

*Post Office*

nous dossier. I think the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) must surely be aware of the expression or proverb in French "qui s'excuse s'accuse", although in his case when he accuses me of wanting to force the postal workers into a general strike he is probably thinking of the kind of political advantage this step might give him and his party.

There is nobody in the Post Office or in this government who wants to force the postal workers into a general strike. I will go further and say to the hon. member that there is nobody on this side of the House who, even though the postal workers go on strike, intends to make the kind of recommendation that he and his party made in June of 1966 when they introduced a bill to force the long shoremen back to work on the ground that this was in the public interest. The hon. member was here at that time. So he gives the postal workers the right to strike, and the moment it becomes inconvenient to him, he wants to take it away. Well, this government does not intend to do that.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kierans:** Let me quote an NDP press release of June 9, 1966. It states:

The time has therefore come when Parliament and the government cannot further postpone appropriate action to bring the strike to an end.

That is from your own press release. Then you explained why the NDP was submitting a draft bill to order the striking longshoremen in eastern Canadian ports to abandon their legal right to strike and return to work on terms that were fixed by your bill.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**Mr. Kierans:** When Mr. Howard presented this bill he said, as reported at page 7704 of *Hansard* for July 14, 1966:

I might say that even though the bill was in my name, I only acted in that respect as an agent for the party itself, because this was a matter of strong unanimity.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**Mr. Kierans:** So it is the NDP, I think, that would like the chaos of a general strike so they could propose a similar bill forcing the postal workers back to work. Well, that may be their policy but it is not ours.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Orlikow:** Mr. Speaker,—

**Some hon. Members:** Sit down.

[Mr. Kierans.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, please. Does the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) rise on a point of order, or to ask a question?

**Mr. Orlikow:** I should like to ask the minister a question, Mr. Speaker, if I may.

**Mr. Kierans:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to finish what I have to say. I listened with a great deal of interest to what the hon. member had to say and I did not ask him any questions. I did not expect there was any information there that I could get. The people of Canada have given postal workers the right to strike. This government does not intend to take it away from them.

• (5:30 p.m.)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kierans:** I should like to say, however, at the same time, that the people of Canada and this government at all times expect them to use that privilege with a sense of responsibility.

**An hon. Member:** They can strike.

**Mr. Kierans:** Yes, they can strike. There will be no legislation introduced to bring them back.

**An hon. Member:** Never?

**Mr. Kierans:** We will see. This is not our present intention. It is not my intention. They have that right, and I have no present intention to propose legislation to force them back. It is up to them to weigh the costs and the responsibilities. But I say that their present conduct may lead to greater problems for them in the long run than to go on strike because, just as one of the freedoms in this country is the right of people to go into business and to court the risk of bankruptcy, so also is it a freedom of a union to pursue policies that can eventually lead only to a reduction in the number of its own members and a reduction in the size of the union.

At the present time the series of slow-downs, rotating strikes or sitdowns is leading to a situation in which they are in effect crippling for a long time the postal service of Canada. If they do that, they are crippling themselves because if in the long run the people of Canada find they are dissatisfied with the service and turn to other means, they may not, when this series of disagreements is over, wish to come back to the Post Office. I will give one example of how this works. It is an example which relates to Ottawa and area, although similar examples