

*Post Office*

goodwill could be found than the hon. member for Westmount, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) of *Bonaventure* fame and other interesting records. He and his spokesmen seemed eager to miss no opportunity to inflame the situation and exacerbate the problem. On May 26 a Canadian Press item by a very able reporter, Ian Porter, states:

Drury comes within a breath of daring postal workers to strike...He said the government would be under less pressure than ever before to settle on union terms.

Four days later, on May 30, David Monk, director of communications for the Treasury Board told reporters that the 24-hour rotating mail strikes are a callous tactic that harasses the innocent public. This was on the very eve of the arrival of the government-chosen mediator, President Carrothers. What an environment for compromise they extended to him; what a scene they set!

After that gentleman withdrew in apparent despair, a spokesman again rushed into print to denounce the unions. Then, the irrepressible Postmaster General, envious perhaps of his colleague's temporary monopoly of ineptitude, held a press conference. This produced one of the most incredible utterances since the days of Baron Munchausen.

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

**Mr. Macquarrie:** As reported on June 9, he said that the rotating strikes and the continued spread of a national strike and wildcat stoppages are alienating the Canadian public. He went on to say it might even be that the people would lose confidence in the Post Office if this continued! The suggestion was made that the striking workers were responsible for the diminution in the faith the people have in the institution over which he has presided with such great disarray for two years. In speaking of the people losing confidence, and in speaking of the declining use of the service, he knows the story of the declining use of the service by many people in Canada.

● (4:20 p.m.)

If he does not know, I can let him have my files. The Prime Minister, (Mr. Trudeau), the captain of the team, joined the fray and quoted statistics which have been cryptically refuted and publicly denied by the leaders of the unions in the most outspoken terms that I have ever heard applied by public men to the leader of a government. So far as I know, these statements have as yet gone without

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

contradiction. These are contributions to a situation which now faces us. But what appears to be constant in all this is the determination to confine one part of the economy, one group of employees to whom the 6 per cent guidelines shall and will apply come hell or high water, postal strikes or no postal strikes. This, I fear, is part of the problem. Others may get 19 per cent, 10 per cent, and perhaps even 21.9 per cent, but these workers must settle for 6 per cent or else. Even Judge Lippe's suggestion of 6.3 per cent seems an extravagance which a brittle government will not accept even in the face of disruptions of the postal service.

Is this group of public servants to become the scapegoat of a faltering effort to establish a guideline which so few others in the country will respect? Are these workers to be the victims of a squeeze play in a government's last ditch effort to save face, if not the postal service? Is the government really determined to force upon some of its own workers a restriction which it can neither sell nor compel upon the rest of the public? Is this the issue? The government's handling of this whole matter has been a dismal, dreary record of insensitivity, stubbornness and lack of consideration of the public or of their own employees.

We have today a vital national service in suspension, Canadians inconvenienced, business and the economy suffering, and the average citizen denied a service for which he is paying at the highest rate since confederation. Must this go on and on? The minister laughs, but it is the highest rate since confederation. That is one of his great achievements. Must the months and months of inefficient, inferior mail service be followed by a galloping disruption of that service and a continuing deadlock in an effort to bring this to an end? After what the Postmaster General has done as the head of the department, I am not surprised that he can even laugh in the face of this situation. It may be unbecoming, but it is not surprising.

Do the proprietors of the once-designated just society believe that the Canadian public is possessed of endless patience and devoid of any determination to have its rights protected by the group to which it gave its mandate for a time, namely to the government of the day? I say with all seriousness and with great concern that there is grave danger that the wick of public patience is growing short. Let the government know this, and I say also, let the unions know this. My sympathies are, as is