

Inquiries of the Ministry

suance of this service. We are concerned with making sure that the men who have worked in these positions in the past would be given the choice of continuing to work in these positions in the future, with all the added security and other advantages which accrue from working in the public service.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in taking the decision to have the trucking of postal material in Montreal carried out by the government, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the government gave the employees any assurance, first of all, of job security and of retaining the same rates of pay and retaining their security rights? Were these assurances given to the employees, or does the government intend to give such assurances to the employees?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the government has given many assurances to the representatives of the employees. These will be made public in due course, but as is proper in the field of labour negotiations the dealings have been between the President of the Treasury Board and the duly chosen representatives of this particular union. We are still hopeful that the men will get the total message the government wants to convey to them, but we are still determined to communicate through the official representatives of the union. For that reason I do not think it is useful at this point to go into the details of the offer made by the President of the Treasury Board.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the public has a right to know why the employees to date have been refusing to accept the government's offer, may I ask the Prime Minister if the government is offering these workers considerably lower rates of pay than they have been enjoying up until now?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that the public has a right to know, but I am sure that if the government had taken the position of not dealing with the representatives of the union and had talked directly over their heads to the men and the public he would be the first to condemn us.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the government intends to continue with its policy of having the trucking done by the government itself or does it

[Mr. Trudeau.]

intend to revert, as has been reported, to making contracts with various firms and including some stipulation in those contracts in respect of wage security and seniority?

Mr. Trudeau: In answer to the first question, Mr. Speaker, I indicated it was the intention of the government to implement the terms of the Goldenberg report. This means inviting the former employees of Lapalme to enter the civil service and work as civil servants in the jobs they previously occupied.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister.

In view of the confusion now prevailing with respect to the post office, would the Prime Minister look into the opportunity or the possibility of granting the mail delivery contract for Montreal to Mr. Michel Chartrand, for instance, just to see if he could do better than everybody in dealing with the employees?

[Later:]

[English]

Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. In view of what the Prime Minister just said about going over the heads of the official negotiators of the union and the inappropriateness of such action, would he consider reprimanding the Postmaster General for doing precisely this in the current negotiations with the postal workers?

MONTREAL POSTAL DISPUTE—PAYMENT OF
COMPENSATION FOR CANCELLED
CONTRACTS

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Has-tings): Mr. Speaker, is it the intention of the government to fully compensate the contractors, whose contracts were summarily cancelled on April 1, for the purchase of trucks and other necessary expenses incurred by them in order to carry out these contracts?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): As was recommended by Dr. Goldenberg, this matter has been referred to the Department of Justice and we intend as a government to discharge any obligation we may have in this regard.