

Inquiries of the Ministry

INQUIRY AS TO STEPS TO DEAL WITH UNEMPLOYMENT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister just in the event that I do not have the privilege of the floor between eight and ten tonight. I am wondering whether the Acting Prime Minister would care to make any comment on the serious situation which exists in Canada with regard to unemployment. I do not mean with regard to the fund but with regard to the people unemployed.

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that I ruled on this question last week.

FINANCE

REPORTED INCREASE IN NUMBER OF BANKRUPTCIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. A. Webb (Hastings-Frontenac): My question is one for the Minister of Finance but in his unavoidable absence may I address it to the acting minister. Inasmuch as there has been an increase of 15.3 per cent in the number of bankruptcies in the year 1963 as compared with 1962, could the hon. gentleman tell us what action the government is contemplating to assist small businesses in Canada?

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a question for the order paper.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

MONTREAL—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON MAIL TRUCK ROBBERIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. A. McBain (Elgin): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Postmaster General I should like to direct my question to the Acting Postmaster General and ask whether he can give a report to the house on the robbery that occurred last evening in mid-town Montreal, in which it is reported that \$400,000 was stolen. Also, can he say if it is the policy of the department to leave mail trucks carrying as much as \$42 million unprotected by armed guards?

Hon. J. P. Deschatelets (Acting Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Postmaster General I might read a statement which covers this matter.

At 7.30 last evening the mail truck for the service between the Montreal post office and the C.N.R. station was held up at the corner of Lagauchetiere and University streets in Montreal. Two trucks and six armed, masked men took part in the hold-up.

[Mr. Langlois.]

The post office vehicle was boxed in at the traffic light and the railway mail clerk, who was accompanying the mail, and the truck driver were taken from the post office truck, handcuffed together, placed in one of the other trucks and pillow cases pulled over their heads.

The post office truck and the mail have not yet been located. The information indicates that there were 31 money packets on board the missing mail truck and some of them are believed to have contained payrolls. The matter is being investigated by senior officials of the Montreal city police and post office investigators.

This morning's press and radio indicate the amount of the loot as \$400,000, and have also indicated that mail trucks have carried as high as \$42 million on a trip. It is not known where the press and radio obtained this information, as an accurate amount of the loss will not be ascertained until the respective banks have been contacted, and I have no knowledge of any mail truck carrying \$42 million.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, last night at 8.20 p.m. the highway motor vehicle service between Valleyfield and Montreal was held up at Caughnawaga. Two motor vehicles were involved in the hold-up and at least two armed men took part. The truck and mail have been recovered in this case but the locked bags have all been ripped open. Investigators are checking to ascertain the loss in this particular case, but it is not believed that any money packets were carried. The matter is being investigated by the Quebec provincial police.

[Translation]

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Public Works who answers in the house for the Postmaster General in his absence?

Does the Post Office Department intend to ask Senator Azellus Denis to make an inquiry into those robberies?

[Text]

HEALTH AND WELFARE

EXTENSION OF HOSPITAL INSURANCE INTO COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister. Yesterday the Prime Minister, in addressing the federal-provincial conference, suggested that the government of Canada was prepared to withdraw from the hospital insurance field in return for giving to the provinces a certain abatement in personal income tax. I want to ask the Acting