

vice, resulting in a loss of business which used to be handled by the Post Office Department. This amounts to running so as to stand in the same place. The department hardly maintains the same position, because in order to meet the deficit resulting from loss of revenue due to declining service there has to be an increase in the cost of postal service, which results in further loss of business. Obviously, it is a losing game.

I should like to receive further background information. I can well understand that the Post Office Department has become so inefficient that, as the parliamentary secretary indicated, voluminous protests are coming in from all parts of Canada. However, I am willing to take a reasonable position on this matter and suggest that the government deals with just a sampling of the protests that have been received.

There is another area of Post Office problems that I am sure has generated many letters of protest. I refer to the failure of the government to come to grips with the complaints of its own employees. In 1969 I received from the Fort William—Port Arthur and District Labour Council a letter which outlined some of their problems in this respect. Another letter came from this group, dated March 30, 1972, which makes complaints about the working conditions at the Thunder Bay post office. I am sure hon. members representing these areas have received copies of these letters, because the correspondence mentions that they were sent copies.

Obviously, labour relations present serious problems to the Post Office Department. The most recent negotiations took place in 1970. They went on for month after month without settlement, and eventually—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

**Some hon. Members:** Carry on.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member may continue with the unanimous consent of the House.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you I thank the members of the House for their courtesy. I shall not trespass unduly on the time allowed but will try to bring this part of my statement to a conclusion and leave the matter there for the time being. As I was saying, labour relations within the Post Office Department have been most unsatisfactory for the past two or three years. In the most recent negotiations in 1970, no action was taken to improve the salary situation until the employees engaged in a period of rotating strikes which caused considerable disruption to the postal service of Canada, along with all the other problems that I have outlined briefly this afternoon.

We are in the same situation in 1972. The contract has run out. It is now a month since the employees have had a contract. It was admitted in the House the other day by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) that no specific offer had been made to the postal union members, notwithstanding the fact that they are operating without a contract. It appears that the same delay and procrastination will result in a repetition of what occurred

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in 1970. The government will not be prodded into taking positive action until the employees are forced to protest, perhaps in the form of rotating strikes, in order to bring to the attention of the government and the Postmaster General (Mr. Côté) the difficulties under which they are working.

I have received a few letters from several local labour councils on the matter. Again, I do not want to be unreasonable but I am sure that from all parts of Canada similar complaints must be reaching the Postmaster General. Therefore, I think it is a reasonable request that some of these letters be made available so that members of the opposition might have an idea of the broad spectrum of public opinion on the deteriorating efficiency of the Post Office Department. I repeat what I said at the outset of my remarks, that we are not asking for correspondence received from isolated districts. This is a reasonable demand, Mr. Speaker. I hope the government will provide members of the opposition with the information necessary to carry out an intelligent appraisal of the problem.

• (1740)

**Mr. Jack Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton):** Mr. Speaker, it is a sad commentary on the disastrous deterioration on the front benches of the official opposition when we see them bring forward a silly motion like this, what I would have described as a tongue-in-cheek motion, asking the government to produce the kind of criticism, comments and letters which the hon. member seeks. To give him his due, he tried to protect his motion by saying in effect, "That isn't what I have said and it isn't really what I am looking for."

The situation, Mr. Speaker, is that other hon. members of this House have on the order paper motions for the production of papers which were put forward sincerely in the hope that they would have an opportunity to debate and vote on them. These motions seek papers that hon. members are genuinely interested in having produced, but today we have this motion for the production of letters which the hon. member seems to think are as important as other motions which have appeared on the order paper.

When President Johnson left the White House he gave an address in which he outlined the three great problems facing the United States: first was the war in Viet Nam, second was the race relations problem, and third, dealing more with the financial area and the question of efficiency, was the Post Office. It is recognized throughout the world that there are problems in this area. To suggest that we have a poor post office system is not in accordance with the facts. If the hon. member is so critical of the post office staff, I suggest he should attempt to learn what the post office does on the positive side and not be content to rely on the few letters of complaint that he receives.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** They are voluminous, according to the parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Cullen:** If the hon. member did a little research and asked people to write about the good service which the post office provides, he would find the correspondence to be much more voluminous than the few complaints he has