

carrying out its responsibilities by funding activities which will in fact become competitive with Canadian jobs?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had listened to an earlier answer I gave to the House, he would understand the situation.

Mr. Gillies: Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully and was so shocked by the answer I could not believe a responsible minister would give it. Is the minister suggesting that we should trade off short-term one item sales in mining equipment against the possibility of maintaining a strong and forceful position for the nickel industry in the markets of the world?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the hon. member supports the hewers of wood and drawers of water approach to Canadian policy.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Gillespie: He made that very clear a little while ago. If the hon. member is really sincere in that position, we should not export any machinery to anybody if that machinery might compete with a product which is made in Canada.

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POST OFFICE

POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING CROWN CORPORATION— GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Walter Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General, who has some responsibility for a department which is vital to the employment situation and economic stability of this country. Now that a senior official of the Post Office Department has added his voice to the request of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, along with 79 per cent of the members of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, spokesmen for the opposition parties in this House and a growing number of exasperated Canadians, in asking the Government of Canada to consider replacing the bureaucratic tangle of departments and agencies running Canada's Post Office with a Crown corporation type of organization, would the Postmaster General inform the House and the Canadian public what action he is taking on the matter?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman knows, there has been in the past serious consideration to making the Post Office a Crown corporation. However, as he knows as well, our deficits have progressed from somewhere in the vicinity of \$70 million some five years ago to approximately \$560 million for the current fiscal year. At a time when that much public funding is involved in postal operations, surely it is essential that the government keep its hand in the operation and maintain the operation of the Post Office in order to ensure that the expenditures are kept at the lowest possible level.

Oral Questions

Mr. Dinsdale: Does the Postmaster General feel that Canadians can continue to afford a half billion dollar deficit in the Post Office which results from mismanagement, inefficiency and continuing labour-management confrontation?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. gentleman that the increase in the deficit bears no relationship at all to the question of management or efficiency. It is a question of increased labour costs and transportation costs. I hope that the hon. gentleman will wait until Friday when I am prepared to participate in the throne speech debate and will inform the House completely of the situation relating to the post office.

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● (1142)

AIR TRANSPORT

MOVEMENT OF TRAFFIC AT TORONTO INTERNATIONAL— REQUEST FOR REPORT

Mr. Jim Fleming (York West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Transport regarding whether air traffic movement at Toronto international airport has at last returned to normal; that is, to the rate that was considered normal and safe until parliament acted to order the air traffic controllers back to work and their apparent slow-down began?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the procedures being followed in Toronto are still somewhat different from the situation prior to the air traffic control strike. I should assure hon. members and the public that safety is in no way impaired. Discussions are going on between air traffic controllers and my senior officials concerning various matters that lead to the problems and difficulties. The air traffic control situation in Toronto is much more complex than in other places in Canada on a number of counts. A variety of steps to deal with the problems created may eventually lead to a solution.

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POST OFFICE

DELAYS IN PARCEL DELIVERY AT TERMINAL A, TORONTO— GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, a question for the Postmaster General. Has the minister been informed of the long delays in clearing parcel mail at Terminal A, Toronto. If so, what action is he taking to clear up the backlog of parcel post mail which amounts to an almost complete breakdown in the service?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I have not been made aware of any difficulty in Terminal A relating to the parcel post. The hon. member's information is usually reliable, so I shall make sure an investigation is conducted