

*Postal Service Policies*

medicare should be available. Teachers do not like to be organized to attain a national objective that might eventually result in free education.

This whole theme of organization is partly responsible for the rebellion of the young. They see themselves entering a society that is too highly structured and organized to permit the kind of initiative and creative activity for which they have been educated. We have the problem of change in an institution that is not used to change. These are changes that must be accomplished in a way that will eliminate the impersonal attitudes of highly organized administrations and structures.

• (3:00 p.m.)

The objectives of the Post Office are to provide a dependable postal service for all Canadians and to create a progressive and rewarding working climate for all who work in the Post Office. To that end, in this day of change we in the Post Office are taking the highly centralized decision-making process away from Ottawa and placing it where it belongs, in the regions, in the field, in the post offices themselves. We intend to involve everyone in this decision-making process.

What has happened since the report of Mr. Justice Montpetit? He published a second report a little while ago in which he said that the progress that has been made is remarkable. This progress has not been without, of course, all of the stresses and strains that accompany change. What are some of these changes? No longer are political appointments of any kind made in the Post Office. All employees entering the Post Office are non-political appointments. The Post Office now offers to anyone entering its service a full career with all the civil service benefits and security that this implies. Postal employees now have collective bargaining. They also have their own independent union—and today we know how independent, strong and forthright those unions can be. Employees of the Post Office have the right to strike, and we assume that they recognize all of the responsibilities that go with that right. In addition, in the last several years the employees have had numerous increases in wages which have brought them up to equivalent rates obtaining for similar work. Their working conditions have been continually improved, though we still have a very long way to go because there is so much lost ground to make up.

I now come to the Frankenstein monster that has been raised here today—mechaniza-

[Mr. Kierans.]

tion. Mechanization is not a Frankenstein; it is not a Baal; it is not a demon. On the other hand, it is not an idol. Those who attempt to set it up as some sort of monstrosity that has to be feared are scarcely presenting arguments that have any measure of quality. The purpose of mechanization is, quite simply, to eliminate the drudgery and routine of work. Mechanization is a productive force. It should be productive of leisure. It should be productive of that affluence that will enable society to pursue its objectives of better health, better education, better housing and the attainment of all our other social needs. Mechanization is not a threat to the job security of anyone who is presently working in the Post Office. At the present time we have 42,947 employees. Five years from now, with a normal increase in volume, we would expect to have about 47,392. Mechanization simply means that that 47,000 will not be 55,000.

Mechanization improves the productivity of the department and the service it can render to the Canadian people. It will reduce to some extent the rate of growth in the work force, the rate we have experienced in the past and which we would continue to experience at an accelerated pace in the future if we refused to mechanize. To this I can add that even though there will be an absolute over-all increase in the number of jobs in the Post Office in the next five years, at the same time approximately 10,000 people will be leaving the Post Office for retirement and other reasons, but not for the reason of being laid off as a result of automation or mechanization.

For too long has the Post Office been divorced both from close contact with the people that it serves, the people of Canada, and its own employees. These two types of contact are the hallmark of any successful corporation. We in the Post Office are at the present time going out and contacting the people who use our services and we are attempting to find out how better we can serve them. Most of all, we are digging down deeply into the service itself, getting to know the people who work within the Post Office, explaining to them how vital their role is, their own personal contribution, and how important it is that they see the over-all responsibility that the Post Office has to all people in Canada.

I say quite honestly and sincerely that no improvement made in the Post Office will be the work of one man or even a number of men. The only way to improve the Post Office is through the work, the involvement and the