

*Post Office*

It seems to me that the situation is extremely serious at the present time. In fact, previous speakers have said so in most eloquent fashion. They have explained the situation better than I can but it seems to me that it is my duty to insist the minister surround himself with advisers capable of maintaining intelligent human relations within his department. This is one thing he should leave to others, realizing that in this respect, he has not been the least bit successful so far.

That is why I repeat that he is the one who is primarily responsible for that situation. When there is provocation, a reaction inevitably follows.

Before concluding I would like,—and that is my third point,—to submit a proposal that has often been moved in the House. It seems to me that it is still important and advisable to do so today.

As a matter of fact, compulsory arbitration should have been established long ago, with regard to working conditions, and departments should take advantage of this.

With compulsory arbitration, strikes could be avoided in the Public Service and labour and management would be compelled to negotiate in order to find solutions to their disputes. Absolutely nothing is settled with guns or with threats, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) tried to do recently with regard to employees, or even where union leaders are concerned because they themselves are using the same weapons against the Postmaster General and Minister of Communications or against the government.

If like two neighbours who cannot agree on the type of fence to build between their properties, the Postmaster General and Minister of Communications and the union leaders do not stop trading insults as they have been doing for two years now, nothing will be solved and once more the people will suffer.

Should there be compulsory arbitration in Canada, the minister would have to stop being arrogant because he would no longer be able to insult everybody instead of solving problems. Like the union members, he would have to sit at the bargaining table. In Princeville last year a labour dispute lasted over six months. Employees were waiting for the employer who was conspicuous by his absence. Thus the strike lasted more than six months and it will now take the workers two, three or four years with the small wage increase they obtained to recover what they have lost during the strike.

A postal strike in Canada is a luxury that we cannot afford. As members of this House, we should resort to every means at our disposal to prevent such a disaster because we have no right to allow a strike especially in the postal service which is most essential.

Compulsory arbitration is not a dictatorship, but it must not be characterized by arrogance, threats and blackmailing, as has been the case for the last two years in the Post Office Department. True arbitration means that sensible people meet together and discuss a problem and, if necessary, agree to a compromise.

In conclusion, I ask the minister to seriously consider entrusting someone else in his department with the care of ensuring a sound management of staff and more human relations, which would help settle a great many things.

The second solution would be to remove from all post offices in Canada the photograph of the Postmaster General and to resort to compulsory arbitration.

I see I am making you smile, Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to do so at the end of the session. Thank you for your kindness to me and I hope that in spite of the the present serious situation, the minister will seriously consider the possibility of compulsory arbitration in order to spare the Canadian people, who pay for the postal service, the inconvenience of being deprived of it.

Today, Canadians are paying much more for that service. It is up to the minister to see that they get it since it is his responsibility.

**Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General and Minister of Communications):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the member for Lotbinière. At least, he has spoken honestly and has made concrete recommendations. Even though I cannot accept his recommendation for compulsory arbitration, I congratulate him since he has made a suggestion instead of contenting himself with making at large comments as did the members of the other two parties.

*[English]*

Mr. Speaker, I think we can leave the musical maestro of the Conservative party to one side for the moment, because again he has conducted a rehearsal. Some day he will come to the performance and say something that will be a real recommendation instead of a resumé of irrelevant facts which he constantly drags out of what must be a very volumi-