

That the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates be ordered forthwith to inquire into the current and projected cost commitments, both direct and indirect, of the federal government to the 1976 Olympic Games and to report to the House both as to the level of those commitments and the adequacy of existing cost control mechanisms over them.

**Mr. Speaker:** The motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

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### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

#### REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON INVESTIGATION OF LOW MORALE IN THE DEPARTMENT—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Leeds.

**Some hon. Members:** No!

**Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds):** Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 to move a motion arising from the statement made recently by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in which he denied there was any morale problem in his department. I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre:

That the Secretary of State for External Affairs make a statement to the House giving full details of a secret six-member committee to investigate low morale in his department and that the minister also release to the House the now completed report on interviews on the subject of morale made with numerous department employees by a sub-committee including in its membership Pierre Brien, Michael Mace and Shirley Boles and, finally, that the minister advise the House when the recommendations to improve morale will be carried out.

**Mr. Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 43 this motion requires unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

#### POST OFFICE

##### GOVERNMENT POSITION ON LEGALITY OF STRIKE— CONTINGENCY PLAN IN EVENT OF PROLONGED STRIKE

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, a question to the Acting Prime Minister in the absence of the Postmaster General. I understand that the executive of the Postal Workers Union has called for a national strike. I should like to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether it is the view of the government that the union is in a position to call a legal strike and that the Government of Canada is now seized with a legal national strike by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

#### Oral Questions

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** That is my understanding. I made inquiries this morning and I understand there has been a call for a strike which is being observed.

**Mr. Stanfield:** In the light of the statement made recently by the Postmaster General concerning the possible necessity of a long strike—perhaps three months—to resolve this issue, has the government decided, in the event of rotating strikes by the union, to shut down all postal services across the country in keeping with the remarks made by the Postmaster General for as long as it takes to reach a collective agreement?

**Mr. Sharp:** I hope an agreement can be reached without any prolonged delay in the operation of the Post Office. As to the particular question which the Leader of the Opposition has directed to me, I believe it should be directed, rather, to the Postmaster General.

**An hon. Member:** Where is he?

**Mr. Sharp:** The Postmaster General is in Windsor today; I expect he will be in the House either tomorrow or the next day. I know he has no desire to avoid answering questions raised by the hon. gentleman. The cabinet has not yet considered what action will be taken if the employees indulge in rotating strikes.

**Mr. Stanfield:** The Postmaster General has also told us that the government has contingency plans for the distribution of essential government mail and social security cheques. Has the government prepared a contingency plan designed to help small businessmen and other Canadians who face severe, perhaps unendurable hardship as a result of a strike? Has the government such a plan and, if so, when will the public hear about it?

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, I think it would be misleading to suggest that the public is not going to suffer if there is a post office strike. This is one of the penalties of collective bargaining, and I think it is one that is accepted by members on both sides of this House. They would not want to deprive any particular group of the right to strike. So I would not hold out the hope that a post office strike would not harm many individuals, big and small.

##### GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ENSURE LEGALITY OF STRIKE— ALLEGED TAPPING OF POSTMASTER GENERAL'S TELEPHONE—GOVERNMENT ACTION

**Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question which I will direct to the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the statement by the Postmaster General that the vote conducted recently by the CUPW union does not necessarily constitute a mandate to call a strike—and it is to be regretted that the Postmaster General is not in the House today on this most significant occasion to deal with this problem—and in view of the further announcement that I believe was made this morning by the postal unions that the negotiations broke down on the wage packet rather than the fringe benefits which have been in public focus during recent days, what action is the government taking to ensure that