

Government Organization

Ontario fast enough for it to get into the hands of people on Thursday or Friday, although in the past they could do this if it was sent from Toronto on Tuesday. Therefore there is something wrong with the system. I have brought this problem to the attention of the department.

I am surprised also at the lack of initiative the Postmaster General is allowing to the district officers. They are not exercising the discretion they had before. I have never asked them to do anything in a political sense. I have always felt that they were qualified to make decisions in their jurisdictions. I now find they are not making decisions and have not attempted to do so because they do not know what the Postmaster General has decided. Anything they do may be thrown out. Obviously, morale is very low at this level of the department.

The Chairman: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

[Translation]

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Chairman, I shall make only some brief remarks on clause 7 concerning the future Department of Communications.

First I would like to say outright that the future Minister of Communications is able to defend himself. He gave strong evidence of it in the past, yet some situations appear so illogical that we should try and correct them. As other hon. members I often hear in this house that the government is spending a lot, that budgets are increasing tremendously and that taxes are going up. However, as soon as a responsible minister dares to introduce reforms to save money and to modernize some services, the very same ones who were blaming the government for being extravagant complain that taxes are increasing.

Yet it should be agreed that two and two are four. One cannot blame the government for spending too much and increasing taxes today and at the same time ask it to spend even more tomorrow. That does not make any sense, Mr. Chairman. As a matter of fact, almost every day those who are complaining about the fact that the government wants to cut expenditures are the first to suggest that it should invest millions of dollars in some cases. In my opinion, that sounds somewhat illogical.

It is obvious that everyone is affected by reforms and savings, Mr. Chairman, and no one thinks that they can be approved willingly. In my opinion such reforms should be

[Mr. Peters.]

possible in the difficult situation in which we now find ourselves, when all governments in the world are faced with austerity measures made necessary by the economic situation. Hon. members should help all Canadians to understand why they have to tighten their belts even if it hurts. In fact, it must be done to avoid a worsening situation due to more serious financial and economic problems and perhaps even devaluation of our dollar.

I think that the validity of this argument should be obvious to those who want to consider the situation objectively. It is so simple in fact that there should not be any need to stress the point.

I think that the future Minister of Communications must have some gumption to impose measures as drastic as these while facing the opposition's big guns.

He certainly does not do it because he invented all those reforms as the new Postmaster General. He is surely doing it, and we know it, because for years the experts in his department have been considering these reforms and trying to develop them. In fact the minister has finally decided, in view precisely of the circumstances I mentioned earlier, to introduce them to the Canadian people. However, this discussion shall probably not be wasted. Some aspects of the matter should perhaps be changed a little. The minister understands this, because he made some changes to the legislation he wanted to implement.

But, Mr. Chairman, this is not what I want most to point out. I heard yesterday or the day before on the radio a speech by an official of one of the Postal Unions—I understand his name is Décarie—who said that the postal workers would go on strike, whether it was legal or not. I hear hon. members approving those people and telling us that, even though it is illegal, it must be done.

Mr. Chairman, I think that it should not be done. If hon. members are willing to approve Canadians who challenge the government by taking illegal action, I feel that we are heading for anarchy.

That reminds me of an opinion I expressed when the house granted the employees of the civil service the right to strike, at which time I was sitting in the limbo of opposition. I voted against the passing of the legislation and warned the president of the Treasury Board at that time that he would be faced with certain problems before the year was over. The minister answered then: No, I have enough confidence in the public employees'