

Inquiries of the Ministry

agreed to go directly to adjudication and, so far as I know, both parties are satisfied.

Mr. Stanfield: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to be perfectly clear. Am I correct in understanding the Postmaster General to say that he has no knowledge of the union asking whether he and his department will institute mediation or arbitration, as distinct from adjudication proceedings?

Mr. Kierans: There has been some difficulty about the translation of the word "adjudication". The word "arbitre" applies in French to both an adjudicator and an arbitrator, to the best of my knowledge. On one occasion, as Mr. Decarie admitted to me himself, when I was talking about adjudication—and the Prime Minister also used that word one day in the house—the journalists interpreted this to Mr. Decarie as "arbitre", and Mr. Decarie explained to me that he thought we meant arbitration when all I meant was adjudication. I think this point has been cleared up between us.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): When the Postmaster General says the Post Office Department is ready for this question to be adjudicated, is he ready, first of all, to settle the question whether the department has or has not the right to institute the straight-through walk system?

Mr. Kierans: These are precisely the issues which are going before the adjudicator. I certainly would not want to say what I consider the adjudicator would or would not have the right to decide.

Mr. Orlikow: The question was this: Will the department suggest to the adjudicator that under the terms of the contract he has no right to rule on the straight-through walk?

DELAY IN MAIL DELIVERIES

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): My supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. In view of the seriousness of delays in the delivery of mail in this country, to the extent that some people are beginning to wonder whether transmission by smoke signals would not be faster, would the Prime Minister, bearing in mind the truculent and defiant attitude of the Postmaster General in connection with the postal employees, turn this problem over to the Minister of Labour who seems to have some diplomatic qualification for getting labour disputes settled?

[Mr. Kierans.]

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am willing to look into this matter, but I feel that if we are obliged to resort to smoke signals I had better turn it over to the Minister of Health and Welfare.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

[Translation]

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the minister a supplementary question.

Considering the importance and the urgency of the matter, I believe that the minister owes it to himself to supply answers, since we are seeking a better postal service.

Since the taxpayers now have to bear the burden of increased postal rates, could the minister tell us when he hopes to conclude negotiations with the union and when he expects delivery to return to normal in the Montreal area?

Mr. Kierans: Mr. Speaker, we have been negotiating with the union for six or seven weeks and we are keeping in touch with the union and the C.N.T.U. Of course, the discussions will continue over the week-end; however, a week ago, the representatives of Rod Service Limited bluntly informed us that they intend to give up their operations.

[English]

CIVIL SERVICE TESTS FOR ROD SERVICE EMPLOYEES

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): I have a supplementary question which might be better handled by the Secretary of State, but in his absence I would direct it to the Prime Minister. Since the Prime Minister has indicated that Rod Service employees will be taken on as employees of the Post Office Department, will it be necessary for them to sit the civil service examinations and to qualify themselves in the usual way?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The Secretary of State has had to leave for Paris to represent the Canadian government, but I shall draw the question to his attention.

Mr. MacInnis: The Postmaster General may be able to handle the question.

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General): The 27 employees we have already hired have not yet taken the examination, but they have to fulfil all the requirements of the public service, of course.