

Oral Questions

research has established a casual relationship between hyperactivity and artificial food colours and food flavours; and finally, in view of the fact that some 1800 chemicals are routinely used in the Canadian food supply, and very few of these have ever been tested for the deleterious effects they can have on human health and human behaviour, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave):

That the matter of chemical additives in the Canadian food supply be referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs for immediate consideration, study and report.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Pursuant to Standing Order 43 this motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Murta: Mr. Speaker, before the question period starts, I should like to beg your indulgence for a few minutes and bring to the attention of the House the fact that in my constituency of Lisgar, in southern Manitoba, the post office employees—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret that the procedure of the House simply does not provide for the intervention of the hon. member. I have no idea what the point is—

Mr. Murta: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might raise it briefly by way of a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the Standing Orders of the House under which we have been operating since Easter do not permit points of order or questions of privilege at this time.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

POST OFFICE

RESPONSE OF MINISTER TO LETTER FROM UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS SUGGESTING RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): I think, Mr. Speaker, I detect a smile on the handsome Irish countenance of the Postmaster General this morning. I do not know whether it results from the demonstration that is taking place in front of the building at this moment by the postal workers who are demonstrating against the strike or the fact that there is some truth in the rumour that a note has been received, in response to the invitation of the minister issued in the House yesterday, informing him that the negotiators from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers are ready to return to the bargaining table. If this is true, is the minister able to give a positive response?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): I understand, Mr. Speaker, that there was a letter delivered by private courier from the Canadian Union of Postal Work-

[Mr. Yewchuk.]

ers sometime last evening which I have not had a chance to study this morning.

Mr. Peters: Study it. It is two paragraphs.

Mr. Mackasey: The reply to the letter will be sent out sometime today after we have had a chance to fully analyze its contents.

STRIKE OF INSIDE WORKERS—SUGGESTED COOLING OFF PERIOD AND NEGOTIATION OF PROBLEM OF CASUAL WORKERS

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, in order that the Canadian public might begin to see light at the end of the long tunnel, I wonder if the minister would accept, in his response, the suggestion that has been put forward from this side of the House that a cooling off period of 90 days be a part of the bargaining process, and that the issue of casual workers be negotiable on the same basis as the very difficult question of technological change which was negotiated and successfully resolved, and in so doing make it possible for the postal workers to go back to work without losing face and ensuring that this essential service is restored in Canada.

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I knew I was going to pay very dearly for that compliment. In the negotiations, as the hon. gentleman appreciates, the question of casual workers has been dealt with at great length by the conciliation board chairman. We are prepared to negotiate all issues. I propose to indicate, in a conciliatory tone, to the negotiators for the union that we are ready to resume negotiations almost immediately and it would be very nice if they, as well, would show their concern for the Canadian public by letting workers in their union who want to go back to work go back to work because they are obviously in the majority across this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mackasey: Many locals have gone back to work in Newfoundland and some in New Brunswick, and obviously this is beginning to spread. I think it is time now for the House to have a little patience with me and for the union to extend the same courtesy until my reply in letter form—certainly not by telephone—and then we will see what emerges.

STRIKE OF INSIDE WORKERS—GOVERNMENT INTENTION WITH REGARD TO BACK TO WORK LEGISLATION

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Prime Minister. On Wednesday the Postmaster General said that the postal strike “does not in the slightest add any pressure on the minister who runs the Post Office”. While that may be true, I hope the Acting Prime Minister recognizes the hardship, or pressure if you like, that a long shut down of the post office will mean to many groups and individuals in the country. Unless this dispute is settled through the weekend, is it the government's position that in 90 days or a similar fixed period it will bring a back to work order during which time the