

*Montreal Postal Strike*

He decided not to submit any bids. In effect he said, "I cannot manage my own affairs; I cannot hire my people; I cannot fire them; I cannot appoint supervisors or run my own business." This is why he did not submit a tender. Due to the fact he did not bid, this group again lost its employer.

What this strike is all about is this: Can another employer be found that will permit them to operate, recognize their status and give a legal existence to something that has in fact disappeared twice within less than a year?

[Translation]

I want to quote a letter from Mr. Cormier, Montreal postmaster, to Mr. Lapalme, dated September 25th, in which he prompted G. Lapalme Inc. to send in a tender. Here is an extract:

Your experience in local trucking and your knowledge of postal operations put you, naturally, in an excellent position to bid. We shall expect your tenders with pleasure.

And here is some extracts from the letter sent by Mr. Breton to the Canadian Union of Postal Workers:

Now, under the Post Office Act,—

I am required under the act to publish the advertisements for tenders.

Now, under the Post Office Act, it is understood that public tenders will be asked.

Mr. Breton was then writing, as I said, to his own union.

We are convinced that with your experience and this year's result, we shall be in a position to tender, to get this contract and to obtain security for about 5 years.

Mind you, mention is made of "security for about 5 years" instead of insecurity or security provided by contract for one year only.

And here is what Mr. Breton says further on in his letter:

We therefore expect your co-operation to complete this year and help us prepare that tender.

But nothing was done. After all, it is up to me—

• (9:10 p.m.)

[English]

The union took no action. They were advised at the end of September. The union ignored the fact that the government of Canada was announcing public tenders. Why did they not ask us until the end of January when they blew it and decided to revert to their old tactics of violence against the people of Montreal? Why did they not ask to see

me? Why did they not speak up on behalf of their men? Why did they not ask me to include in the contract a clause protecting their men? Mr. Speaker, they are not interested in protecting their men; they are interested in protecting themselves. We ourselves included—not at the instigation of the union—such clauses as "tenderers must undertake to pay wage rates not less than prevailing rates." We have paid more attention to the welfare of their men than they have themselves.

In January the new contracts were awarded, representing five times the security of the old ones and stipulating that employees shall be paid daily wage rates—

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order. I am sorry to interrupt the minister but his time has expired. He may not continue without the unanimous consent of the House.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Agreed. The Postmaster General and Minister of Communications.

[English]

**Mr. Kierans:** This company's contract expires on March 31. These 455 employees will therefore be out of work. They will no longer have a union; they will no longer have a contract. They have never been Post Office employees, nor have the other 40,000 or 50,000 people who work for other contractors across the country. The principle suggested tonight, that the government should guarantee all 455 jobs whether they need them or not because their company has ceased to exist, could be extended to include the case of workers in any textile or other factory which went bankrupt. It might be said that we should guarantee employment to all who lose their jobs. We cannot guarantee employment. We can make suggestions and ask people to take certain steps. We shall do all we can to help them. But first of all they must help themselves.

I have a better breakdown of the seniority of these employees than the union does. We asked them for this information but they refused to give it, or did not bother to reply. We cannot urge contractors to take on new employees until the new employees are permitted to seek work; until they are permitted to register with Canada Manpower and permitted to approach the new contractors. This they cannot do. One of the new contractors can show you any day the goons of the union