

could be found right across this country. Ottawa's highway services arrive early in the morning. On Wednesday the Ottawa employees went on strike at 5 a.m., so mail posted, say in Brockville, had to be diverted to another office, say Smiths Falls. The Ottawa workers went back to work on Thursday, but offices like Smiths Falls, which had been holding Ottawa mail, were on strike; therefore, the Ottawa-bound mail stayed there. On Friday the smaller offices returned to work but Ottawa went on strike, so the mail from offices such as Brockville, Smiths Falls and Hull could not be taken into the Ottawa office.

This brings us up to the weekend. If there are no further disruptions, mail from the offices tributary to Ottawa will arrive on Monday morning. Some of it will be delivered on Monday, much of it on Tuesday and the remainder, at least firstclass mail, on Wednesday if there are no further disruptions. I cannot stop this. If they want to do it, they can do it. The reaction, however, is not from me but the the Canadian people who become fed-up and seek to employ other means and will remain with those other means, a lot of them, long after this strike is over—over but not forgotten.

At the present time the volume of mail handled in the Post Office is at the 1966 level. There is still a Postmaster General and a Deputy Postmaster General. But I want to say this: in 1966 that volume of mail was handled by 4,100 fewer union employees than the 27,000 in the Council of Postal Unions. I am simply saying that if this situation remains, and if this long series of rotating strikes and impediment to the movement of mail continues so that the public does not come back, and if we have this continuing volume of 1966 or perhaps even less, then there will have to be lay-offs.

These lay-offs, however, will not be for reasons of mechanization or automation but for the quite simple reason that the Canadian people will no longer have the same demand for their services. If the volume of mail continues at the rate of 4 billion items per year instead of slightly more than 5 billion items, then even when the strike is over I do not think the people would expect me to keep hiring and paying salaries to the 4,100 people from whom the Canadian people will not be requiring services. I do not intend to hire people in the Post Office who are not needed. But I do intend to hire all the people who are needed. That need is expressed, not by me

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but by the confidence and appreciation the people of Canada have for the services offered by me and by all of my 45,000 colleagues. Nor do I intend to bring in legislation that would prevent any other private company carrying the second, third or fourth-class mail.

I simply say to my colleagues in the unions that if the postal workers, letter carriers and all people in the Post Office work together with management and co-operate, we do not care how many private companies spring up or how many of them may prosper during this regrettable period, because if we all work together we can drive them out of business overnight. But if we do, it will not be by legislation; it will be by the co-operation of all of us.

Mr. Speaker, hon. members opposite have said we are using the Post Office, in the words of the hon. member for Winnipeg North, as a patsy for the guidelines. I want to say to the hon. member for Winnipeg North that these negotiations started 10 months ago, long before there was any talk about 4 per cent, 2 per cent, 10 per cent or 6 per cent guidelines. In that intervening period agreements have been concluded with the postmasters and subpostmasters within the Post Office for three years at 5½ per cent, at 5 per cent and 5 per cent, long before there was any mention of guidelines. This is what we consider to be a fair and reasonable offer. This is what the unions should now be negotiating with the Treasury Board. But this is not being used as a lead-horse for a guidelines policy. This long antedates the oratory that is presently being spent on the guidelines policy.

• (5:40 p.m.)

Within the last several years the Post Office has changed considerably from the days when Judge Montpetit in 1965 and 1966 described basically what had gone on under the previous government. Since that time, of his 282 recommendations, 238 have been implemented in whole or in part. Never, to my knowledge, have so many recommendations of a royal commission, even the Glassco Commission, been accepted, adopted and implemented. Four have been rejected by the government, another four jointly by the department and the unions, and others are still up for negotiation. There are many that we ourselves can do nothing about.

Judge Montpetit, for example, recommended that there should be rotating shifts within the Post Office. While the Postmaster General might wish it as being fair to all employees