

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

these prosecutions or any initial steps leading toward prosecution will not be proceeded with?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** To what prosecution is the hon. member alluding?

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** I understand that already the Staff Relations Board has notified certain representatives of the postal workers that they are to appear on March 17 with a view to preliminary discussions before prosecution.

**Mr. Trudeau:** These are not prosecutions; they are subpoenas in order to permit the board to establish whether or not the strike is illegal. They have nothing to do with prosecutions.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** May I ask the Prime Minister a further question? Are these discussions which are to be held with the Staff Relations Board taking place with a view to deciding whether or not prosecutions should be proceeded with, and would the Prime Minister withhold these discussions?

**Mr. Trudeau:** The hon. member is really distorting the role of this board, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of the hearing is to establish whether the strike is illegal or not, and in order to do this the board will subpoena witnesses to get the facts. That is all the witnesses are being subpoenaed for.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** In order to blackmail them—

**Mr. Trudeau:** Do you want the board to have the truth or not?

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Has the Postmaster General yet been able to consider the suggestion that he hand over the conduct of this dispute to the Minister of Labour, who could substitute some knowledge of industrial relations for the minister's bull-in-the-china-shop methods?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Robert Simpson (Churchill):** A supplementary question to the Postmaster General. Is the minister in a position to advise the house whether a decision has been reached in relation to representations made to the Deputy Postmaster General in mid-February on behalf of the postmasters of Canada?

**Mr. Kierans:** I will look into that, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** As a supplementary question, may I ask the Postmaster General how he squares his statement now, to the effect that the government has been trying for three weeks to arrange for third party adjudication, with his statement in the house on March 4 that there was no necessity for third party adjudication.

**Mr. Speaker:** I suggest to the hon. member that the question as asked is argumentative in nature.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Then may I ask a different supplementary question? May I ask the Postmaster General whether, in view of his desire to conduct these discussions in an atmosphere of serenity, he will hold in abeyance the cause of offence, namely the single sortation schedule.

**Mr. Kierans:** We believe that it is an improvement, Mr. Speaker and that it will increase the productivity of the people who work for the Post Office. As long ago as October 2 the Deputy Minister, then Assistant Deputy Minister, advised both unions verbally, and by letter on October 3, that the department was considering introducing a single mail processing system, together with the five-day week. Since that time and during all that time we have been discussing it with them. We have given ample notice of our intention. We have not in any way disturbed the security of the people involved; their jobs have been guaranteed, although we have pointed out that this could require some reworking of existing methods.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that there are very few institutions in Canada the employees of which are doing exactly the same kind of work as their grandfathers did.

**Mr. Speaker:** I wonder whether the minister is not now making a statement.

**Mr. Hees:** Six days work for five days pay.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Perhaps I might allow one more supplementary.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** My supplementary question relates to the single sortation system. Since this does seem to be the bone of contention would it not make sense to suspend it while the discussions are under way?

**Mr. Kierans:** I do not believe so, Mr. Speaker.