

Inquiries of the Ministry

written to President Kasavubu and also to Premier Tshombe of Katanga, protesting this maltreatment and dealing with the question of Mr. Lumumba being given a fair trial promptly.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT**MANUFACTURE OF MAIL BOXES AND KEYS IN PENITENTIARY**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Azellus Denis (St. Denis): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Postmaster General. According to this morning's *Gazette* four persons have been arrested having in their possession:

Keys which police said could open almost every federal mail box in the city—and probably in the entire country.

The same newspaper also reports that:

In Edmonton police made an arrest in the case and said investigations indicate keys to the mail boxes have been manufactured in the penitentiary at Kingston, where repairs are made to the government mail boxes, and that there may be at least one master key in circulation that could open all mail boxes in Canada.

The question is this. For what silly reason did the Postmaster General decide to entrust prisoners with the manufacturing and repairing of mail box locks and keys?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Did I understand the hon. member to ask for what "silly" reason?

Mr. Denis: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I admit I was wrong. However, I had that thought in mind.

Mr. Speaker: Unless the hon. member is prepared to withdraw that word he appears to have answered his own question.

Mr. Denis: Very well, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the word "silly" and am prepared to let the people judge for themselves. Will the Postmaster General consider the advisability of having the locks of government mail boxes changed, by hiring this time honest people for the security of Canadians, as the underworld must now have copies of keys which could be used on existing mail box locks?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member seems to be set on making a long speech rather than asking a question. Perhaps he would let the minister answer.

Hon. W. M. Hamilton (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I think I know what the hon. member has in mind even if he has some difficulty in expressing it. I am looking into this matter at the moment.

Mr. Chevrier: He does not speak English nearly as well as the minister does.

[Mr. Green.]

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): C'est vrai, ça, c'est vrai. I am looking into the matter at the moment, and I shall comment further in a day or two. However, in the course of looking into it, Mr. Speaker, I did discover that mail boxes have been repaired at Kingston penitentiary certainly since about 1900, and I was interested to find out that in February, I think it was, or November, 1956, there had been a question of one of those keys having issued from Kingston penitentiary for illicit purposes.

Mr. McIlraith: And the minister never did anything about it in four years.

Mr. Denis: If the former government made a mistake, does the minister think this government should go on repeating the same mistake?

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Perhaps in answering that question I might say that in November, 1957, one of my officials was in Kingston penitentiary—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: For how long?

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace):—in a visiting capacity in order to look into this matter and take corrective measures.

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. member has yet not found the key I think at least he has had ample opportunity.

[Later:]

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the disclosure, reported in today's press, that government keys and locks are being found in the possession of prisoners, can the minister give assurance to the house that keys and locks giving access to the royal Canadian mint are not being manufactured or repaired by prisoners?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Perhaps considering the hour of the question period some of the questions asked do not appear to be as serious as should be expected.

Mr. Denis: It is a question of urgency.

Mr. Speaker: I understood the hon. member's question related to the royal mint?

Mr. Denis: Yes. There are locks and keys which give access to the mint. If it is true that these locks and keys are repaired by prisoners, I think it is a question of urgency. The people of Canada should be assured that those keys are not in the possession of prisoners.