

finally, security of employment, as long as they could work.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has done nothing. He merely said: I am not an employer; I cannot intervene in the conflict since, as minister, it does not behove me to deal with the employees. To my mind, the minister is merely bringing out the hypocrisy inherent in this supposedly just society.

Mr. Speaker, the minister could intervene and he still can do it if he wants, since in the contracts he grants, he himself determines the working conditions such as the minimum wages paid to the people working for the new contractors. And, when the minister is forced to protect the employees and union members by setting up a bargaining unit, he refuses to commit himself and he tries, by devious means, to beg off and to shun his responsibilities.

If the minister needs additional arguments we might be able to oblige him. When he says that he cannot provide a bargaining unit for many employers, I think that he could refer to the Canadian Labour Code. The minister does not know it because he has never been close to the workers but has always represented higher interests. I am not blaming him for it, it is his privilege. But in the House it is his responsibility, as a minister, to deal with workers and union members. The minister should know about the mechanisms capable of preventing such conflicts.

The minister could resort to the Canadian Labour Code, which permits but one bargaining unit among a group of employers. Besides, this is done in the Montreal area, in the province of Quebec. In fact, there are bargaining units on building sites and the members of all the trade associations have to go from one place to another and belong to a single bargaining unit. And those units have to deal with numerous contractors.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is too ready to find an excuse for his inaction. He could intervene but he refuses to do so and that is why the union members accuse him of wanting to destroy the bargaining unit. I do not accuse him myself, but I wonder whether his refusal to reply is not an indication of the truthfulness of their allegation.

It is up to the minister to state clearly his position in this regard. Why does he refuse to relieve the workers from their anxiety as to their future employment? They want to know if they will be unemployed tomorrow and if, like thousands of others, they will have to

### *Montreal Postal Strike*

swell the already great number of unemployed in Canada, especially in Montreal and in the other areas of Quebec.

• (8:20 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, if the Postmaster General was really serious and sincere, he would have asked immediately his colleague the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) to act as a mediator in this conflict. Apparently, in view of the questions that we put to him recently, he would be ready to do it. The member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand) asked recently the following question in the House: Is the minister ready to offer his services as a negotiator in this conflict? The minister replied then that he was ready to do so. Then, as a supplementary question I asked the minister if his services had been required. The Minister of Labour did not answer because we know as well as the ministers that the Postmaster General has not yet asked his colleague the Minister of Labour to intervene.

Why this silence, this indifference and this arrogance towards the working class? The workers are only asking for one thing: justice, the right to work and security of employment.

There are mechanisms which could be used. When I look at what is going on here, I wonder what is being done by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand)—and I regret that he is not in his seat—and the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier), two men who, in days gone by, in the labour world, used to write—before they were elected to the house—that they were the great defenders of the working class, of the downtrodden, of the proletariat and of what you will. The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, a former president of the C.N.T.U., should make a statement about this conflict and demand that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) come and solve it because he knows the mechanisms of negotiation well. He could certainly be a good adviser to the Postmaster General. In fact, those men who, in the past, achieved a reputation as great defenders of the workers are mute as fish. They do not say much.

We are confronted here with a serious conflict requiring immediate measures. We want and have to know what is the position of the Postmaster General and Minister of Communications and what he suggests to settle this dispute.

The minister has left us wondering whether the strike was illegal or not. It may be. He never gave us any information in this respect.