

*Government Orders*

Contracting out, if continued, will erode the service further because there is not the same commitment by people who are now the contractors working for Canada Post in a particular service, simply because the cheaper that they can get it done for the more that individual can put in his pocket. What happens is that we get the scenarios like the one in Mexico where one is told: "Don't put a letter in that system. You will be lucky if you ever see it again because the people there are not exactly reliable. They are not people you can trust". Canadians have always felt very secure that they can trust their letter carriers and that they can trust the people behind the wicket at the post office in their home towns.

Now we are being asked to trust someone making minimum wage who really does not want to be there, someone wishing for a much better job with benefits included. Why should they give a darn if a letter goes missing or not? It is not big deal for them. That situation is something that is quickly going to come to fruition as far as Canada Post is concerned once it realizes this whole process of change that is going through.

Another issue in this country—and we talk about this very fondly—is that we have set up a social net to look after Canadians. We have set up a system called benefits and the paying into of programs called pension plans. However, the government seems to forget is that if people are not given benefits and they do not pay into their pension plans, eventually down the line somebody is going to have to look after these Canadians. If the benefits of 42,000 or 45,000 people at the post office are reduced, there may seem to be some sort of benefit as a corporation today by making a profit, but who is going to pay for those people down the line when they retire? They were making so little they never had an opportunity to save any money and they never paid any benefits into any plan. What do they do? Obviously they will have to be looked after by the state.

We talk in this place very often about what goes on in the United States versus what goes on in Canada. When we look at those people living on the streets in big cities in the United States who have nowhere to go, no benefits, no nothing, it makes us wonder whether that is the kind of system we are talking about when we talk

about these kinds of processes of contracting out and not having any benefits for our workers.

If we have job security and benefits for workers, it is going to save us something down the road. It is not something that we should look at as being something we cannot afford because in essence we will have to pay it anyway.

I want to talk a bit again about bargaining in good faith. I for one am appalled at the game that the government continues to play. On the one hand it says to CUPW and Canada Post that it expects them to bargain in good faith, but at the same time it continues putting out the message, as it did in the grain handlers' strike when it said to grain handlers: "We are going to bring in back-to-work legislation". The minister responsible for grains and oilseeds went to Winnipeg and said: "We are going to put them back to work through back-to-work legislation", even as they were in the process of trying to negotiate with a mediator, a person from the Minister of Labour's office who was down in Thunder Bay in the mediation office trying to get the negotiation kick-started again.

Anyone who has ever been in a negotiating room knows that once you get those kinds of mixed messages and signals the negotiation is finished, it is off, because one side or another feels very comfortable that they will do better with the arbitrator than what is being proposed at the bargaining table. My sense of what has happened is that Canada Post management has a lot more respect and they hope that the arbitrator will be more on its side than the union does in this case. I think it is feeling that it will get something beneficial, more so than what CUPW will get.

This process of bringing in legislation before there is a strike or a lockout is a complete farce. Anybody who has ever been in a collective bargaining process or a negotiating room long enough knows that it stops everything.

The minister opposite who used to be the Minister of Labour should know that they keep sending mixed signals to the labour movement: "Either do it my way or we will bring in back-to-work legislation. If you don't like it we will put in an arbitrator who will rule in the company's favour. So you have to give concessions".