

LA VILLE DE MONTREAL

The city of Montreal was in a state of shock Wednesday (Oct. 8) after six hours rioting Tuesday evening, which resulted in two deaths, a score of seriously injured persons and millions of dollars damage. The Montreal police walked off Tuesday, followed by the

Montreal firemen, who left only emergency services operating — about 25% normal capacity.

The hastily convened Quebec Legislature passed a bill ordering the police back to work by one minute past midnight. The bill threatened

finer, jail terms and possible decertification of the unions if the police and firemen did not return.

IGNORED BY POLICE

The police ignored this bill but approximately 80% of the police force were back on duty by 1 a.m. Wednesday, followed by the firemen. Before this, the city had been at the mercy of mobs of looters and demonstrators. The Quebec Provincial Police, unfamiliar with the city, were too few in number, too thinly spread, and too ill-trained to control the demonstrators. They were unable to gain control even with the aid of busloads of out-of-town reinforcements.

Units of the Canadian Army arrived in the city by three a.m. Wednesday only to find that demonstrators and looters had vanished. By the end, Montreal and provincial police forces had arrested about 100 people.

VIOLENCE BREAKS OUT

The violence broke out in Montreal shortly before 7 p.m. Tuesday, when 150 carloads of taxidrivers, militant students, and other demonstrators stormed the depot of Murray Hill Limousine Co. on Barre Street. The crowd was fired on when they began throwing Molotov cocktails at the depot. Reportably, the Murray Hill Security Guards fired the first shots. A sniper across the street retaliated, shooting out the Murray Hill spotlights. Here the first casualty occurred. Corporal Robert Dumas was

killed by a shot in the back.

Rioting spread to Paul Street, in the heart of downtown Montreal. A crowd chanting "Quebecois dans la rue" marched down St. Catherine's. The Queen E., Sheraton Mount Royal, and Windsor Hotels, along with the Murray Hill Taxi stands suffered the most damage. The looting spread all along St. Catherine's as far as the McGill University. The university suffered minor fires among the duplicating faculties, and broken windows at the McLennan Library, the English building, and the Administration building. At least 10 Montreal banks were hit by bandits Tuesday as part of 23 major holdups in the city. Another death occurred when a Montreal doctor interrupted a burglar Tuesday and opening fire killed him.

QPP HELPLESS

The QPP were next to helpless. Small squads of helmeted riot officers trying to control the main intersection of downtown, were quickly surrounded by crowds of demonstrators most of them young. By the time the riot was over the police had only managed to arrest three people on Peel Street. Barricades were set up by the crowds at Bleury Street and heavier looting developed before the police finally moved in, storing arrested looters into a bus commandeered as a paddy wagon.

One thing that this holocaust did prove was the importance of the Montreal police. The chaos in their

absence was a testament to the value of their presence. When they returned at 1 a.m., the "riot" ended. They arrested twice as many people in a couple of hours as the Quebec Provincial Police on duty with reinforcements for the entire day, had made. Unfortunately, in the wake of the events in Montreal, is the analysis of what was wrong: somehow it is seen as the fault of the police for "not being there".

POLICE A MUST

If it achieved nothing else, the Montreal incident did vividly establish that, whatever the cost, police patrol must be maintained, come hell or high water.

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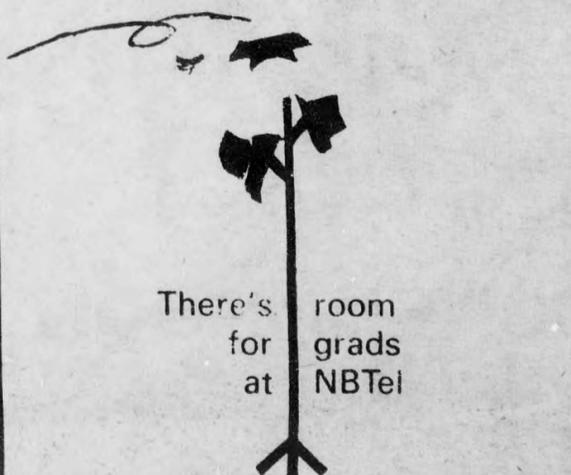
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