

Oral Questions

way by the Government. Did the Government bounce off its ideas on people from the trade unions, on farmers, on fishermen, on small businesses? Did the Government consult them? Or did it just consult tax lawyers and accountants and ask them for their opinions? What kind of equity is there in that, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, during the course of the development of tax policy—and I am not trying to make a distinction between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party—

Mr. Riis: There isn't any. You can't do it. Don't even try.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —I am just saying that this is a practice which has been going on for years within the Department of Finance. The officials of the Department of Finance have found it useful to bounce ideas off a group of experts—

Mr. Cassidy: What about ordinary Canadians?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —so they can understand the technical impact of these proposals to make sure that when the proposals are brought in in the form of either a White Paper or a Budget, they are going to be far sounder than was the case of instances in the past when this sort of advice was not taken as fully as it might have been. That is the purpose for this exercise.

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[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT PROVIDE MANOEUVRING ROOM
TO SETTLE LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Canada Post.

The Government caused the postal strike by putting impossible restrictions on the Canada Post Corporation. Union members would be willing to settle for the status quo plus protection against inflation, but the Canada Post Corporation cannot even give them that, because the Government has put it in a financial straitjacket.

If we want to settle this dispute, we will have to deal with the crux of the problem, and the question is: Is the Government prepared to take the only step that would help solve this problem, which is to reconsider its priorities with respect to postal services and give Canada Post the financial flexibility it needs if it is to pursue these negotiations with any hope of success?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the Marchment Committee pointed out in its study released last year, the previous administration left the Post Office in a terrible mess—

Mr. Gauthier: Baloney to you, too.

Mr. Andre: —and its virtual survival is in question. This House agreed unanimously in 1981 to the creation of a Crown corporation with the intent that the Crown corporation, under the direction of its board of directors, would manage that operation in a sound fashion. That is what it is trying to do. The Hon. Member, by bringing issues from the table onto the floor of the House of Commons, is going against the position taken by his Party, the New Democratic Party, and this Party.

Mr. Gauthier: Quit cheerleading.

Mr. Andre: No one wants a strike. Everyone wants to see a resolution negotiated at the table. But it is not healthy to have the Hon. Member bringing forward false, misleading, inaccurate information—

Mr. Gauthier: That is not true.

Mr. Andre: —before the House, claiming he knows what needs to be done.

[Translation]

ROOM FOR MANOEUVRING IN NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for Canada Post is very far out to lunch. If he had read the Marchment report, he would remember that it recommended giving the corporation until 1990 to balance its budget, not just until the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, the worst of it is that the Government, by using replacements to deliver the mail, is manipulating the unemployed and forcing them into confrontations with regular workers. This can only lead to violence and deterioration of the system—

[English]

Mr. Crosbie: Question.

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): You are going to get the question. Don't worry about that.

Mr. Crosbie: That's a relief.

An Hon. Member: It will be in Chinese for you, John.

Mr. Rossi: Hey, Crosbie, go back to sleep.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question, please.

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I was saying that the solution is not to use temporary workers but, and I am sure Hon. Members opposite are anxious to hear what I have