

*Oral Questions*

Minister will know that the appointment of a mediator in the postal dispute brought the hope of a settlement. Right on the heels of that we had the firing of 40 letter carriers which has clouded the negotiations.

Will the Prime Minister tell the House whether he considers this action to be the result of stupidity, incompetence, or deliberate sabotage of the negotiations?

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, this action of suspension, I believe, and not dismissal of employees, was undertaken by Canada Post. The Government was not involved in the decision. I understand that it is in keeping with the spirit and terms of the contract which has now lapsed.

A commitment was made in writing by Canada Post to the unions that while the contract is no longer in place it will abide by the spirit. It is abiding by the spirit in this instance. Apparently there is a time limit between the action and the response of discipline, and the Post Office, I am told, had to act within that time period.

**Mr. Keeper:** Surely the withdrawal of the strike-breakers was an attempt to create a climate conducive to negotiations and the firing of 40 letter carriers destroys that climate.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR CORPORATION'S ACTIONS

**Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister face up to this issue and tell the House whether he feels the Minister responsible for the Post Office, who is his appointee, or the President of the Post Office, who is also his appointee, is responsible for this destructive action, or is it he himself who is responsible for this two-faced approach to the negotiations at the Post Office?

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, in the first question the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre pointed out that a mediator is now working with both parties trying to bring about a negotiated settlement, for which I hope he, along with everyone else in the House, would wish.

It does no good whatsoever to the process to have issues from the bargaining table raised in the House in a prejudicial, inaccurate fashion. I wish the Hon. Member would give Mr. Kelly and the negotiators an opportunity to reach a settlement and would not keep muddying the waters.

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[Translation]

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

## RIGHT TO USE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF ONE'S CHOICE

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. We

had a very unfortunate incident in the Alberta legislature recently. A francophone Member was denied the right to speak in French in the Legislature of Alberta. A Committee of the Legislature was asked to look into the matter and told Mr. Léo Piquette, Alberta M.P.P., to apologize for using French, his official language. I want to ask the Prime Minister what he intends to do to help francophones across Canada and especially francophones outside Quebec, in the provinces, to obtain recognition of their right to use the official language of their choice where and when they please.

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we are going to work together with the *Fédération des francophones hors Québec* and the provincial Governments, and with language minorities wherever they happen to be, to promote their rights at all times. These are some of the realities that led to the substantial amendments to the Official Languages Act that were tabled last week. I think my hon. friend who has always been most vigilant about the official languages question will basically approve what the Government has done. In fact, our purpose is to create a climate more conducive to having this very important reality accepted everywhere in Canada, the reality of the Official Languages Act and all the consequences thereof.

## RIGHT TO USE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES EVERYWHERE IN CANADA—OPPORTUNITY TO PUT PRESSURE ON ALBERTA

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, considering the insult—and it is an insult—to all francophones in this country, considering the threats Mr. Léo Piquette received, which went so far as to restrict his right to speak and even mentioned the possibility of imprisonment, fines and possible expulsion from the Legislature, and considering the intent of the Meech Lake Accord, the Official Languages Act and the latest version tabled last week, which provides that the Secretary of State has an obligation to urge the provinces to promote, assist and protect, I want to ask the Prime Minister: Is he prepared to call the Premier of the province, to put pressure on his Alberta cousins and friends, so they will finally understand, once and for all, that French and English are the official languages of this country—

**Mr. Malépart:** No way he has to apologize!

**Mr. Gauthier:**—and that Canadians have a right to use both languages and that it is unthinkable that a francophone should suffer any restrictions in Alberta, any more than an anglophone would in Quebec? And I ask the Prime Minister to take action.

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I personally find it unacceptable that a Canadian should be asked to apologize for using one of the official languages. The spirit of the Meech Lake Accord makes the broad assumption that the people and the leaders of this country will act with generosity and openness of mind with respect to the implementation of all linguistic measures. Members of this House know perfectly well that these may be