

*Inquiries of the Ministry***CANADA ELECTIONS ACT**

MEASURE TO CONSOLIDATE AND REVISE

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-215, respecting the franchise of electors and the election of members to the House of Commons.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the said bill be read the second time? Next sitting of the House?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, there have been some discussions about this bill and in view of the general interest in the bill it has been suggested that after second reading it should be referred to the committee of the whole rather than to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. On that basis I wonder if the House would agree to change the second reading order, contrary to the usual rule, so that it would be referred to the committee of the whole?

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, we agree to this. The government has had so little legislation to place before the House that we thought the time might be employed better in that way.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Why don't you read the Order Paper?

Mr. Speaker: Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**POST OFFICE**POSSIBLE NATIONAL STRIKE—STATEMENT BY
MINISTER VIS-À-VIS POSITION OF GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATORS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the Postmaster General was speaking as a minister of the government when he said over the weekend that the Post Office is a place of poor pay and unsatisfactory working conditions, that labour relations are in a mess, and that it is a department with a lack of opportunities for advancement?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Leader of the Opposition will appreciate that the Chair

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

ought to take some exception to the form of the question. My understanding is that questions asked concerning statements made by ministers outside the House should be for the purpose of seeking information on whether these statements reflect government policy.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Well, that is what it was.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I hasten to comply with your suggestion. I asked the question because I had some doubt as to what the status of the minister might be by this time. I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the Postmaster General was expressing the policy of the government when he said these things?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, obviously this is not, as you have said, a question of policy.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Just a statement of fact.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, might I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether those who are conducting the negotiations on behalf of the Treasury Board are reflecting the views expressed by the Postmaster General with regard to the level of pay and working conditions, or whether on the other hand they are reflecting the views expressed by the representative of the government on the conciliation board that postal workers are not underpaid in relation to other workers in the country? Can the Acting Prime Minister tell the House and the country which point of view is being reflected by the government negotiators?

Mr. Sharp: It is quite clear that if I were to agree with the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition, for which I have only his word—I have not talked to the Postmaster General and I doubt very much whether he said these things—

An hon. Member: You would.

Mr. Sharp: Of course the position the government would be taking would be to support the chairman of the conciliation board. Therefore the answer is that we are supporting the position of the chairman of the conciliation board.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I did not notice the Postmaster General rise on a question of privilege when I gave a summary of what he said, so I think I am entitled to assume he was accurately reported. I ask the Acting