

*Montreal Postal Strike*

who are watching to see which of the members of the union goes into his plant.

I was invited to one meeting of the executive. I went to it, as did the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, and the Minister of Labour. I received the telegram inviting me to another meeting of the executive on the morning of the day on which the meeting was convened. I could not go because I was appearing that day before the Senate Committee on Mass Media, and the Minister of Labour was in Vancouver. The next meeting took place at my instigation. We went over all the points and had a very useful talk and a very hard one.

[Translation]

I am ready to meet with Mr. Parent and Mr. Beaudoin.

**An hon. Member:** The Minister of Labour also?

**Mr. Kierans:** Surely! But I would prefer meeting with the union members themselves and having a frank talk with them.

I was told, two or three weeks ago, that I would be invited to a general union meeting. But I heard no more about it.

[English]

You want the details? You talk about the destruction of a union! Do you want me to talk about the destruction of government property? What do you want the government of Canada to do when 568 mail boxes out of 1,800 have been damaged, blocked, cemented? Are we supposed to say to these people, "You are right. Your methods have forced us to recognize the logic of your arguments"?

**Mr. Valade:** Of course not. We never said that.

**Mr. Kierans:** You can see the damage all over Montreal. Where will it end?

**Mr. Valade:** You are the minister.

**Mr. Asselin:** Arbitrate.

**Mr. Kierans:** What is there to arbitrate when people block your trucks and destroy your mail boxes? Who wants to arbitrate with people like that? We shall come to that after they stop these practices—and not before.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kierans:** The situation in Montreal is that 700,000 items of mail have been delayed. Now these people are beginning to damage the relay boxes. I could read two pages of

[Mr. Kierans.]

incidents. In short, the unions have worked themselves into a position in the last five years where the people of Montreal and the taxpayers of Canada are calling a halt.

In the last five years the cost of operation in Toronto has risen by 33 per cent. In the last five years the cost of operation in Montreal has gone up by 73 per cent. And still they are not satisfied. I have said that unless the violence and the slow-down ceases, I shall have no choice but to revoke the Lapalme contract.

I will say more: It is much more likely that by that time, if the present situation continues, the employees themselves will have driven their employer into bankruptcy. He is not delivering the mail, and in accordance with many of his contracts he is getting paid for what he delivers. Nevertheless, he is paying the employees at full-time rates even though they deliver 20 per cent of a load instead of 100 per cent. In effect, we the people of Canada are financing this slow-down. It is the taxpayer of Canada who is financing what is going on in Montreal.

[Translation]

The Montreal taxpayer is fed up also.

[English]

If the Lapalme contract is to be revoked, or if the company should have any reason to give up this contract, the members of the union are back where they were when Rod Services decided to go out of business. They will have no contract because they will have no employer. They will have no union because they will have no employer. This time we are not looking for a guardian angel to take them into the fold because we have the people to handle the mail transportation services in Montreal. The sooner the CSN understand that, the better it will be for them and for the people of Montreal.

• (9:20 p.m.)

I have explained to Mr. Parent that if I am forced to revoke the contract we will hire 350 chauffeurs. That is all we need, not 455. We will give priority to those who have long service. I can break down the service for the House. According to the newspapers, some of this service goes up to 20 years. In fact it goes further than that, because 30 of the present drivers for Lapalme have worked for between 15 and 43 years. Three of them have worked 14 years, four have worked 13 years, nine have worked 12 years, 13 have worked 11 years and 27 have worked 10 years. Another