

*Postal Service*

The Minister of Labour has always prided himself on standing for the rights of labour. I would not be one to say that he has not. Again today he said that the government would continue to rely on voluntary agreements. He indicated that when he mentioned that the process of voluntary agreement in one department of the government had broken down. Although we intend to support the bill on second reading, and I presume it will move rather quickly through committee, there is a cancer in the dispute resolution process of the public service. This is only one cell. It is shown in the morale of the public service, the way the merit principle is being dissipated in the public service, the way rights are being denied in the public service, and the way 3,000 people were brought in out of the ordinary channels in the years 1976 and 1977, according to the evidence before the Standing Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments. That is all part of this cancer. Now the public is being treated to the Public Service Commission reporting on the eve of an election with respect to what it will do with public servants. The public has not been consulted with respect to that, they have been told.

The government brought in Bill C-28 which has a disturbing effect on the public service, to say the least. As well, this section is pulled out of it for special treatment. The attitude of the government toward public servants is sick—as well as short term. The length or breadth of the government's vision is as long as the next two months. While this bill must be dealt with because it is a matter put before us by the government, there ought not to be any person in this House who can approach this entire subject without a rather heavy heart. Within the time limited to it, I suggest the government should work very, very hard at changing its attitudes, so that the entire process in government and the relationship between its employers and employees can change. Once again the Government of Canada can begin to provide some leadership for the public and private sectors of this country. This sense of leadership has been lost over the last ten years.

**Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression that second reading of any bill dealt with debate on the principle of the bill. I have to ask myself what the principle in Bill C-45 is. How do I square the way I stand and the way my party stands on the principle contained in this bill? I think the principle is one of confrontation.

This has been the pattern since the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) ran for office in 1968. It is reminiscent of a candidate for Prime Minister standing in Montreal waving defiance on St. Jean Baptiste Day, which caused the rest of Canada to say: "What a strong Prime Minister he will make. Look how he puts the rabble in their place. That is the type of man we want as leader". That is the same kind of confrontation which we experienced when the LaPalme drivers were demonstrating on Parliament Hill against the manner in which they had lost their jobs. It is the same kind of principle. The Prime Minister said to working class people who lost their jobs through no fault of their own: "Mange la merde". At the same time, the rest of Canada said: "What a tough Prime Minister! He has moxie, he has backbone. That is the man."

[Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton).]

It is the same sort of principle we saw with respect to Quebec and the government of Quebec. It is the same type of confrontation where the Prime Minister is building on a scapegoat philosophy, so that the rest of Canada says: "It takes a French Canadian to put French Canadians in their place". That is the sort of cynicism, that is the kind of philosophy I find when I read this one-page bill. What else is the principle in it?

• (2102)

I was shocked to hear the Postmaster General (Mr. Lamontagne) say yesterday in a CBC interview that all this bill does is to provide for CUPW a clause which is already in the Canada Labour Code. Section 181 of the Canada Labour Code says, in effect, that workers who are covered by it cannot go on strike during an election period. Mr. Speaker, he has not read the bill. I phoned up and said: "You have used section 181 but you have not put in section 148," which says, in effect, that the workers who are prevented from striking during an election period will be covered by the previous collective agreement. Ministers over there have not even read the bill properly. It is not often I feel sympathy with Liberals but I do feel a little sympathy for the defender of the Hamilton Ticats. I feel some sympathy for the men who try to keep Harold Ballard out of Hamilton. Here we have CUPW which comes under the public service act, under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen), and lo and behold, the bill which affects them is being introduced by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro). I cannot help feeling sympathetic toward him if he feels beleaguered and asks: Good God, what nonentity wrote this bill and expects me to clean it up?

There is no protection in this bill for the workers. The post office flunkies in middle management would love to see the workers without a collective agreement during those 60 or 90 days when an election is being held. They have never shown themselves to be particularly efficient in the absence of whatever is admirable in public relations. Again, the principle is one of confrontation. On the very day the CUPW negotiations went to conciliation, yesterday, the Prime Minister was tabling this bill in the House. Since the Minister of Labour seems to have done so well last Friday he wants to press his luck; he wants us to put the measure through today.

What sort of reaction, Mr. Speaker, do you think this will provoke in any honest-to-goodness trade union with any kind of balls? What kind of reaction might have been expected? I am amazed at the patience and restraint with which CUPW has reacted to Bill C-45. As I say, there is only one concept here, and that is confrontation.

There is political confrontation as well to some degree, because if there is one union in Canada which is not persona grata in the hearts and minds of the public from coast to coast it is CUPW. So the Prime Minister is trying to hoist the opposition in the House of Commons. What a marvellous election issue—to be able to go across the country and say: "We want to be sure there are no strikes in the post office during an election." And if other parties vote against it, he can