

*Summer Recess*

**An hon. Member:** You should have known better.

**Mr. Benjamin:** You guys had them sized up better than we had. It was all bluff and fluff in the first place.

Now, let me get you fellows.

**Mr. Shields:** You are in bed with them. What are you talking about?

**Mr. Benjamin:** The Post Office strike is nothing more than a symptom of disease. I predict, and I hope I am wrong, that we will be back here in August or September on back-to-work legislation, on matters relating to the Seaway workers, on matters relating to the seamen's union and, the grain handlers. You name it; there will be a list as long as your arm. Those are the reasons the Conservatives should be keeping this Parliament sitting.

The postal strike is only a symptom of disease. We will have half a dozen more symptoms the rest of this summer, this summer of discontent. This discontent has to do with things like tax reform, interest rates, housing, bankruptcies, the fair prices commission, energy policies, and another little one that happens to be a pet of mine, and that is VIA Rail. Everyone is in the act.

I raised the matter on June 29 and I am extremely pleased and proud of my colleagues from all parties who have been raising hell about that matter since June 29. I tried to be courteous by sending material that I had from a secret-type source and I even spread it around among Conservative and Liberal members of this place. Those are the things that we need to be here for next week.

If the boys from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick want to get up and ask about Atlantic Limited, they cannot do it if they cave in tonight. They caved in this afternoon. They gave up. I would like to tell some of my colleagues on the government side from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) wants you out of here when he makes his announcement next week or the week after about VIA Rail cancellations. Hon. members will not be able to raise the matter in their own caucus, let alone the House of Commons.

**Mr. Corbin:** We have.

**Mr. Benjamin:** But what did you get? You got kicked in the head, and you will get kicked in the head some more.

It is not just the postal strike, VIA Rail or a number of other matters, it is asking Parliament to sit for the rest of the summer if necessary to deal with matters which will require in some cases a 180 degree turn in present government policies. Governments of all political stripes have had to do that now and again. Governments have had to face up to making about turns. And, by the way, if they did have the guts to do that, they could get some credit for it.

You cannot continue to have the kind of performance we have had in Parliament in the past week, with big talk from the official opposition that they will keep us here until Christ-

mas, and then they fold and quit. They are the first ones to fold up.

I happen to disagree with my colleague from Winnipeg North Centre. I thought from day one that we should keep Parliament here for reasons other than the Post Office strike. But the government after its performance last night and today has a lot of nerve moving closure on a rule which has not been used since 1913. How desperate can the government get? the government wants us out of here. The government does not want anyone asking questions. The government does not want even its own caucus members around to fight and raise a little bit of heck.

**Mr. Gimaiel:** Look around you.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Let me get on to why I think Parliament should sit next week. I could mention the herd maintenance program. My colleague the hon. member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) has been trying to get something out of the government on that, as have some members of the official opposition. That is one reason to have Parliament sit next week.

Members from all three parties have been trying, either in this House or in their own caucuses, to get something done about interest rates. That is another good reason to stay here next week.

Then there is the matter of bankruptcies. I have had phone calls from businessmen in the last couple of weeks. That would be a good reason to stay here next week. What are we going to do about that situation?

Then there is the fair prices commission. That might be a good reason to sit here next week.

Those are reasons why my colleague from Winnipeg North Centre moved his motion to adjourn the House today. But the Tories chickened out. They cut and run. They were big talkers over the past week.

The problem is not only the Post Office dispute. You cannot put the state of the economy of the nation on the backs of the postal workers. There are many other things equally or more serious than the Post Office. Such as energy and transportation.

I come now to my main point. Here sits a government with a bunch of Liberal members from various parts of central and Atlantic Canada who are in the process of raising the cost of transportation and ignoring the energy issue. This government is abandoning 16 rail passenger routes and is reducing the frequency of five more. I am pleased that both Liberal and Conservative members from Atlantic and central Canada have been on their feet and saying things in public. I hope that gets a message to the Minister of Transport. But this government does not want us to sit here and talk about those matters.

The Canadian Transport Commission has already ruled that 15 of those 21 routes on which they have held hearings should be retained. Liberal members from Atlantic Canada and Tory members from western Canada agree with that. I think I can safely assume that is a topic we could discuss next week. But