

ers at the Toronto International Airport, for example, who are members of the PSAC.

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[Translation]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SOMALIA—REQUEST EMERGENCY AID PROGRAM BE STUDIED

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. As Somalia, one of the poorest countries in the world, is facing an influx of over one million refugees, as well as a shortage of 100,000 metric tons of food and the loss of oil supplies from Iraq, could the minister consider setting up an emergency assistance program including the CIDA recommendation, according to which Somalia should be considered as a target country in terms of bilateral aid?

[English]

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I should like to thank the hon. member and our colleague from Fraser Valley West, both of whom have shown in recent days such concern for international relief and international humanitarian affairs. Canada is the second largest contributor to the world food program and a very great effort is being made in the horn of Africa. We have also contributed \$2 million to the African fund of the International Red Cross which also is devoting all of its resources to that particular problem. I will be very pleased to meet the two hon. members and to review, in light of the needs and also of our available resources, whether there is anything further we can do to assist in this serious problem.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. BAKER (NEPEAN-CARLETON)—ANSWERS GIVEN BY PRESIDENT OF TREASURY BOARD

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I have risen on a question of privilege on the assumption that the question period is over. I apologize to you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I was about to interrupt the question period but I had decided to let the hon. member ask a question. I will recognize him now on a question of privilege.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): My question of privilege involves two points of privilege, first, the answers to questions today given by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) with respect to the completion of the agreement which was reached with the public servants to which we referred, and an earlier one arising out of a question which I put to him on October 6 and the undertaking which he gave to me on the same day. Madam Speaker, you will recall that at

Privilege—Mr. W. Baker

that time I said the following, as reported at page 3271 of *Hansard* of that day:

Because of the importance of this meeting—

I was referring to the meeting which led to the completion of the agreement.

—will the minister undertake to return to the House when the day's work is over, if that day's work is definitive, and make a statement to the House in respect of the results of that meeting and their impact on the work stoppage in the public service?

His answer to me was as follows:

It will not be my intention in any way to prejudice these negotiations by making premature statements regarding the content thereof. Obviously in the event an agreement is reached I would be very pleased to return to the House and advise the House.

In the context, my question to him was to advise the House by way of a statement, and that is the reason I used the words "and make a statement to the House", which is part of our proceedings. That is exactly what I had in mind. That is the first aspect of it, and I think the minister should consider whether he could wait for just a few minutes before going out to meet the press, and make a statement here in the House of Commons so we will know what the results were.

The second aspect of my question goes to the line of questioning which underscores what I was asking for as a result of the question of the hon. member for York-Peel regarding disciplinary action. We have now in our hands two written statements, one by the President of the Treasury Board dated today for immediate release, and the other by the Public Service Alliance of Canada, also dated today for immediate release, and they are different. That is why a statement to the House is quite important. These two written statements are different with respect to discipline.

I do not want to re-read the whole of the minister's statement, but the important thing is that from the point of view of the government he says:

—that no amnesty has been granted, partial or otherwise—

That is his position. It goes on:

Those who have broken the law—

Civil or criminal, here I paraphrase.

—must face the consequences, subject only to careful review of the circumstances in individual cases.

That is a very hard line which the minister has taken. I am not quarrelling with him taking it, but that is what he has taken.

The statement which has been made by the president of the Public Service Alliance is completely different. It says this:

According to the agreement the employer would freeze disciplinary action—except for those actions related to criminal acts.

In other words, if they are going to carry on with respect to civil acts, the minister's answers to the questions indicate another proceeding altogether.

Madam Speaker, it may be that the President of the Treasury Board might argue that he is not bound to make a statement to me if he does not choose to do so, except for the