

Government Orders

couple of ministers were delayed in getting here. We have them. Let us proceed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

POSTAL SERVICES CONTINUATION ACT, 1991

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-40, an act to provide for the continuation of postal services.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Danis: Mr. Speaker, when I rose in this place to address hon. members on the introduction of legislation bringing about an end to a damaging labour dispute, it was my hope I would not find it necessary to do so again for a long time to come.

Regrettably, this wish has not been fulfilled and I rise today to introduce legislation, the Postal Service Continuation Act, 1991.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Danis, seconded by Mr. Blais, moves that this bill be now read the first time and, pursuant to the order adopted on Friday, October 25, 1991, be deemed printed.

Bill read first time and deemed printed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): When shall this bill be read the second time? Pursuant to the order adopted on Friday, October 25, 1991, now.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1210)

[English]

POSTAL SERVICES CONTINUATION ACT, 1991

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour) moved that Bill C-40, an act to provide for the continuation of postal

services, be read the second time and referred to Legislative Committee H.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the legislation is designed to ensure the continuation of postal operations and provide a mechanism for the settlement of the current and long-standing labour dispute between Canada Post Corporation and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

It is never a pleasant task for a Minister of Labour to resort to legislation to bring about an end to an industrial relations dispute. However, in this particular case the parties to this dispute have been afforded every possible opportunity to resolve their differences through the provision of extensive conciliation and mediation assistance over the past two years.

Despite the efforts of a conciliation officer, a conciliation board and one of the most highly respected labour mediators in this country, the parties have failed in their attempts to find an acceptable compromise to their differences.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I remind hon. members that these negotiations impact on all Canadians who depend on the postal service for reliable and efficient delivery of the mail. One has only to recall the sight, earlier this year, of senior citizens lining up in the sweltering heat to collect income security cheques, to realize the potential for disruption to the income flow of the elderly, the unemployed and those requiring social assistance.

Numerous businesses which rely on the mail for their economic existence are also severely impacted by any significant interruption to postal service through a work stoppage. The government, as the protector of the public interest, cannot subject the citizens of this country to further disruptions which have the ability to impact on their health and well-being.

[English]

It may be worth while for me to briefly review the current dispute before commenting on the legislation which I have introduced today. The present negotiations between Canada Post and CUPW constitute the first round of bargaining between these parties since a 1988 decision of the Canada Labour Relations Board to reorganize the structure of bargaining units at Canada Post.

Negotiations between the parties are focusing on an attempt to arrive at a new single collective agreement for