

charges and then be able to say that those charges have been laid.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Labour. There were reports yesterday that the leader of CUPW had said categorically that he would refuse to meet with the hon. Lucien Tremblay whom the minister appointed yesterday as mediator-arbitrator. Today, however, there is a press release—and I am quoting from it—put out by the leader of CUPW which says:

However, we wish to reiterate that we are ready to meet any person appointed by the government with a view to resolving the issues that gave rise to the present dispute.

I know that the acting minister understands that if there is an absolute refusal to meet with the hon. Lucien Tremblay, then the whole nexus of the legislation falls apart. Can the minister tell us what the situation is?

Hon. André Ouellet (Acting Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, in this regard the course of action which ought to be followed by the union is quite clear. It has been decided by parliament that the mediator-arbitrator would be appointed and that he will try, in the first instance, to bring the parties together to try to arrive at a negotiated settlement, and if he is not successful in achieving this, he will turn into an arbitrator, a responsibility which has been given to him by parliament; and he will draft a collective agreement which will have force and effect on both parties, on the government on one hand and on the union on the other hand. That collective agreement will be in force until the end of 1979.

Mr. Fraser: I have a final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the Acting Minister of Labour any information which can clarify what are, not apparently but clearly, conflicting statements made by the leader of CUPW, one of them yesterday, in which he is reported to have said that he would not meet with the mediator-arbitrator, and the second statement today that while he is critical of the choice of that particular person, nonetheless he will meet with anybody appointed by the government.

Can the minister clarify for the House just what is going on, because it is obvious to all of us that it would be preferable to have the union meet with the mediator-arbitrator?

Mr. Ouellet: It is very difficult indeed for me to give an interpretation of two different statements made by the president of CUPW. But I am glad to see in his second statement that he is now starting to understand the fact that parliament has established a course of action which he ought to follow, that if he wants to present his point of view in order to have, for his own sake and that of his members, a better collective agreement, he should sit down with the mediator-arbitrator and present his point of view, because the course of action of the mediator-arbitrator has been set by parliament and within 90 days he will have to draft a new collective agreement. I am sure he will do it. This agreement will be imposed, I repeat, not only on the union but on the government.

Oral Questions

SUGGESTED DECERTIFICATION OF CUPW

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Postmaster General. In view of the continuing defiance by CUPW and the counselling of its executive that members defy the law, has the Postmaster General asked the government to start proceedings to decertify the union, and will the government take steps to fire those public servants who counsel defiance of the law?

Mr. D. M. Collenette (Parliamentary Secretary to Postmaster General): In answer to the hon. member's question, I should like to advise him and members of the House that this morning a memorandum was sent by the Deputy Postmaster General to the CUPW bargaining unit, and in that memorandum the deputy minister advised members of CUPW that, under the Public Service Employment Act, any employee who failed to report for normal duties during the seven days ending at 12.01 a.m. on October 26, 1978, may be declared to have abandoned the position he or she had occupied.

This could lead to the termination of employment with the Post Office.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[Translation]

URBAN AFFAIRS

BUILDING PERMITS FOR MONTREAL CONSTRUCTORS

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.

On August 31 last, the minister announced to the residents of Place Frontenac in Montreal that as a pilot project, he wanted to set up a management committee for those buildings. Considering that the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation stated recently that it wished to set up a non-profit company to manage those apartments, is the minister in a position to say why he does not extend the 12-month mandate which included a clause providing for its extension?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, indeed the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation which was the owner of Place Frontenac in Montreal decided to make a rather special experiment with that housing complex by setting up a joint management under which the tenants of those apartments met with the directors of the corporation to organize the joint management of that complex. We then said that if the experience was successful we would be prepared to offer the apartment for sale to the tenants who through a non-profit company would become owners of that complex. We are now negotiating the sale of Place Frontenac to tenants who have set up a non-profit company which will become the owner of the building.