

*Government Organization*

We have a stoppage. It is the third stoppage the public has had to suffer. As of last week the minister denied that there was any possibility the stoppage would take place. It is a stoppage caused by the failure of the minister to bring into the department people who have the slightest concept of what collective bargaining means, to bring into the department the kind of people who realize that the feudal system which has existed for almost 100 years in the postal department has now ended. Under that system the minister, the deputy minister and a couple of other key people could decide, and everybody else had to go along with their decision. That type of thing has vanished and we are now in a period when—I cannot say this as eloquently as the Minister of Labour, I am sure employers have to sit down in good faith, negotiate and try to settle matters in dispute with their employees.

The minister has failed for the second time to do this. We had a strike a little while ago when the minister headed the post office. We have a stoppage today. I suggest in all seriousness that this minister, having failed so miserably to understand the most elementary facts about labour-management relationships, in a department which is of such vital concern to the people of Canada and their everyday living, ought to resign. He ought to make way for a minister who will put people first and let matters which are important be settled by negotiation and conciliation, rather than by work stoppages.

**Mr. McCleave:** Mr. Chairman, I think most of us regret that the department which is closest to Canadians in their day-to-day life should also be the subject of most controversy in Canada today. The difficulties in the Post Office far outweigh those in any other department of government; and believe you me, with this government that takes some doing. Yet this is precisely the state in the Post Office Department at the present time.

I ask the minister this question: Did he have any warning that his difficulties were going to be compounded at this time or did they come like a bolt from the blue? I suggest that the Postmaster General had ample warning. I suggest that the difficulties of the previous postmaster general gave him a warning. But in addition there has been the Montpetit report, that fat volume put out by the commission outlining the grievances found by that judge of the Quebec Superior Court. He

felt those grievances should be remedied. Some of them have been remedied.

In addition, there was the new, collective bargaining legislation which we in this house passed in good faith a few years ago. Combining the factors of Montpetit and collective bargaining, the result was that people who had been content to put up with certain conditions over a long period of time were suddenly faced with the fact that they had a responsibility to themselves to do something to better their conditions. I think everybody in the house will agree with that philosophy. I know I preached it myself when I addressed dinners of postal unions at that time. I said: If you have these working conditions of which you complain, do not sit around and take them any more; get out and take them up with your management. Deal at arm's length with each other, and do your best to remedy them.

That spirit is now abroad in the Post Office of Canada. The Postmaster General takes time out with amateurish dabbings in another minister's department, telling us how NATO should or should not operate. Then, he turns to the Post Office and delivers his offhand pronunciamento. No wonder half the country has postal difficulties. I say those warnings were there before the Postmaster General was elected and, subsequently last fall, became a member of the ministry. He has nobody to blame but himself for what is happening in Canada at the present time.

The minister should have had warning from the events of last year when the increases were brought about which have caused consternation. The difficulties, which still have not been fully assessed in the newspaper field, are very much with us in the magazine field. For example, the March, 1969, issue of the *Legion* contains an article headed "We Face a Crisis". It was written by the dominion president, Mr. Robert Kohaly, who is also chairman of the national magazine executive committee. The *Legion* publication had enjoyed its second class mailing rates for more than 40 years. It was aware that increases were coming. This editorial says:

The *Legion* had prepared for the increase in second-class rates, roughly from half-a-cent a copy to two cents a copy, and had adjusted its 1969 budget to meet a monthly increase in mailing costs of from \$1,300 to \$5,000.

Then came the mighty hand of the Postmaster General, and this is the result:

—the cost of mailing (the *Legion* magazine) after April 1 will be seven cents a copy or a monthly mailing expenditure of more than \$19,000 or \$228,000 a year!