

allotted day, I think it will be the will and intention of the house that we should devote our work this afternoon to the consideration of the motion of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) rather than debate the motion of the chairman of the Committee on Transport and Communications. In any event, I will study the contributions made by hon. members and give a decision.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

MONTREAL—ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW DELIVERY CONTRACT WITH LAPALME TRANSFER

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a brief statement on the order for motions. I regret I was not able to provide hon. members opposite with copies, but I was only in the position to make this statement before entering the house.

I am glad to be able to inform the house that shortly before one o'clock this morning a settlement was reached in the dispute which has disrupted postal delivery in Montreal for the past four weeks. The Post Office has terminated the delivery contract held by Rod Services Limited and transferred the contract to a new company, LaPalme Transfer Ltd. of Montreal. The union has signed a new contract with LaPalme Transfer Ltd. and all employees returned to work this morning.

As hon. members know, the breakdown in postal delivery in Montreal arose out of a labour dispute between Rod Services Limited and the C.N.T.U., representing the company's employees. This dispute, which last week degenerated into violence, was the culmination of three years of disruptions in service to the public, brought about by management-union differences.

During the past four weeks, when a number of Rod Service employees failed to turn up for work, postal delivery in Montreal was seriously disrupted, and this in turn affected deliveries throughout the country. The situation would have been a good deal worse but for the extra effort put out by Montreal letter carriers and postal clerks, and by the co-operation of the public.

The present contract with LaPalme Transfer runs to March 31, 1970. At that time, the Post Office will review the situation, depending upon the performance of the company and its employees, and in the light of the studies being conducted by the task force. I

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do not want to prejudice the future but I may say I am greatly heartened by the approach LaPalme Transfer has taken to the key problem of employee working conditions. I therefore believe that this solution will prove to be the best one from the viewpoint of the employees, the company, the Post Office, and the public.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough):

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, I rejoice in any diminution in the troubles in the Post Office, and in the troubles of the minister. I am very happy that some settlement has been achieved, and I hope it will be a lasting one. I regret that in the long interval of disputation aroused by the President of the Privy Council the minister could not have found time to send a copy over to some of us.

There are many facts that we would like to explore. For instance, I am interested in the expiry date of the new contract. I understand Rod Services had a contract which would expire the same date. I am interested in some of the phasing out formalities in relation to the Rod Services people. But, looking at this a priori, I am delighted that this very upsetting situation, where thousands and thousands and thousands of parcels have been held up in one of the most important distributing centres in the country, has reached some kind of settlement.

● (2:40 p.m.)

I might say to the minister that I note his optimism. I have noticed over the months that he is always optimistic. Sometimes it might be the better part of caution if he occasionally admitted that he does have troubles in the Post Office Department. We do hope however that this settlement will be lasting, and that the mails will go through.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, in light of the difficulties the minister and the department seem to be having in all parts of the country, and in light of reports which come in daily to members of parliament about the tremendous drop in the morale of postal employees from one end of the country to the other, it is good to note that one of the immediate and most pressing problems has been settled.

I am sorry the minister could not give us a little more notice of this settlement. Let me say to him that at the proper time we will be interested in finding out the arrangements which were made with Rod Services after the