

Private Members' Business

Commons how many post offices they planned to close. I could not even get the president of Canada Post to use the word closure. He kept using the word conversions.

We have seen mass demonstrations in town after town, in village after village, in some of the cities of this nation, protesting those so-called conversions as they lose their community post office. I consider the answers that other members and I received from Canada Post to be evasive. That is a polite expression for what it did.

What Canada Post did in regard to the back to work legislation in front of the House and further in front of the Senate was more than just evasive. It deceived. I would go so far as to say that it deliberately deceived the members of this House. We were told by the Minister of Labour that there were eight or nine items left and that if we quickly passed the legislation there would be assurances that the arbitrator would be able to work quickly and resolve the outstanding issues.

That was last October and here we are April 7, 1992 and those issues have not been resolved. The reason they have not been resolved is that Canada Post did not restrict the arbitration process to those eight or nine items. Canada Post deliberately came back with a much larger package of items and basically said to the arbitrator: "You discover what we agreed to. You discover what those eight or nine items are because we are not going to tell you. We are not going to help you".

When I was in front of the consumer and corporate affairs committee last Thursday, I quoted Harold Dunstan, the Canada Post negotiator, the vice-president in charge, who stated in the Senate: "The union will withdraw some of their extra items. Then we will get down to the basic numbers, the number of items that are really still in dispute".

The union went to arbitration. It honoured its commitment to the House of Commons. It honoured its commitment to the Senate. It honoured its commitment to the Minister of Labour. When it went into arbitration—and I have seen the documentation—it had a very small list of items that were still in dispute. Canada Post did the exact opposite of what it said in the Senate.

This legislation should not be denying the right to strike to postal office employees, the members of CUPW. It should be ordering Canada Post to negotiate in good faith. Furthermore, because I believe this is a very serious issue, I would recommend to this House that from now on, when Canada Post officials come before

the House of Commons committee, before they come in front of the Senate, if they are ever called to the bar of this House, they be sworn in as witnesses.

I find contemptible what they said and what they have done because they are in complete contradiction. I know that the Liberal member who has just now joined the House was in the committee when I quoted the words of Canada Post in its testimony in front of the Senate. Yet I could not get an answer from Canada Post. I could not get an answer as to why and what it said in testimony before the Senate was not honoured by Canada Post when it went into arbitration.

Often in this House we have to work on the basis of good faith. The opposition, the Liberals and ourselves, helped to speed the passage of the back to work legislation on the basis of information we were given by both parties. The Senate acted in good faith on the basis of that information. The Minister of Labour acted in good faith. CUPW, as many members will remember, ordered its workers back to work before the legislation was passed. It acted in good faith.

• (1720)

Mr. Speaker, I deliberately accuse Canada Post of misleading, deceiving, and not telling the truth to the people of Canada and to the Parliament of Canada. I think they should be held accountable for that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Luc Joncas (Matapédia—Matane): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-304, introduced by the hon. member for Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville. Hon. members are being asked to consider a proposal that would have a major impact on collective bargaining in this country. We are being asked to amend the Canada Labour Code, Part I, so as to outlaw strikes and lockouts involving employees of the Canada Post Corporation.

In fact, we are being asked to restrict the collective bargaining rights of Canada Post employees and the Corporation itself.

There have been similar motions in the past. Various intervenors have asked for amendments that would have brought about significant changes in our collective bargaining system. Often, recommendations were aimed at modifying our labour relations system so as to prohibit strikes and lockouts. These recommendations are usually motivated by the impact work stoppages may have on