

THE SENATE

Monday, November 14, 1966

The Senate met at 8 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

PUBLIC SERVICE

JOINT COMMITTEE—CHANGE IN COMMONS MEMBERSHIP

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons to acquaint the Senate that the names of Messrs. Sherman and Maddill have been substituted for those of Messrs. Keys and Ricard on the list of members appointed to serve on the Special Joint Committee on the Public Service of Canada.

DIVORCE

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Arthur W. Roebuck, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Divorce, presented the committee's reports Nos. 848 to 909 inclusive, and moved that the said reports be taken into consideration on Wednesday next.

Motion agreed to.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

AIR CANADA MACHINISTS STRIKE AND POSTAL WORKERS THREATENED STRIKE—INQUIRY

Hon. Donald Cameron: Honourable senators, I would like to ask the Leader of the Government (Honourable Mr. Connolly) if he can give us any information as to what action is contemplated or likely to be taken with respect to the current strike situation which affects transportation in Canada. I refer particularly to the fact that 5,200 members of the International Association of Machinists are tying up our major air line, and that there is a likelihood within a few hours of postal workers going on strike and disrupting communication between the various parts of the country.

I have heard the statements made from time to time by Mr. Kay, the President of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and by Mr. Decarie, representing another group of postal workers, and I have heard and seen on television Mr. Rygus, the Vice-President of the International Association of Machinists.

These gentlemen claim that their members are being unjustly dealt with. Anyone who has read the Montpetit Report, as I am sure all honourable senators have, will realize that there is injustice in the postal service and that there has been a quality of low-grade administration—

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): What is your question?

Hon. Mr. Cameron: I asked what action has been taken or is likely to be taken by the Government to deal with the situation; and, by way of explanation—

Some Hon. Senators: Order.

Hon. Mr. Cameron: Just a minute. If I am not in order, Mr. Speaker, I will find another occasion, but my observations will take only a minute.

The Hon. the Speaker: I do not wish to interrupt the honourable senator. I think it would be more fitting if he would reserve his comments to a later point in the debate. The honourable senator has put his question.

An Hon. Senator: There is no debate on a question.

Hon. John J. Connolly: Honourable senators, may I intervene at this point, now that the honourable Senator Cameron has asked his question? I must say that I have had no notice of it, and therefore I take it under advisement. But let me make a comment by way of preliminary answer.

He has raised a question about two strikes. One of these has started, that in respect of Air Canada. In the first place, I should say that Air Canada is—

Hon. Mr. McCutcheon: Struck.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): —is a Crown Corporation, and the officials of that corporation are dealing with the union officials. They have been negotiating and the negotiations have broken down. A strike has begun. This matter has been engaging the very earnest attention of the Government for some time.

I am not in a position tonight to say what precise action the Government proposes to take, as negotiation is primarily the responsibility of the parties. However, I understand that an offer will be made—if it has not been made already—to appoint a mediator to deal with the situation as it exists.