

Opposition and of the hon. member for Don Valley West can only encourage the Canadian Union of Postal Workers not to return to the bargaining table and not to negotiate a new collective agreement. If our negotiations with the postal workers have not progressed very far until now, the fault lies with the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Don Valley West, Madam Speaker, who rather than say—

[English]

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Balderdash!

Mr. Kempling: You are silly.

Mr. Huntington: Nonsense!

Mr. Ouellet: Madam Speaker, when we say the truth to members of the opposition, they start yakking and yakking because they do not like it.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Madam Speaker: I would invite the minister to complete his answer.

Mr. Ouellet: To my mind, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition was taken in by Mr. Parrot. Instead of urging the postal employees to accept our offer of \$25,000, he led them to believe that he would force the government to legislate them back to work. In my opinion, when it comes to irresponsibility, the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition puts him on the same level as Mr. Jean-Claude Parrot.

[English]

ADVICE FOR PEOPLE WHO CANNOT AFFORD PRIORITY POST

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, a government which would provide postal service to the corporate elite during a legal strike can hardly be called responsible.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: Neither can that be construed as being conducive to successful labour negotiations. I want to ask the Postmaster General, who has the responsibility here, what advice he has for the thousands of Canadians who cannot afford Priority Post, who cannot afford this special privilege service, but who, as Canadians, are entitled to equal treatment from their Post Office? What advice does he have for these Canadians who are—

Some hon. Members: Louder, louder!

Mr. McGrath: If it is necessary to get the message across, I will yell louder. What advice does the Postmaster General have for the thousands of Canadians who are being forced to close the doors of their small businesses and to lay off their

employees because they cannot afford this elitist Priority Post service?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1425)

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that the hon. member for St. John's East has asked this question because I can tell him that, in fact, Priority Post customers include a number of small businessmen from Newfoundland.

Mr. Siddon: Name them.

Mr. Ouellet: They include prescription optical suppliers, photographic dealers, small retail stores, drug companies, logging equipment dealers, television and stereo dealers, rental suppliers, and a small butler from Newfoundland. All of these businessmen, who are not large companies, are depending on a service for which they pay much more than 17 cents a letter. They are paying dollars for this type of service. These are services from which the Post Office is making a profit and from which we hope to make a profit in the future; but with the help of the Conservative party the future of Crown corporation is being destroyed.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ouellet: It is no wonder that the Post Office has deficits.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: Madam Speaker, it is incredible that the Postmaster General of Canada would stand in his place and espouse a position which says that "if you are prepared to pay the price we will give you the service". That is the line he is taking in this House. I say to him that there are people in this country who cannot afford to pay his price for postal service and by the thousands they are wiring members of Parliament every day because they are going out of business.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

EQUITY OF TREATMENT

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, the Postmaster General has had experience in this area. He knows that the acceptance of mediation does not necessarily lead to the bargaining table. We are now into the third week of this costly strike. What is the minister prepared to do to ensure equity of treatment to Canadians who are suffering? What is he prepared to do for these people, since he is evidently prepared to serve the corporate elite who are well able to sit out this strike?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General): Madam Speaker, the very reason we can keep this service going is because Priority Post