

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT—REFERRAL OF
OUTSTANDING ISSUES TO MEDIATION
PROCEDURES

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, for a long time I have been interested in the efficiency of the Post Office Department. I have noted the efforts made by the present Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) and the detrimental results of his ill conceived efforts in the direction of what he calls efficiency in the interests of going into the black. For a long, long time I have noted, watched and studied the relations between public servants and civil servants working for his department and the Government of Canada. In my 11 years in this house, never have I seen such evidence of discontent as is now manifest by the very people on whom the Postmaster General must depend for the efficacy of the operation of his department.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Macquarrie: The Letter Carriers' Union of Canada, in a press release dated March 14 declares:

This on-again, off-again procedure by the employer, leaves the union no choice but to hold Treasury Board responsible for all expenses incurred.

Since the employer has withdrawn its applications, they have proven they were in the wrong and it logically follows that the union was in the right, and that the employees involved should suffer no loss of pay.

All I can say is that I note with great concern the statement made by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers under date of March 17. God help us, this St. Patrick's Day. The statement reads:

Does the public know or realize that even with the increase of postage they are getting "short changed" as to prompt and efficient service and this will continue to decrease, especially with some of the plans proposed and even at present in effect.

We have told the Postmaster General repeatedly since last October that his ill considered and hastily prepared program of the five-day delivery week would reap all sorts of discomfort not only for patrons of the Post Office and Post Office workers, but for all citizens of Canada. He listened not to our protests. He hearkened not to our advice. He paid no attention to our solicitations. Now, he has steam-rolled forward and has found that in his department there is resentment which will injure not only the people of his department but all of Canada. I say that when the people of Canada suffer in this important matter of

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

postal delivery, he has a great responsibility to bear. Even at this late date it would not hurt him to consider, to reconsider and ponder upon the efficacy of this system which he so proudly launched a few months ago as a great and forward movement. He knows, and the people of his department know, that it has not been a forward step, but a backward step.

I ask him even at this eleventh hour, will he not reconsider and think of the people of Canada instead of his own preconceived notions of efficiency.

• (10:10 p.m.)

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, it must be a disappointment to the hon. member that his audience is so small this evening because the form and eloquence of his appeal certainly deserves a better audience, even if the substance did not merit the same attention.

The hon. member repeated the words of Mr. Decarie, that the Treasury Board should now consider paying the strikers who went on strike illegally last week. I wonder if this pronouncement is the position of the Conservative Party? If so, it would be a new departure for them. Since the hon. member is speaking of the Treasury Board, I suggest that he formally lay this proposition before my colleague, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury).

The hon. member stated the basis of all the discontent is the five day week. Nothing could be more wrong, Mr. Speaker. The unions have pronounced themselves to be in favour of the five-day week. If, as the hon. member suggests, we were to revert to the six day week, I suggest we would then have a very critical situation on our hands. When the hon. member suggests that discontent is prevalent, I think he takes as evidence the obvious public relations programs we have them as well as the unions.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Kierans: The hon. member does not take note of facts such as the attempt in Montreal last week by union leaders to provoke a strike in that city which was overwhelmingly rejected by union members, so much so that someone has said there must be a real gap between union leadership and the feelings and sentiments of their members.

There has been nothing new in what the hon. member has said, Mr. Speaker. I do not think I should take any more time in replying to what is a repetition of many earlier statements.