

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

dation of Judge Lippe and the wage recommendation of Keith Campbell, does the minister's answer refer to those recommendations in Judge Lippe's report which Mr. Campbell also supports? If so, is Treasury Board adopting the position of Keith Campbell on the wage issue rather than the position of the chairman of the board? I should like clarification of this point.

**Mr. Drury:** Mr. Speaker, in respect of the recommendations on which the views of the chairman and of Mr. Campbell were the same, the government supports the views of both these gentlemen. In the case of wages, where there was a difference of view as between the union representative, the employer's representative and the chairman, the government supports the view of the employer's representative.

**Mr. Lewis:** A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for clearing up that matter because it is important for all of us. Have any negotiations been taking place in the last few days? If so, were they on the major issues or were they not on the major issues? I ask this question because the union negotiating committee was occupied with its strike vote. May I also ask the minister whether it is the intention of Treasury Board to resume full negotiations the moment the strike vote is completed and seek to negotiate continuously day and night in search of a settlement satisfactory to the postal employees so that a strike may be averted?

**Mr. Drury:** Mr. Speaker, I indicated in the House the other day that negotiations were interrupted at the request of the union representatives to allow them to consult their membership. This consultation has not yet been completed. We have invited the unions to reassemble and to meet us again to resume the interrupted negotiations as soon as they are free to do so. The government, on its side, will be prepared to negotiate continuously day and night if this will meet with the wishes of the union. I think the hon. gentleman will well understand that even though the government has been ready to negotiate over the weekend, it has not been possible to do so owing to the unwillingness of the other party.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Champlain wish to ask a supplementary question?

[*Mr. Lewis.*]

**Mr. René Matte (Champlain):** No, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, may I direct a further supplementary question to the Postmaster General. In view of the fact, and I understand it is a fact, that the fear of loss of jobs due to mechanization and automation is a major issue in the negotiations and in view of the minister's emphasis on the need for mechanization and automation in the report to which the Leader of the Opposition referred, is the minister supporting the request of the union negotiators that job security be contractually safeguarded in the case of people who might be affected by the automation he has promised for the Post Office?

**Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, I think a great deal has been said about this and there is a great deal of misunderstanding. Over the next five years the work force of the Post Office will expand by some 5,000 people, primarily to meet the increase in volume, if the Canadian public continues to have confidence in the services of the Post Office.

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

**Mr. Kierans:** There is no possibility of people who want to work not having work in the Post Office, and this depends as much on the people who work in the Post Office as on any policies that the government may develop. There is no possibility of automation or productivity outstripping the present work force. People who seek contractual obligations sometimes seek not the work but the pay without the work.

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

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I should like to say, and I am certain that all hon. members will agree, that for the minister responsible for the Post Office to have made the statement he has just made when both sides are in the midst of negotiations is absolutely scandalous and irresponsible.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member will recognize that that is not a question of privilege. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings on a supplementary and then the hon. member for Champlain.