

Post Office

This offer was made at the time of mediation, May 31 to June 2, and was referred to by the Council of Postal Unions or one of its spokesmen as baloney. If this is baloney, I suggest it is quite a large package representing, as it does, an increase in pay and benefits of approximately \$42 million over the 30-month period of the proposed contract. Further, the postal clerks would now be receiving \$3.40 per hour and could look forward to a pay rate of \$3.55 per hour as of April 1, 1971 if the Council were to accept the government offer.

In spite of what the hon. member who has just spoken alleges, the government has offered and continues to stand ready to write into any future contract comprehensive provisions for the protection of workers in the bargaining unit from the impact of technological change. I am told that this term of art is covered by the phrase "job security". As far as I can ascertain, what is being sought specifically under the heading of "job security" is not protection for the worker from the onslaught of technical change, but an unqualified guarantee that once on the payroll the man will not for any reason be put off the payroll. I think probably that is a little unique in Canadian employment practices. I think hon. members will understand if there is resistance to this kind of demand. I hope there will be an acceptance of the arithmetic of the current wage offers.

Having made a series of offers beginning last February and in spite of many attempts to get the Council to at least present some kind of counter-proposal substantiated with some supporting facts, the Council has stood rooted in the position set out in the minority report of its representative on the conciliation board. Hon. members will recall that the report of this board was made public on May 4, almost two months ago.

I mentioned on an earlier occasion a number of issues which still divide the position rigorously maintained by the Council from the views of the majority on the conciliation board. I will not attempt to repeat them here. I remind hon. members that with respect to employment in the public service there is a very wide range of fringe benefits which members of the public service, including those in the postal service, now enjoy. This range of benefits is far in excess of those available to employees in comparable occupations in the private sector.

There has recently been considerable publicity surrounding certain information on cur-

rent rates of pay and earnings of postal employees compared with other elements in the private sector. I wish to say a few words about these alleged comparisons. For example, it has been mentioned that the average weekly earnings of employees in Canadian industry were \$124.64 per week in February of this year.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

• (6:20 p.m.)

Mr. Drury: I repeat, the average weekly earnings of employees in Canadian industry are \$124.60 a week as of last February. This figure includes overtime payments, shift premiums and other payments. The comparable average for postal employees, including the same premium payments, is now \$132.69 as of last February. We should, then, be comparing \$124 as an average for industrial employees in Canada with \$132 for postal employees. These are the figures prior to, and not including, the pay increases which have been offered. These increases, if accepted, would raise the earnings of postal employees to \$143.20 as of June 1 of this year.

Another set of figures relates to the average hourly earnings of employees in manufacturing industries which will be acknowledged, I think, as being one of the better paid sectors of industry in Canada. In February of 1970, their hourly wages, including overtime and other premium payments, were \$2.93 an hour. The average hourly earnings of postal employees, including the same premium payments, were \$3.32 an hour prior to the increases now being proposed and which would be applicable if the current government offer accepted. If the present offer were accepted, the average would rise to \$3.58 per hour as of June 1 of this year.

Previous speakers have made reference to a letter addressed by the co-chairmen of the Council of Postal Unions to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) yesterday alleging a series of statements attributed to the Prime Minister and making a rather unfortunate attempt to refute an alleged statement by the right hon. gentleman. I shall not attempt to deal with this, except to say that this afternoon the Prime Minister sent to the co-chairmen a detailed answer to this letter refuting effectively the misstatement.

Mr. Orlikow: It had better be more correct than his figures last week. They were wrong.

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of mythology which makes this whole postal