

*Montreal Postal Strike*

ter. It is also becoming more and more obvious that the minister has no other alternative, in the present situation, but to resign.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Valade:** Mr. Speaker, the government members who usually keep very silent when it comes to—

**Mr. Gérard Loïselle (Saint-Henri):** You will find it is the other way around in due time.

**Mr. Valade:** Has the hon. member some remarks to make? If he wants to take part in the debate, I wish to remind the hon. member for LaSalle or Saint-Henri that he has every opportunity to do so, because it is a very important matter. Being a member for Montreal area riding, which is particularly affected by the postal strike going on at the moment, he should have been the first to ask his government—

**Mr. Lessard:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for LaSalle on a point of order.

**Mr. Valade:** —to take appropriate steps to settle this dispute.

**Mr. H.-Pit Lessard (LaSalle):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the hon. member for Sainte-Marie (Mr. Valade) to indicate by the name of his constituency the hon. member who made a remark. The hon. member to whom he was referring is not the hon. member for LaSalle. I would like him to make the correction.

**Mr. Valade:** Mr. Speaker, it does not matter very much. I must say that the hon. member who rose is not the one I meant; I had in mind an hon. member who has been sitting here for over 12 years, yet nobody seems to know which constituency he represents, because of his stolid silence, his carelessness and the incapacity he has demonstrated since he came to the house.

Mr. Speaker, we are here to discuss an important problem and try to find a solution. If the Postmaster General would condescend to call to order that bunch of unruly members, I believe that the debate would prove more constructive than the one in which some are trying to involve me.

[Mr. Valade.]

• (8:10 p.m.)

We are now faced with a crucial problem, otherwise this debate would not be taking place this evening. This is a serious problem to the extent that if in the near future, the entire postal system is disrupted on account of the slowdown or the work-to-rule now carried on in Montreal, we might be confronted with a national dispute.

Basically, it is not a simple problem, but the minister does not seem to understand anything. It is a conflict in which 450 union members are threatened to lose their job in a couple of months, but this does not seem to concern the Liberal members from Montreal.

In fact, the employees are only asking that the government take measures to ensure that the tenderers or sub-contractors, whatever they are called, recognize the only bargaining unit which represents them. Since only one contractor provided the postal service in Montreal and the area until now, the minister, in his doubtful wisdom, decided to distribute the postal service among five or six separate contracts.

The employees are threatened because their bargaining unit will not be recognized by the contractors. If this happens, they will no longer have any job security.

Those people are also threatened with losing their seniority. Some employees have held their jobs for over 20 years but with a single stroke of the pen the minister recently threatened their security.

Have we reached the point in this society the Prime Minister calls just, where people are no longer entitled to survival? All those employees ask is for the Postmaster General to assure them that they will not be laid off in a month.

Mr. Speaker, I fail to see why the minister did not take a clearer stand in that conflict. He could have benefitted from past experience. We remember the strike that broke out when the mail was delivered by Rod Service Ltd, which also knew of the experience of the former contractor, a certain Sénécal whose contract was transferred merely by verbal agreement between the minister and the G. Lapalme Inc. to a new contractor who was forced to respect those contracts, that bargaining unit.

Thanks to that bargaining unit, for which they paid dearly through four years of work and efforts, the employees managed to obtain decent salaries, normal fringe benefits and