

Postal Service Policies

or more. I say to the Minister of Communications and to the President of the Treasury Board that if they want some restraint shown, they should begin showing it in their own organizations, in the number of their own assistants, special advisers and public relations people. God knows, if there is any minister who is in greater need of a public relations man who could get a better image across, I do not know of him. He will never make it. Obviously, the Postmaster General has a good one, but he is too stupid to use him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): I regret that I must advise the hon. member his time has expired.

Mr. Orlikow: May I have one more minute, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Is it the pleasure of the House to allow the hon. member to continue.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Orlikow: Since we have a limited time for debate today, I would not want to cut off any other member who wished to participate. I say to the minister, and to the government, that from everything I have heard, and I have good contacts with the public service side as do most members on this side of the House, I am satisfied there is no need for a strike. There is no desire for a strike on the part of the employees. Certainly, as the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) said, the public does not want a strike.

I suggest to the minister and to the government that if they will show some common-sense, some intelligence and some compassion, of which there has been virtually none until now, even at this late date there can be a settlement which will be fair to the employees, to the public, to the government and to other public employees, one which will obviate the necessity for a strike which will hurt everybody in this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, the motion of the official opposition regarding the government's behavior towards the management of the Canadian postal service is extremely important. However, I wonder if the mover of the motion is as serious.

I see right now that there are three Conservative members in the House while we are

discussing this motion. There are only two now because the other one just left.

As for government members there are about ten to discuss or to hear the grievances of the opposition members.

The motion, which reads in part as follows:

This House repudiates the government's postal service policies—

—is certainly relevant. I am pleased to see that the Postmaster General and Minister of Communications (Mr. Kierans) is in the House to hear what we have to say.

In my opinion, the Post Office Department should not prepare a balance sheet at the end of the year to find out whether it has made a profit or not. This department must provide services to the entire population. Unfortunately, it offers fewer services every year but it charges more for them.

The minister himself says that post offices had to be closed in certain areas. At a time when everybody requires more and more services, the department, because they cost too much and because profits are not high enough, must eliminate some services.

The previous speaker contended that at the higher levels of administration in the Post Office and Communications Department, the number of employees or their salaries were not reduced in order to cut expenses; their social benefits were not abolished either. Everything has increased at dizzying speed, and the population bears the cost. However, the result has been a reduction of services.

In my area, many small post offices have been closed. The mail is sent once or twice a week. We have postal service five days a week instead of six. The services have clearly diminished while the rates have undeniably increased. This is nonsense!

I am not against paying a little more for a service, provided it is improved. The service is literally rotten, as it says in the motion:

This House repudiates the government's postal service policies and censures those ministers of the Crown responsible for the mismanagement of the postal services which, within two years, have deteriorated through fewer mail deliveries, fewer post offices, higher postal rates, disrupted and irregular services, and deplorable labour-management relations, to the prejudice of all Canadians, postal employees, and the national economy.

Mr. Speaker, all that is quite true. However, the Progressive Conservative members have forgotten to provide a solution. In my opinion, their complaints against the Post Office and Communications Department as well as against the government in general are