

desperately anxious that this should not be revealed to the committee and therefore no such statement was allowed to appear in the brief submitted to that committee?

**Mr. Hellyer:** Mr. Speaker, I was not desperately anxious, and as I will explain to the committee on defence when it meets—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I think that question is clearly argumentative.

### PUBLIC SERVICE

#### POSTAL WORKERS—REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF CONCILIATION BOARD

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam):** May I direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the imminent threat of a strike by the postal workers and the serious consequences which would follow from such an event, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the government would consider setting up a conciliation board to investigate the wage demands of the postal workers, assess their wages to comparable posts in industry, and report on what they would consider to be the basis of a fair and reasonable wage settlement?

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, there are certain processes of law that have to be followed in connection with matters concerning civil servants and public officials in disputes of this kind. Those processes are being followed at the present time. Whether any exceptional procedures are required in a matter of this importance is now under consideration by the government.

**Mr. Douglas:** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the Civil Service Commission is a government agency, and may not have the information with respect to wages paid in industry for comparable types of work, would the Prime Minister not think that the setting up of a conciliation board might be of considerable assistance to the Treasury Board in resolving this problem?

**Mr. Pearson:** In the first case I do not think my hon. friend is accurate in referring to the Civil Service Commission as a government agency. Second, I just told him we are taking this matter under consideration at the present time.

**Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Royal):** On a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, I wonder

### *Inquiries of the Ministry*

whether the Prime Minister would give us a firm assurance that there will be no interruption in the mail service in this country.

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, I hope there will be no such interruption.

**Mr. Reid Scott (Danforth):** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the statement reported today by the Postal Trades Unions Council that unless the decision of the Civil Service Commission is reviewed there will be a strike shortly after November 5, can the Prime Minister or the Postmaster General tell the house what action this government proposes to take so that we will not sit idle until the crisis is upon us?

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman knows that it would be quite improper at this stage of the proceedings to give an answer to a question of that kind without doing a great deal of damage to the negotiations that are now taking place.

[Translation]

### AGRICULTURE

#### BUTTER—PROSPECTIVE IMPORTS FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Gérard Laprise (Chapleau):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Can he tell us whether he anticipates imports of butter for Canadian consumption during 1966-67? If so, can he tell us how extensive those imports will be?

**Mr. Speaker:** I suggest to the hon. member that this question might be placed on the order paper.

[English]

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

#### MIDDLE EAST—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON SITUATION

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the situation existing in the Middle East at present and described yesterday in the United Nations as a fragile state of peace, and the statement this morning or late last night by the prime minister of Israel that retaliatory action will be taken against sabotage by Syrian forces, does the minister have any statement which he could make to the house in regard to this situation?