

that he too is concerned about any unjust treatment to which these veterans are subjected. We have been assured that this matter will be investigated, and a further report to the house will be made in the near future.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT—NEGOTIATIONS
RESPECTING FIVE DAY DELIVERY

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, my question deals with the problem being encountered by the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) with reference to the implementation of the five-day week delivery. We have been told that there have been discussions on this important matter. I submit that if discussions have been held, then the message is obviously not getting through. Someone in the communications department is not communicating.

It is now clear that the minister's hopes of last fall have not been justified. The five-day delivery plan is not being accepted. It has been changed in its application, and now rural and urban Canadians are in two different categories. The plan was to cut down expenditure but not to cause anybody to lose his job. There is anxiety on this question. In addition to changing the scope of the plan the minister has had to change the date. Instead of February 1, we now hear it is to be February 17.

Yet there is great unrest. Obviously there is resistance from the employees affected, mostly those who work on the sortation process. Why these matters were not fully and carefully ironed out in the many weeks since the announcement was made is difficult to comprehend.

Previous to the last postal strike which disrupted this country there were signs and portents long before the event. The department showed no sign that it saw what was coming.

While it is agreeable to think big for the future, to dream dreams, to talk about the waves of the future and the ringing of telephones, under the sponsorship of the post office department, it is also prudent to look at some of the knotty problems of the present. The public is interested in knowing what is going on. Will employees work to rule? In today's *Ottawa Citizen*, Roger Decarie, council co-chairman and President of the Letter Carriers' Union of Canada, is reported to have said:

There is no question of work-to-rule, . . . We're just keeping track of time.

29180—302

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

The same article quotes the secretary-treasurer of that organization as saying that the requested action can be considered:

—either work to contract or work-to-rule.

Farther down that same article says:

Adding fuel to the controversy was a departmental memo to postmasters ordering them to remove from post office bulletin boards copies of the council bulletin sent out last week.

That is a very, very serious matter constituting a form of industrial action on the part of the post office.

Field representative Don J. Mowat of the Letter Carriers' Union of Canada said, as reported in the same article:

At present our boys are in an all-out war with the postal department.

That is a very, very serious state of affairs. This morning's *Globe and Mail* had this to say:

The move is not expected to have any effect on mail delivery but may result in postal employees working longer than their 40-hour week and, as a result, claiming overtime bonuses.

There is a danger that the five day delivery week may not be a cost saving project after all. I say to the minister, or his representative, before it is too late it should be pointed out to both sides in this controversy that the public is in no mood for any disruption, dislocation of retardation of mail service. There has been a constant stream of increased charges flowing from the post office. We have had increased charges for stamps, money orders, newspapers, and now rent on boxes is to be increased. Apparently the boxes produce for the Post Office Department revenues of \$2.5 million. They cost the department \$4.5 million in administration and maintenance, although I do not see how that figure is arrived at. Even the cost of postal box keys is to increase from 35 cents to 50 cents.

Mr. Dinsdale: That is Liberal inflation.

Mr. Macquarrie: In the midst of all this, there is a growing public complaint that although costs are going up and up service is slipping. One hears this too often for one to be complacent about our Post Office Department.

In the face of this, I think all concerned should take warning. If the minister has to backtrack on his plans for five day urban delivery, so be it. But let all concerned beware of making the public one again a victim of the dispute between the post office and its employees. The tolerance point of the public is low indeed.