

Anti-Inflation Act

Mr. Peters: Mackasey's the reason.

Mr. Leggatt: The Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) is the reason for the strike. If the Postmaster General did not insist on seeing his picture in the papers three times a week, and on being on three television shows a week, there would not be a strike. But he wants public bargaining in the public service. I am amazed that the strike has only now begun. I thought the strike would take place at any time during the past year, and every time the postman came to my door I was surprised. Every time I read the newspaper I was told that the strike was imminent. When I saw the postmen I said to them, "Are you not on strike?" They said "No, we want to continue delivering mail." Judging from what you read in the papers, a Post Office strike has been in progress for the past two years. But that is not so. The mails have been delivered.

An hon. Member: You couldn't tell that by the deliveries we have been getting.

Mr. Leggatt: My mail delivery has been good.

An hon. Member: No drinking in the House.

Mr. Leggatt: I assure hon. members that this is the purest water you can get from the tap.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): His name isn't John A. Macdonald, you know.

Mr. Leggatt: Although the postal workers asked for 71 per cent over three years, the award is for 14 per cent a year, which is not particularly generous.

There is something we forget about postmen, something people do not often mention. My dad worked in the Post Office for 36 years. He was proud of his job. He knew all the routes in the community. His work as a postman was challenging, and he worked hard in the postal service. Now, because of the increasing introduction of technology, there is every reason for people in the Post Office to be concerned. Increasingly, Post Office jobs are becoming more boring. The workers are being told to push buttons. Their jobs are becoming more mundane, more boring, and they are mad about it. How would hon. members feel if they were no longer asked to make decisions or exercise judgment, but had to sit here and do nothing?

An hon. Member: That's nothing different.

Mr. Leggatt: It seems to me that the problems of inflation and problems in the Post Office are related. This is not a one-way street. The people in the Post Office are entitled to some dignity. They are entitled to negotiate changes in their working conditions, changes which are negotiated in most industrial sectors. I do not support everything that has happened in the Post Office. I do not think the Montreal situation is good, just as the Post Office does not think it is good. But I do not think it is right to precipitate a strike in the postal service to solve it. Let labour solve its problems itself. The labour movement will do it. The government is not going to do it. You will merely turn these people into martyrs. The labour movement is getting behind them, and I do not think we are

[Mr. Leggatt.]

adopting the right approach. As I say, there are problems in the Post Office; there are particular difficulties in Montreal, but I submit the government is going about their solution in a wrong-headed way.

Let me return to my theme. I was diverted. I want to deal briefly with an interesting article Walter Gordon wrote in the *Toronto Star* of October 13, dealing with wage and price controls. In that article he took the trouble to examine oil company profits during the past four years. Apparently between 1970 and 1974 the profits of Imperial Oil increased by 176 per cent. Poor old Gulf made only a 313 per cent increase in the same period, and Shell Canada increased its profits by 178 per cent. Compare that with the 71 per cent the postmen are seeking. May I call it ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

PUBLIC SERVICE—SUGGESTION SALARY INCREASES FOR EXECUTIVE CATEGORY APPROVED AT SAME CABINET MEETING AS CONTROL PROGRAM APPROVED

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, this evening I wish to pursue the question I raised this afternoon with the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) about the timing of the formal and final approval of salary increases for senior civil servants. May I go over the sequence of events?

This afternoon the Prime Minister suggested that the Lambert report was presented to cabinet on March 31 and accepted by the cabinet on July 24. That general approval and acceptance by the cabinet led to the reference of the proposed salary ranges to the cabinet committee. The cabinet committee studied these salary ranges and slotted individuals into those various ranges between that time in question and two weeks ago.

When the Prime Minister responded to my question in the House he said that the final approval given to increases for deputy ministers did not coincide with the cabinet meeting which approved the guidelines affecting all Canadians in this country. The Prime Minister had said that he thought that probably in August not a great deal of work was done, and that the whole matter was carried out between August and two weeks ago. He was referring to the slotting of various individuals into the various salary ranges agreed on and approved by cabinet in its July meeting. Therefore, until two weeks ago the cabinet committee was apparently slotting people into those various salary ranges.

● (2200)

Two weeks ago it was October 9 or thereabouts, and if I take the Prime Minister literally, on that date and thereafter Treasury Board minutes were signed formally ratify-