

*Post Office*

situation so confused. The hon. gentleman who has just spoken is in the happy position of not having heard the Prime Minister speak, of not having had a chance to see a transcript of what was said; he is relying upon the allegations of a group of people who likewise had no opportunity of hearing what was said or of knowing the context in which it was said, and who are merely making allegations without foundation. I hope he will not fall into this kind of error in the future.

What follows? I repeat, as I have throughout the course of this difficult negotiation, that we stand prepared to negotiate upon any reasonable basis. I suggest we cannot in good conscience make any progress while the Council of Postal Unions remains adamant and inflexible in its position and refuses to put forward any concrete proposals other than those put forward by the union according to the minority report of the conciliation board. The charge is made, of course, and I have heard it repeated in the House today, that the position of the government is rigid. I would suggest to the House that the record of this negotiation would, if examined, disclose that the employer was the first to make a proposal relating to pay. Some seven months after the conclusion of the agreement, without any specific union pay demand having been formulated, when it was obvious that no progress was being made, it was the employer who initiated the proposal that the matter should go before a conciliation board. Once the report of the board had been received, it was again the employer who took the initiative to keep negotiations going.

When it became clear that progress was still impossible it was the employer who suggested to the Council that the services of a mediator should be employed. The Council regretted that it could not join us in such a request. It was again the employer who made a new offer, a proposal which would have increased the cost of the earlier government offer by more than \$300,000.

The Council, I regret to say, has failed to support any of its demands with statistical data or with any kind of substantive argument. Perhaps one clue as to the motivation which governs at least one side of the bargaining table has been given by one of the co-chairmen, Mr. Roger Decarie, of the Council of Postal Unions. I quote a view expressed this month by Mr. Decarie:

If the employer is really hurt, then that is the time to sit down and bargain a settlement.

[Mr. Drury.]

It is clear from utterances we have heard that the Council of Postal Unions does not feel that the present disrupting tactics it has carried on at the expense of the taxpayer and of the general public have hurt the government. Until they come to the conclusion that the government has been sufficiently hurt they are not ready to sit down and negotiate a settlement.

This is the real crux of the problem, not, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North suggested, lack of honesty in collective bargaining. The actual fact of the matter is that the Council takes the view that until somebody is hurt enough it is no use talking about a settlement, and it appears we have not yet reached this point.

Mr. Speaker, I think it would be quite difficult to hurt the government. It will not be hard to hurt the taxpayers of Canada, the unfortunate public of Canada, but it will be very hard indeed for this kind of operation to hurt the government.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Insensitive.

**Mr. Drury:** I suggest to the interjector who has just made that observation—

**Mr. Stanfield:** May I ask a question?

**Mr. Drury:** I have to deal with another Tory. It is not a question of insensitivity. What is involved is a rather more clear understanding of the facts, an understanding which seems to have escaped the interjector. He is not too clear what this is all about. Now, if the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) wishes to ask a question I will be glad to answer.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Just for clarification, would the minister indicate the percentages involved in the increases which have been proposed by the employer?

**Mr. Drury:** I do not have the precise arithmetic, I regret to say.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh.

● (6:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Stanfield:** Might I assist the minister and ask him whether the percentages exceed the guidelines that the government has laid down?

**Mr. Drury:** Mr. Speaker, in response to that question, may I say that none of the agreements which the employer, in this case the government, has negotiated with the public