

*Postal Service Policies*

state. This government must take full credit for masterminding the situation in a little under two years. This is a remarkable achievement, Mr. Speaker. All the more so when one reads Bullock's "Selected Readings in Public Finance" and comes across the following paragraph:

The best established and in many cases the oldest form of public industry is the postal service, which Adam Smith described as "the only mercantile project which has been successfully managed—by every sort of government.

We may begin to wonder what sort of government we have in Canada.

We face our second nationwide postal strike in two years. That is serious enough, Mr. Speaker, but sandwiched between these two strikes there has been case after case of blundering and bungling and fumbling, dispute after dispute, violence and destruction, delayed mails, parcel embargoes and post office closures—and all at a higher cost for what is said to be an improved service. This government mocks the people of Canada when it talks about a better mail service. How dare it offer such balderdash! Today we have the spectacle of a government that blindly turns its eye as its ministers fall over themselves in their eagerness to neuter what was once a proud, efficient postal service.

• (4:40 p.m.)

We have a union-hating Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) who thrives on trouble and newspaper headlines and creates problems every time he opens his mouth. We have a Treasury Board President who occasionally pinch-hits for the Postmaster General and who is dedicated to testing the government's anti-inflation missiles on some of the lowest paid workers in the country. And we have a Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) who has the remarkable knack of sidestepping the thorny management-labour relations his colleagues work so hard to produce.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the Post Office under the leadership of this government is in one heck of a mess. It sounds like the English Post Office before 1784 when the Postmaster General there introduced sweeping reforms. Commenting on the actions of this Postmaster General, A. T. Hadley in his history of postal services wrote:

Previous to his time the mail conveyance had been infrequent, slow, irregular and utterly unsafe.

We are not going forward; we are going backward in history. Such has been the

number of problems confronting the government over the postal service that you might think the ministers would learn a lesson or two in human relations. They look to automation and they look to a streamlined Crown corporation to lead them out of this wilderness, and every time it would seem they forget they are dealing with people and not cattle. The *Montreal Star* of May 12, 1970, put its finger on the issue. I do not suppose anyone on the government benches read the article so I will take time to read a paragraph or two as follows:

Improvements in efficiency (meaning first and foremost automation) are essential.

But one thing is just as essential and that is improvements in and consideration for the human aspect in dealing with Post Office employees.

Marcel Perault, local head of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, draws a parallel between the national dispute which now appears inevitable and the strictly Montreal conflict between the Post Office and the former G. Lapalme truck drivers.

To some extent, he is right.

No one came out of the Lapalme dispute smelling like a rose, but Mr. Kierans and his department were definitely the least likely candidates for any flower garden. The thought of displacing 457 men (even though it was partly their own choice) is distasteful to most people and it is downright objectionable to any union members.

"The inhuman treatment by Kierans of the guys from Lapalme is no different than what he is trying to do to us," Mr. Perault claims.

A quick perusal of union demands tends to add credence to his viewpoint.

The article then touches on the issues as seen by the postal employees and, let me say, these issues cannot be contemptuously swept away—issues such as working conditions, job security and rates of pay. The article continues:

It appears that he (that is Judge Montpetit) knew that technological changes alone will not create better efficiency, which is something Mr. Kierans and the Post Office Department hierarchy have yet to fathom.

The Post Office employees themselves are in the best position to know where improvements should and could be made with the least amount of friction and with the greatest speed.

It requires a new outlook on labour relations and until it is adopted Canadians can expect continued trouble in the service.

The government pins its magic-wand hopes on automation or mechanization, and the employees seek the security that the government refuses to give. The Postmaster General was questioned in the House about this very matter earlier in the week and he told us that over the next five years the work force of the Post Office could expand by some 5,000