

is an inconvenience, into the lives of young people who might be waiting for word on jobs, or for people who might be awaiting documents or payments in the mail.

But for others it is much more than an inconvenience, it is a literal tragedy to be without their mail in this country. It can be the breaking of their lives. People who have laboured long to put together small enterprises, people who have worked hard to keep and to earn jobs are now being forced, because the government will not negotiate a settlement, to see their businesses put at risk, to see their jobs put in jeopardy. These individual Canadians cannot afford to have their government play games with their future.

The Government of Canada has two alternatives. One is to negotiate a settlement. The other is back to work legislation. The one thing which is not acceptable is to do nothing. The government created this burden for Canadians and it must resolve that burden. A Parliament which rises now is one which turns its back on its responsibility to be here immediately in case there is a need for Parliament to act. We have here a House of Commons which is not working to solve the problems of our country. That is not the fault of the institution of Parliament; it is the fault of the direction of the policies brought before the Parliament by the government. We have a Parliament and a government whose initiatives and policies are having the effect of dividing the country more dangerously than it has been divided at any time in our past.

We have a government which ignores the real problems of real people. An opposition in the Parliament of Canada has only very limited weapons. I talked about those when I began my remarks. On some occasions we can be ingenious in the use of our weapons to ensure that the public interest is protected. But there are very serious restrictions on what we can do as an opposition. We cannot hold Liberal members of Parliament here forever. We cannot force the government to be here forever. We cannot even force it to do its duty and negotiate a settlement or bring in back to work legislation. But we do have a duty to Parliament to try to force this government to accept its responsibility to the people of Canada. We have a duty to try to force the government to restore the mail service in this country, to recognize that it is not here for its own pleasure but is here to serve the interests of individual Canadians, to solve the problems of individual Canadians. There is no indication at all on the part of this government that it intends to do anything to restore mail service in this country. Until we get an indication of a serious determination to restore the mail service in this country, we in the Progressive Conservative Party intend to prolong this adjournment debate as long as we can.

● (1530)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Laprairie (Mr. Deniger) on a point of order.

Summer Recess

Mr. Deniger: Would the Leader of the Opposition allow me one or two questions so that I may properly understand his rationale and the conclusions he suggests to the House?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With the consent of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Clark: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deniger: Mr. Speaker, I did appreciate the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. I think he eloquently made a very strong case about the specific impact of a postal strike on the Canadian people. He mentioned some particular cases and rightly so, and many more could be added. However, does the Leader of the Opposition think that the right to strike should be taken away from postal workers? If not, does the Leader of the Opposition think that we should immediately legislate them back to work?

Mr. Clark: I want to answer very briefly, Mr. Speaker. I think it would be a mistake to take away the right to strike from postal workers. The hon. member will remember that we have suggested another way of settling disputes in the public sector. I hope this government will be prepared to implement such a solution. But, at least until we have a more efficient mechanism, we must respect the right of the workers to strike, and we must also recognize the right of Parliament to act in case of emergency to provide services. Back to work legislation immediately? Of course not. If, as I often said, we can reach a negotiated settlement, that would be a lot better. But the government must show evidence that it is really determined to reach such a settlement by negotiation.

Mr. Deniger: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. Leader of the Opposition allow a supplementary question?

Mr. Clark: Certainly.

Mr. Deniger: Mr. Speaker, I share many of the feelings which were expressed by the Leader of the Opposition, but I would like to get things clear. The motion put forward by our House leader does provide that at any time prior to that date if the government becomes convinced that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time, Madam Speaker may give notice that she is so satisfied and thereupon the House shall meet in due time. Therefore, does the Leader of the Opposition not agree that the guarantee which he is seeking can be found in the notice of motion introduced by the Government House leader?

Mr. Clark: With this motion, the government alone is deciding what the public interest requires. We have no confidence in the government to make such a decision. It is for Parliament to make that judgment. We are here and we intend to stay here to allow Parliament, not just the government, to decide what the public interest, the Canadian interest requires. We consider bankruptcies, problems affecting individuals,