April 30.