

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): No, on *Hansard*.

Mr. Speaker: If it is the unanimous wish of the House, the letter referred to by the minister could be printed as an appendix to *Hansard*. Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Editor's Note: For text of letter, see appendix.]

[Translation]

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister's tabling of documents will not make the present situation very clear to the House. A statement by him might give members the opportunity to make comments. In my opinion, the minister should be allowed to make a statement. Evidently, without having read the documents he has just tabled, there can be no comments on the meeting and his discussions of this morning with the C.N.T.U. representatives.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: This puts the Chair in a difficult position. The minister was invited to make a statement.

Mr. Fairweather: He did not make one.

Mr. Speaker: Well, the minister spoke to the subject. According to the Standing Orders, one spokesman on behalf of each of the parties in opposition has the same privilege. It may be that some hon. members felt the statement might have been more complete, but a statement was made. Hon. members have the right if they wish, as representatives of their parties, to speak and reply to the statement made by the minister.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, a long time ago, according to ancient history, the Israelites found it difficult to make bricks without straw. Similarly, I am tempted to accept the challenge of making a statement on the minister's non-statement.

There has been filed some sort of letter. I am very much afraid that in my absence the minister, who has been in hot water a good deal, has really got himself in the steam this time. I am very sorry that things have reached such an impasse in Montreal, where a very serious stoppage of mail has developed and where there have been outbreaks of violence. While I cannot for a moment condone some of the reports of violent activity, neither

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can I exonerate the minister from developing, through his abrasiveness and his typical incapacity for dealing with people who work for and in his department, the kind of regrettable relationship that has brought about this mail stoppage, one that is affecting not only Montreal and its environs but everyone in the country. In these days of austerity, with so many services being cut back as far as the Canadian public is concerned, if we cannot expect at least reasonable delivery of mail under reasonable conditions, then we have reached a very unhappy situation.

There is much more that could be said, but I am far more anxious for the mails to go through and for the minister, by happenstance, by circumstance, by luck or by some sign of the Zodiac, to come to a successful conclusion of this problem than I am to make political capital out of what is a regrettable situation. I hope there is something more in the letter than there frequently is in the communications of the Minister of Communications.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, the minister's non-statement was so short that I did not catch everything he said. However, without for a moment condoning the acts of violence which are taking place in Montreal and without knowing the full details of the particular difficulty in which the minister is now, we have had sufficient experience with the minister and with his complete refusal to try to deal with the employees of the Post Office Department with any kind of equity and common sense that I am not surprised he is in trouble.

• (2:40 p.m.)

I can remember that on an earlier occasion the minister was asked to bring in some people who understand what labour relations are in the 1960's and 1970's instead of 100 years ago. The minister brushed aside such suggestions only to have an arbitrator tell him that what he had been doing in respect of a specific case was completely wrong. I know there are other difficulties in the Post Office Department which will come to a head shortly. I can only join with the hon. member for Hillsborough in asking the minister to look into the matter again, meet with the people himself and encourage his officials who have been so incompetent in dealing with labour relations in the past to try to reach a solution which will be equitable not only to the department but to the employees who have worked for the department for some considerable time.