

Oral Questions

Mr. Reisman said this week: "If we leave each side free to interpret the trade agreement, then you do not really have what I would call a reliable commitment". Today it seems clear to everyone but the Prime Minister that a reliable American commitment will never happen.

Hasn't the President of the United States in his letter to the Prime Minister, in reality, politely suggested to the Prime Minister that he should take a walk?

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the short answer to the question is no.

REQUEST NEGOTIATIONS BE DISCONTINUED

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister, the author of the mandate. I want to say to him that it is clear to everyone in Canada, and to everyone in this House, that these talks are coming apart at the seams. The Government is setting up the U.S. Congress as the villain in the talks.

The Prime Minister has said many times that it took courage to enter these talks. I want to tell him that the last fellow who went over Niagara Falls in a barrel also had courage. The question Canadians are asking today is does the Prime Minister have the common sense and intelligence to walk away from these talks when the interest of Canada is obviously not being well served?

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the only people who want the talks to come apart are the Liberals and the New Democratic Party. They would love to see them fall apart—

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Come on.

Mr. McDermid: —for crass political reasons, no other reason. I can tell the Hon. Member, number one, the talks are not coming apart as he would like to say.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Even your own Party doesn't believe you.

Mr. McDermid: And number two, our Government has said right from the start that if it is not a good deal for Canada and for Canadians we will not sign it. We still stick by that.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

LETTER CARRIERS' STRIKE—PICKET LINE INJURIES

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Post Office who said yesterday in this House: "The process which has been unfolding over the last 10 days in these labour negotiations is perfectly normal". The Minister will be aware

that two days ago in Prince George, British Columbia, a large postal truck, crashing through the picket line, broke both arms, both legs and caused internal injuries to a female employee on the picket line. He will know that yesterday there were two people in Ottawa injured on the picket line.

Is this the process the Minister considers to be normal in terms of labour negotiations?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member would have been more forthcoming if he had read the rest of my comments into the record as well, but they are there in *Hansard*. However, I would like to read from the *Gazette* of June 18:

"It's a very tough issue because you have two conflicting realities. The postal workers must be treated fairly and justly, but other Canadians must continue to receive their mail", Saskatchewan MP Lorne Nystrom said yesterday.

That is what the Post Office is trying to do, deliver the mail.

CORPORATION'S HIRING OF STRIKE-BREAKERS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. On April 19, 1984, the Right Hon. Prime Minister made the following statement. He said: "My father was not only a union member, he was a union officer, and I do not cross picket lines". In light of this very clear and precise statement made by the Prime Minister does he think that it is correct, that it is appropriate, that it is acceptable for the Post Office of Canada to be hiring strike-breakers whose intention it is to cross picket lines?

• (1130)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is quite right. I do not cross picket lines. I never have and I never will.

The answer to the second part of the question was provided by the Hon. Member's seat-mate who indicated, in a response which was just cited in the House, that the Post Office has an obligation to the Canadian people, to the taxpayers and to ordinary citizens to try to deliver the mail. That is what it is trying to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST MEDIATOR BE APPOINTED

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Right Hon. Prime Minister is this. Does he support Canada Post's hiring of strike-breakers to cross picket lines?

I also want to ask him this question. He knows that this morning both sides have indicated that they have reached an impasse, that the negotiations have in fact broken down. On many occasions both sides have made the request for a mediator. The right hon. gentleman's reputation is as a labour