

*Government Orders*

some 45,000 operational employees to replace seven previous collective agreements which expired in 1989.

[*Translation*]

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers filed a notice of dispute on September 12, 1989, and a conciliation officer was subsequently appointed to assist the parties in their efforts to reach a new agreement. The conciliation officer held a total of 78 meetings with the parties over the course of a one-year period extending through October 1990.

Needless to say, progress was slow due to the extensive number of union and employer demands placed on the bargaining table—some 250 by CUPW and more than 60 by Canada Post. In addition, the process of merging terms and conditions from seven agreements into one comprehensive contract has proven to be a formidable task.

[*English*]

Initial discussions during the conciliation officer stage centred on the grievance arbitration backlog and with the assistance of the officer the parties signed a memorandum of agreement in February 1990 designed to expedite this resolution. Unfortunately, this stage of the conciliation process did not result in the resolution of any other major issues and in October 1990 the conciliation officer reported to the minister that he had been unable to assist the parties in reaching an agreement.

Given the complexity of the dispute with seven collective agreements being merged into one and the large number of issues in dispute, the parties were notified on October 31, 1990 of my predecessor's decision to establish a conciliation board to deal with the dispute.

[*Translation*]

The Conciliation Board, chaired by Mr. Marc Lapointe, a former Chairperson of the Canada Labour Relations Board, began meetings in January of this year and after some 60 sessions over the course of a seven-month period, filed its report with me on August 12, 1991. It is important to note here, Mr. Speaker, that the parties to the dispute each chose their own respective nominees to the Conciliation Board—Mr. Arnold Masters for the employer and Mr. Jacques Desmarais for the union. The two nominees were then able to agree on the

appointment of Mr. Lapointe as a chairperson acceptable to both parties.

[*English*]

In its report, which was released to the parties on August 16 of this year, the conciliation board noted that while it had been unable to assist the parties in reaching a settlement it had succeeded in reducing the items in dispute.

More importantly it managed to bring in excess of 300 unresolved union and management demands into sharper focus by identifying the nine major and twenty minor issues separating the parties. The conciliation board report addressed these issues and in most instances made recommendations or suggestions for settlement.

The board also commented on the obvious lack of improvement in the labour relations environment at Canada Post and the degree to which this frustrated the members of the board in its effort to find a settlement.

The report stated: "The present conciliation board has found no improvement in these relations. On the contrary the extent of the exacerbation has further increased in some instances to the point of contempt, if not palpable hatred, and the distrust has reached new heights".

As I indicated, the report of the conciliation board signed by the chairman and the employer nominee along with the minority report of the union nominee were released to the parties on August 16, 1991. The parties began direct negotiations on the same day as the release of the report using it as a basis for further discussion. With no settlement in the dispute CUPW initiated rotating strikes at various locations across the country on August 24.

On August 30, 1991, I contacted both Canada Post president, Donald Lander, and CUPW president, Jean-Claude Parrot, to impress upon them the need for the two sides to make significant progress and direct negotiations over the course of Labour Day weekend.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, officials of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service of Labour Canada met with representatives of the parties on September 2, 1991, to evaluate the progress which had been made in talks since the release of the report of the conciliation board.