

Oral Questions

POST OFFICE

INEQUITY IN WAGES BETWEEN SORTERS AND CODERS—
GOVERNMENT ACTION TO CORRECT

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General and it arises from the continuing restlessness among postal workers, as indicated by the current wildcatting. In view of the fact that the mechanization problem, as represented by the inequity in wages between sorters and coders, is at the root of the problem and in view of the fact that this issue has been pressed by members of the official opposition for some two years now, could the Postmaster General give the assurance that there will be some action on this problem even during this Christmas period so that we might be assured of mail delivery during the festive season.

● (1230)

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. gentleman for his question which is frankly very objective because I think he has given me an opportunity to answer through the question what I would have stated on motions and that is that the problem of automation in the Post Office has been resolved. Hand coders and machine coders are now earning the same wages.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mackasey: The main credit for this should go to Mr. Eric Taylor who was the mediator in the dispute since last April. I want to thank the hon. gentleman as well for his very objective interest in this subject, because he has checked and berated us on it over the last years.

Mr. Dinsdale: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I do not know how I can refuse the hon. member for Brandon-Souris.

DESIGNATION OF NEW BARGAINING UNITS—REQUEST FOR
EARLY ACTION

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): There really is a Santa Claus. I notice that the President of the Treasury Board seems to feel he is being left out, so perhaps I can direct my supplementary to him. Inasmuch as the continuing restlessness among postal workers arises from the fact that they have not been recertified and that bargaining units have not yet been designated by the Public Service Staff Relations Board, could the minister give the same assurance, that there will be expedited activity to resolve this problem so that negotiations might proceed immediately to establish a new fair deal for postal workers with respect to wages?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I cannot make a decision for Mr. Finkelman, but I think there will be public hearings before the end of the year. It will be over in early January, and we hope that the bargaining unit or units will be set up. We are anxious to start negotiating and, as can be realized, the Postmaster

[Mr. Lalonde.]

General and myself are working together, and we get results.

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[Translation]

INDUSTRY

TEXTILES—GOVERNMENT POSITION ON PROTECTIVE
MEASURES

Mr. Arthur Portelance (Gamelin): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

In its previous report on men's and boys' shirts, the Textile and Clothing Board has suggested that the special protection measures be completely removed at or about November 30, 1974. What action is the government considering, in view of this last report from the commission that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce has just tabled?

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, due to an abrupt change in the supply and demand situation and the uncertainty prevailing in world markets, the Textile and Clothing Board has recommended that quotas be extended for a further period ending November, 1975 with an increase of no more than 6 per cent. We feel that this particular move will sufficiently accommodate the consumer interest and will as well provide a degree of stability in the ongoing competitiveness of the Canadian shirt manufacturing industry.

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HOUSING

PROPOSED COMMITTEE TO MONITOR SALES TAX REDUCTION
ON BUILDING MATERIALS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. During the budget debate the minister promised to set up a monitoring committee with regard to sales tax reduction on building and construction materials in co-operation with the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Has that monitoring committee been set up and is it in operation at this time?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the committee has not been officially set up yet but I am working on it. I have met with members of the industry to express my views, and I am happy to say that most of the supply industries passed on the savings in sales tax the very first day. In so far as the limited dividend housing clause is concerned, I instructed CMHC to renegotiate this and substantial savings were made as a result of the drop in sales tax but I shall continue in an effort to monitor the industry.