

*Time Allocation*

that we have to agree, all of us, that there was no national emergency. We were not facing a strike that had the effect of crippling the Canadian economy. This is not a rail strike where commodities such as grain, coal, and other essentials are not moving throughout the country, something which we had to endure a few months ago. In this case, we have a situation in which we have a strike which was comparatively more calm than the letter carriers' strike. Certainly, the violence was kept to a minimum up until the time the Government chose to bring this ill-fated Bill forward. According to the Government, the mail was largely moving. According to a statement this morning in *Le Journal de Montreal*, which I will read in French—

[*Translation*]

“The Canada Post Corporation claims it received nearly 32 million letters and parcels during the weekend and that it delivered them on Tuesday”.

Canada Post admitted that despite the fact there was a strike and probably because of the fact the Corporation decided to us strike breakers, the mail was being delivered, which adds credibility to my argument that the Government was ill-advised to introduce its Bill at this time.

Furthermore, negotiations were still going on between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. We think the Government should have done the right thing, which was to act on the request we made to the Minister on the floor of the House about two weeks ago, to appoint a mediator who could then work unhampered, without this sword of Damocles, without the threat of this legislation we have before us today. The mediator would have been able to consider the conciliation report tabled earlier, and perhaps by today the strike would have been settled. However, by introducing back-to-work legislation which is always cordially detested by the workers concerned, whether they happen to work for Canada Post or in any other sector, the Government is taking the risk of having a prolonged strike and of increased violence, and that is what is happening.

I think the Government is largely to blame for the fact that the strike is continuing and that the atmosphere on the picket line is getting worse, as postal workers are becoming increasingly irritated at what is happening, at being faced with back-to-work legislation and seeing people, otherwise well intentioned and who only want to earn a few bucks, being forced by the Government to face Canada Post's regular workers, which necessarily will lead to violent confrontation.

Furthermore, the Bill contains measures that are all wrong. I had a chance to discuss them with some of my colleagues. Clause 7 of the Bill appears to force the hand of the mediator-arbitrator by enjoining him seriously to consider the conciliation report. Whoever has read this report knows perfectly well that in some parts, it supports Canada Post's plan to franchise postal services. And that is one of the most controversial issue at stake between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

• (1540)

[*English*]

I say that it was a mistake for the Government to phrase Clause 7 of the Bill in such a manner as to give the impression that the Government is giving instructions to the mediator-arbitrator to consider favourably the conciliation report. Those who have read the report know that it is slanted in favour of franchising out postal services. This is one of the hottest points that is dividing Canada Post and the union.

I have to agree that the wording is worse in French than in English. In English it states that the mediator-arbitrator should “give due cognizance to the report of the conciliation commissioner”. This may be interpreted by some as considering it very seriously, whereas to others it may be read as giving simple consideration. On the other hand, in French using the words—

[*Translation*]

—“prendra sérieusement connaissance” does not leave any room for interpretation. This strictly means that the mediator-arbitrator should rely on the conciliation report and in that sense, for a Government which has been bragging since the beginning that it has allowed Canada Post to manage its own affairs and that it has tried to intervene as little as possible in that conflict, we see a clause where the Government gives clear instructions to the mediator-arbitrator. However, I must admit, because I already have had several discussions with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Cadieux), that he seems to be open-minded and that he would be ready to accept amendments to that clause, and this augurs well, and in due course I intend to introduce an amendment to curb the effect of that clause.

However this will not solve the problem in Clause 11 which I feel provides for excessively severe penalties and also additional ones, because there are fines much greater than in the past to punish those who would go against the legislation.

However, I must admit that in that case I was less successful in my negotiations with the Minister and I will have to propose an amendment to shorten the five-year period during which a union leader or a Canada Post official could be prevented from holding office. I will have to fight against that clause, since the Government does not seem to be ready to admit that it is most dangerous and could infringe human rights.

This being said, Madam Speaker, I have to add before concluding that I object to the time allocation motion or to the guillotine set by the Government and, in any case, I will rise again to state my views about the contents of the Bill which I find inequitable.

[*English*]

**Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot):** Madam Speaker, the Post Office is an institution that is close to the hearts and souls of Canadians virtually everywhere. It is a place where, in every village and hamlet of Canada, if the federal Government is to have a presence, it has it there. It is a place where fishermen