

and the RCMP being compulsorily retired or forced into retirement before the age of 60. I would ask the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre to verify that part of the question he put to the minister.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Before the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre does that, perhaps I might suggest that this matter might be raised other than as a question of privilege. I must bring to the attention of hon. members that we have reached the end of the question period.

**Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a further question of privilege. When a question is put to a minister I do not think that minister should impute motives or imply that the question was not properly asked in the first place. The minister has no right to imply that I have put an improper question, or that I made a reference to another hon. member's question improperly. I made a proper reference to that question and I do not think it is the minister's place to deny me that privilege.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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#### POST OFFICE

##### DISPUTE WITH WORKERS—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON SETTLEMENT

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder, before Your Honour calls orders of the day, if I might direct a question to the Postmaster General in view of the fact that the government is now adopting a more reasonable attitude.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I apologize to the hon. member who has been trying to get the floor for some time. I would have liked to recognize him but we ran out of time about three minutes ago. He may ask the question with the consent of the House. Is this agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Ouellet:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Perhaps the matter could be held in abeyance until tomorrow, when I will give the hon. member priority.

**Mr. Ouellet:** On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be of interest to this House to know that a protocol d'entente was signed at 3.15 this afternoon.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** On the backs of the Canadian public.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister having used a question of privilege to make an announcement to the House, I think hon. members will recognize that, in all fairness, the hon. member for St. John's East should be allowed to ask his question now.

#### Unemployment Insurance Act

**Mr. McGrath:** The Postmaster General anticipated my question. We are all pleased to know that this long-standing dispute is now settled. My question to the Prime Minister is this: In view of the success of the Postmaster General in concluding a satisfactory agreement on this long-standing dispute, will he now ask the Postmaster General to take over from the President of the Treasury Board all further negotiations with public servants?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I am not sure whether the minister is rising on a question of privilege.

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

**Mr. Drury:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to say I support the suggestion of the hon. gentleman. In all future negotiations with the Post Office, the Postmaster General should conduct them.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** Orders of the day.

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1530)

##### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT (No. 1)

##### PROVISION FOR APPROPRIATION TO BE DEEMED ADVANCE

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration)** moved that Bill C-124, to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971 (No. 1), be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, reference was made to the government's intention to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act as a result of its review of the unemployment insurance program. Subsequently, in fact last Wednesday, two bills were tabled in this House, Bill C-124 and Bill C-125, containing those amendments. The first one, Bill C-124, is before us today. It deals specifically with the ceiling on cash advances.

As I indicated before the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates the other day, there is extreme urgency in considering this bill since current advances available to the Unemployment Insurance Commission are, I am advised by the commission, sufficient only until February 7, give or take a day or two. I hope to find all members of that committee and, indeed, all members of this House in agreement that we should not arrive at a situation where benefits to the unemployed of this country would be cut off.

There are three main reasons why advances are required. First, as hon. members are no doubt aware, when the unemployment level exceeds 4 per cent, the government pays the resulting additional benefit costs. However, the government's share of the total costs for a given calendar year is not paid to the commission until April of the following year. Therefore, the government is responsible in law for advancing moneys to cover that cash requirement.