

*Post Office*

well known, generally with the unions. I want to see their lot improved. I do not deny their desire for better pay because I happen to know that there are some in the country not paid so well. That is a foolish, nonsensical excuse. You do not improve the general lot by dragging down or keeping down some of those who are not at the very bottom.

I say that the unions have handled their case infinitely better than the government which has approached this matter with ineptitude and stubbornness. I recognize the unions' anxiety for job security, but I say to the union leaders: do not, even in the face of outrageous government ineptitude, push public patience too far. I say, with the greatest sympathy and friendship which is well known: do not exhaust the reservoir of goodwill and do not give this government, whose anti-labour bent seems more and more apparent, any justification to move in a manner calculated to hurt the cause of labour, both organized and unorganized, for many years to come.

I ask the unions not to penalize the Canadian public to such a degree that they will lose sympathy for the aims of the unions. These are delicate matters. I ask the union leaders not to spoil a generally good cause, and not to spoil a generally reasonable case, by continued methods of persuasion which are not good, which are not reasonable, and which the Canadian public will not long endure. Above all, I say to them, do not tempt the Canadian public to reconsider the right to strike in the public employee sector. I say to both sides: the public interest is paramount. This is the question here today. There has been enough brittle obstinacy at the negotiating table, enough name calling through the media, enough denunciatory press conferences, and enough rotating strikes.

I urge, I advise, indeed I presume to warn that a national strike must be averted. It can be averted and this continuing, hurtful confrontation must end. Flexibility and reason must take the place of obstinacy, stand patism and a determination to prove a point, no matter how-ill chosen that point was both in time and in mathematics. If the government through any of its spokesmen,—and I fear the spokesman today might be the Postmaster General, not a felicitous choice—have any exceptionally useful measures to propose to bring this agony to an end, we will not be found wanting in our readiness, our willingness to act decisively, whether it be in mid-summer, in the next hour, the next day or the

next week. We are willing to do what we believe is necessary, not to prove a point for the unions nor, God help us, to prove a point for the incompetent government, but to approve, to sustain, to support and to protect the public interest which for far too long has been ignored.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** My colleague, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), yesterday asked leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the new situation created by the acceleration and spread of the rotational strikes by postal employees, thus creating a new threat of a nationwide postal strike, the failure of the Treasury Board to negotiate a settlement to end the disruption of postal services, and the urgent need to debate the serious situation before the House adjourns for the summer recess.

I do not think there can be any question that we are facing in this country a real crisis. Press reports in the last few days make it clear that in the last week we have had a third of the postal workers from one end of Canada to the other out of work at one time. That is likely to accelerate rather than to slow down, unless there is an early settlement of the dispute between the postal workers and the government. How much inconvenience, how much difficulty, how much trouble, have the differences between the government and the postal workers created for the ordinary citizens, whether they be old age pensioners, ordinary workers, or small or large businessmen.

● (4:30 p.m.)

What has caused the difficulties, Mr. Speaker? I will come to the issue in a few moments. I think the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) spoke the truth when he said that the difficulties, in a large part, were caused by the intemperate statements made by the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans), by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury), who cannot even bother to be here this afternoon, as well as by representatives of the negotiating committee for the government. I do not want to take the time to put on the record the irresponsible statements made time and time again by the Postmaster General, which could only have the effect of