

*Government Orders*

Following the report from my officials, I concluded that an agreement was not close at hand for the parties and that the public interest warranted government intervention to end the disruption in postal service. I met with the two sides and discussed various options open to me at that point.

Given what I perceived as a sincere desire on the part of the two sides to reach a negotiated settlement, I agreed to appoint a mediator to assist the parties in resolving their differences.

[*English*]

On September 5, 1991, I appointed Chief Justice Alan B. Gold of the Quebec Superior Court as mediator in the postal dispute. With his appointment the parties agreed to return to work, restore the collective bargaining agreement, resume normal operations of the post office, and participate in mediation with their best efforts to find a settlement.

I am sure that hon. members will be familiar with Judge Gold's reputation as a respected and knowledgeable practitioner in the field of labour relations. He has been instrumental in resolving major disputes in several federal industries, railways, longshoring and postal operations, to name a few. Judge Gold is viewed by both labour and management as an individual who embodies all of the personal traits required by a mediator and has earned the trust and confidence of the parties.

Through his many years of mediation experience he has demonstrated the credibility required to be fully acceptable to both employers and unions in numerous major bargaining disputes. In this particular dispute Judge Gold spent six weeks in mediation efforts with Canada Post and CUPW and gave the process his fullest possible attention. On several occasions Judge Gold made personal sacrifices and alterations to his own agenda to accommodate the mediation process, and for this display of dedication to duty on his part I extend my sincere personal appreciation.

• (1220)

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[*Translation*]

On October 23, 1991, I met with Judge Gold who advised me that he was ending his mediation because, despite their very best efforts, there were difficulties they could not resolve. Judge Gold indicated that the parties had bargained honestly and in good faith.

[*English*]

As hon. members will know I had intended to introduce legislation last Friday, but after meeting with the parties I concluded that they wanted one last opportunity to pursue a negotiated settlement of the issues remaining in dispute. Despite their continuous attempt over this past weekend, the two sides have been unable to reach a final accord of their differences.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, the two parties involved in this labour dispute have been provided with every opportunity to bring their differences to a satisfactory resolution. They have been afforded the full range of options available under the dispute resolution process contained in Part I of the Canada Labour Code.

Direct negotiations, 78 meetings with a conciliation officer, 60 meetings with a conciliation board and six weeks of intensive mediation with one of Canada's best mediators—the process has been stretched to the limit to afford the parties an opportunity to reach a fair and equitable settlement through the collective bargaining process.

[*English*]

When an individual of Judge Gold's stature announces his withdrawal from the dispute resolution process, the message becomes loud and clear. That message is that these two parties, Canada Post Corporation and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, despite their genuine efforts are simply not able to negotiate a settlement to this dispute at the bargaining table.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, given these circumstances and the possibility of further disruption to postal services across this country, I am introducing the legislation before you today—the Postal Services Continuation Act, 1991. In addition to ensuring the continuation of postal services, the Act provides for a mechanism to resolve the issues in dispute between the two sides.