

*Postal Services Continuation Act, 1987*

The Post Office workers, the CUPW, has also said that they are prepared to go along with franchising except where there is a postal station, that it cannot be closed to open a franchising operation. They have backed down on the franchising issue and have counter proposed two exceptions. Where there are no postal services there can be a franchising operation, but it cannot be done where there is a postal station. A postal station cannot be closed to put in a franchising operation.

The Government thinks that it is riding on public sentiment. In my hands I have two editorials. I feel that they are representative. One is from the *Winnipeg Free Press* of ever supporting working-class people. I hardly think that it has ever positioned itself in that manner. The article states, "Why the Government decided to move so quickly and so harshly to end the strike is anybody's guess". I do not have to guess. I know why. The Minister got pressured by his colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, who is really calling the shots for the Post Office. That is why we have this Bill. The article goes on to state, "It certainly was not to benefit the postal service or the people who use it". The article closes by stating, "A negotiated settlement would have taken long and hard negotiations in which each side would have had to pay the price of intransigence—Canada Post through lost revenues; the postal workers through lost wages. The public would have suffered, too, but the suffering would have been limited by the rotating nature of the strikes and by the proven ability of Canada Post to get some mail at least past picket lines". That was stated in the *Winnipeg Free Press* which is not noted for its socialism. It is certainly not noted for support of working-class people.

I have another article from a "real left-wing" paper, *The Edmonton Journal*. The headline states, "Postal workers licked again". The article states, "Ottawa is using coercion where reason might have prevailed by legislating an end to rotating postal strikes. In the process, the federal Government spurns . . ." Not my word, Madam Speaker, but that of the editor of *The Edmonton Journal*. He states, "spurns the collective-bargaining process and erodes the right to strike. Is this an article in *The Edmonton Journal*? By golly it is, Madam Speaker. He further states, "It invites the Canadian Union of Postal Workers to retaliate in a manner that can hardly make the delivery of mail more efficient".

The editor goes on to state, "Last summer's letter carrier strike languished twice as long before a mediator stepped in; and a general strike by clerks and mail sorters in 1981 was settled—through mediation—after six weeks . . . The ability to strike is virtually the only leverage the workers have in negotiations. To short-circuit collective bargaining for the sake of expedience undermines the rights of all union workers—and brings into question the Government's commitment to productive labour relations".

That article was in the *Edmonton Journal*. That is not some left-wing paper like *The Tribune*, or *The Toronto Star*, although I do have *The Toronto Star*.

• (1600)

I see you signalling me, Madam Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** You have one minute remaining.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** I am glad you clarified that, Madam Speaker. That is the signal I have been trying to give to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Cadieux) about the Bill for a long time, that he has one minute in which to repent. It is not too late.

We have learned from all this that the Government jumped hastily because of its hidden agenda. It is all part of the free trade arrangement—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Rodriguez:** It is all part of it; it is all part of it. I know what the Hon. Member from Edmonton will say, but it is all part of it—privatization, deregulation, and free trade.

Our postal services compare very positively on an international basis. The Minister should let the process of collective bargaining take place. He should let the market-place of collective bargaining decide the settlement which workers get. He should not be in there ruining collective bargaining with legislation which is so Draconian that I suppose Hitler could vote for it, but not Members on this side of the House.

**Mr. Allmand:** Madam Speaker, we are told that during the strike of outside workers in the month of June, the Government and the people of Canada paid approximately \$30 million for replacement workers.

During the labour dispute before us right now, the Post Office advertised for replacement workers long before the strike deadline arrived. While they spent \$30 million for replacement workers in June, we do not know yet how much they are spending during this strike.

Would the Hon. Member like to comment upon the policy of spending millions of dollars on replacement workers, moneys which could have been used to settle the strike right away and get it over and done with?

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. I sat in the House and I heard about the development of rural dignity. People in rural communities have been decrying the quality of service provided by Canada Post following the mandate which it received from the Government under the table, surreptitiously, and in a euphemism called the business plan of the Post Office, which was designed in the office of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. They have to cut the deficit, so they have been cutting back on rural mail service.

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