

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

from February 3 to May 4. For security guards—which involved a car and two guards in a single unit—the cost up to April 30 was \$397,090.80. This gives us a total cost, in this particular aspect of the case, of over \$1 million.

The same reply indicated that over \$1 million had been spent for trucks purchased by the government since February 3. The number purchased is most interesting. It is 439. The number of trucks involved in mail delivery before February 3 was only 310. This was in the days when mail was being delivered. So whatever else is missing from this picture, such as efficiency, foresight and careful planning, there is apparently no shortage of trucks. The number of trucks bought by the government at a cost of over \$1 million was 439. This is an impressive advance toward putting the Post Office into the black.

How many rural post offices could have been kept in operation for the sum of over \$2 million which has already been revealed as having been expended in Montreal delivery fiascos? The costs are not all in yet, nor can we measure in money the price which the people of Montreal paid week after week for inferior service, which is what they received, and sometimes no service.

The irony of the story is that the responsible minister, when he is not blaming his department's problems on his predecessors is talking about efficiency and economy. One of his most recent contributions to this end, insofar as discussing it is concerned, was on the program "Encounter" on May 23, just a day or so before he gave the interesting answer to question 1709 in the House. I quote:

• (10:10 p.m.)

Mr. Kierans: Well no, let's say the Lapalme situation really boils down to something—you had 459 chauffeurs doing the work. When you took a look at what was needed to be done in Montreal, you needed 257.

Then the question was asked:

But it wasn't his fault though that that had grown up, was it?

Mr. Kierans: Oh yes. In the last year they had featherbedded that operation down there by the extent of about another 90 bodies. And I warned them a year ago, when I offered to take them all in, that you didn't need more than about 330, and at that time there were 397, but I still offered to take all in on the understanding that we're going to slim down.

So the great rationalizer was becoming the great reducer for the moment. I continue the quotation:

I mean this just doesn't make any sense, and if you're a trustee or an administrator of public

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

funds you're not going to stand for it. Well, nobody ever did anything about this thing before.

"No one ever did anything about this thing before." Perhaps nobody ever did anything quite like this before. What an innovation! The only problem is that it is difficult to think of any of this minister's innovations which have not also been blunders and often disasters. Even before we get the full accounting of the Montreal affair we know how high was the price of inefficiency. Now we have a surplus of trucks, doubtless some of them battle-scarred veterans. The understanding, I now hear, is that some of these trucks will be made available to the Vancouver area. I hope that we have some more precise data on the vintage of these vehicles, sales tax, and so on.

We will also be interested in knowing the full extent of the compensation paid the contractors who in the on-again off-again episode found their services not required, and the virtues of splitting up the contract among several operators disrupted by the reaction to the Goldenberg report. In one of the contracts one finds an interesting clause as follows:

The Postmaster General may, subject to subsection (3) of this section terminate this contract three months after the delivery of a notice in writing to that effect to the contractor.

Where a Notice to Terminate has been served pursuant to subsection (1) of this section and the Postmaster General is of the opinion that the contractor should no longer perform the work required of him pursuant to this contract, the Postmaster General may give notice to the contractor of his decision in this respect and the contractor shall be compensated at the rate of 50 per cent of the amount that he would normally have been paid pursuant to this contract for the unexpired portion of the said three-month period.

Since the contractors never did put a truck on the job in Montreal, and since many trucks were bought by the government, we would like to know how many of these 50 per cent payments were made. Further, what would be the expenses of the contractor if he had never provided the service and if the trucks had been purchased? I think there is reason enough here for further inquiry and investigation. All this shifting ground on the question of contracting out as against departmental operation seems to have been a costly exercise in ministerial mismanagement and governmental indecision. I do not think the country can afford a repetition of this situation and it is for this reason that I sought and still recommend a thorough investigation of just what did go on and at what cost to the long-suffering Canadian people. Blaming it on