

at any time in the day. Considering the fact that he is a kindergarten minister, he is not making the best use of his opportunities. One would naturally expect him to attend school and try to get information from time to time as to how he should administer his department. But he does not seem to think it any part of his duty to remain in this House. But let me draw attention again to this fact, that it would be of great service to the hon. gentleman, who is now filling the position of Minister of Public Works, to have the hon. Minister of Marine in his place to give him his assistance on items affecting the harbours and rivers of the province of Quebec. If he were in his place and ready to give information that would be of advantage to the House, there would not be members on the other side, like the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. McCreary) finding fault with us. Why does not he lecture the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries for not being in his place and doing his duty? Where is the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries?

Mr. MARCIL (Bonaventure). I think that in justice to the hon. minister (Hon. Mr. Préfontaine) it ought to be stated that he is in Montreal attending a conference with the Minister of Labour, the representatives of the steamship companies and the representatives of the stevedores, for the purpose of trying to bring about a settlement of the strike.

Mr. INGRAM. I am very glad to hear that, and I am prepared to compliment the hon. minister on doing his duty in this particular instance. Now, will the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Marcil) explain why the hon. minister absents himself so much as he does on other occasions? There is not a single man to explain why the minister's place is vacant from day to day. But one hon. gentleman rises when it happens that there is a defence to be offered for the minister's absence.

Mr. TALBOT. If the hon. gentleman (Mr. Ingram) will allow me one question, I would like to ask him why this question is not put when the hon. minister is here?

Mr. INGRAM. The question was put the other day when the Minister of Marine and Fisheries was in his place, and he had not the moral courage to answer it. But he blushed over it—he blushed a deep red, when he found the Prime Minister taking his place.

Mr. TALBOT. He could not blush blue.

Mr. INGRAM. Perhaps not, but I think he felt very blue at the time. I do not wish to take up more of the time of the House—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Go on.

Mr. GALLIHER. Go on.

Mr. INGRAM. Some hon. gentlemen who live a long distance from Ottawa, evidently are not anxious to go to their homes.

Mr. GALLIHER. I don't mind.

Mr. INGRAM. Evidently the hon. gentleman is comfortably situated in Ottawa, and has made up his mind that it will take up some time to get through the business of the House. I did not think he would be content to stay here considering the black eye he got the other day. This lead question is as serious a question in its way as the question of the Department of Public Works. It might be a good time now for the hon. gentleman to put his oar in, to use a common phrase, and ask the government what they are going to do with regard to lead. This is a broad motion we are discussing now, and all the malcontents in the House have a golden opportunity, an opportunity they should take advantage of, especially as the Minister of Finance (Hon. Mr. Fielding) seems to be in good humour. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Galliher) might impress upon the minister the importance of putting a duty on lead. I will give the hon. gentleman an opportunity to rise. Well, the hon. gentleman does not speak. Now I do not wish him to go back to his district and say he has not had an opportunity of drawing the attention of the Minister of Finance to this question.

Mr. GALLIHER. I thank the hon. gentleman (Mr. Ingram) for so carefully looking after the interests of my district; but I do not mind informing him that I am quite capable of attending to that myself.

Mr. SPROULE. We have had some valuable information from the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Marcil). He says that the Minister of Marine and Fisheries is attending a strike. It would seem that most of the members of the government have been on strike all session, for they have not been here. Nor will they allow anybody else to work in their places. They have their pickets out, one in China, one in England, one in Montreal; and I do not know where the rest of them are, but when we require information of them, there is a notable absence of them from this House, which makes it very difficult to carry on the work of the session. I think we are quite within our rights and properly discharging our duty when we ask the government at the earliest possible moment not only to make, as they did early in the session, an explanation of the ministerial changes which took place before the opening of parliament, but an announcement of their policy. They have intimated in the speech from the Throne that they are going to reorganize some of the departments. Surely we are not going to continue the work of the session until we know what reorganization is to take place. We are voting money on the demand of the Minister of Public Works to be spent—if we are to believe what we see in the ministerial press—by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, yet we have nothing from the Minister of