

House will consider a motion to be moved by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) pursuant to Standing Order 26.

It being 14 minutes after six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

POST OFFICE

MONTREAL POSTAL DISPUTE

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Pursuant to Standing Order 26, the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), seconded by the hon. member for Sainte-Marie (Mr. Valade), moves:

That this House do now adjourn.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I will start off by saying how sorry we are that members of the press gallery, interpreters and all personnel who normally should have a free evening tonight must be here in the House so that we may deal with a matter of major importance.

Tonight's debate could certainly have been avoided if the Postmaster General and Minister of Communications (Mr. Kierans) had performed his duties more adequately. As the post office conflict is constantly worsening and the Postmaster General arrogantly denies the House information as to the present situation in Montreal, we had no alternative but to demand this debate.

I know the Postmaster General would have preferred that there be no debate. We would have preferred to get other information which would have enabled us to understand that within the Post Office Department there was one man whose capabilities were equal to his responsibilities. Unfortunately, the recent events have shown in an undeniable way that we, members of Parliament, who speak on behalf of the people, have not been able to get from the minister any information of such a nature that would allow us to inform the public and which would enable us to make suggestions in order to settle this dispute.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that facing us there is a shadow government, because as soon as an important issue is before the House, the ministers disappear in a mysterious fashion.

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Montreal Postal Strike

Recently, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien), the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) and these last few weeks, the Postmaster General and Minister of Communications (Mr. Kierans) were not to be found here when matters under their jurisdiction come before the House.

Mr. Gérald Laniel (Beauharnois): Mr. Speaker, the minister is in Montreal to try to solve the problems.

Mr. Valade: We should have preferred, Mr. Speaker, that—

Mr. Laniel: Mr. Speaker, it is in Montreal that he can solve problems, not by staying here to answer the often stupid questions put by some members.

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, I should like to answer back the hon. for Beauharnois (Mr. Laniel) who has just made a stupid remark but I am not here to waste my time taking up such stupid and foolish comments.

The Postmaster General has been beating about the bush for 15 days while he is deep in an explosive situation. He has often refused to give explanations to the House and to supply information. Sometimes the minister was in the building but was not present in the House of Commons. He thus avoided to answer for his administration.

Once again Canada is going through a major crisis in an essential sector of our economy, namely the postal service. For the second time, in so many years, and under the direction of the same minister, the postal service is about to become a national issue, while the minister looks on unperturbed, and even secretly pleased.

Furthermore, as the minister has obstinately—not to say stupidly—refused to reply to hon. members' questions, during the oral question period, in order to inform the House about the conflict, he behaved in an irresponsible manner. In view of his duties, he should act differently. Such an attitude shows that the Postmaster General has lost all sense of the participatory democracy which was championed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Liberal party at the last federal election. Most of all, the minister has shown that he is incapable of coming to terms with the employees of his department.

It is obvious, as time goes by, that the taxpayers and the postal workers have lost the confidence they had shown in the minis-