

Oral Questions

be producing a report, although I will be producing a formal reply.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post.

Canadians hope that the present mediation process will resolve the postal dispute. However, this summer pensioners, the disabled, veterans and others faced a real mess with regard to the mail delivery system.

Will the government and Canada Post respond positively to the request of anti-poverty groups and others and sit down with postal workers in order to work out an agreement with regard to the delivery of pension and other cheques?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, along with the hon. member and I am sure all Canadians, I am sincerely hopeful that the mediation effort will result in a conclusion to this dispute and a contract mutually satisfactory to both sides. That is what is to be wished for.

If there is another strike, and heaven forbid, I do not think we can stand idly by and see anybody hurt, pensioners or anybody else. But I have to say to the hon. member that if there is concern on the part of the union about cheques being caught in the system and not available to those who need them, all they need to do is give 48 hours' notice before going on strike and the cheques will be delivered to every pensioner and they will not be hurt as result of the strike.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if anyone can predict exactly when a strike would occur, so I do not know if the minister himself could deliver on that promise.

Therefore I would ask again that the government and Canada Post agree to sit down with representatives of CUPW. Surely, if those members are willing to deliver those cheques, the government and Canada Post are able to sit down and try to negotiate this before there is any dispute.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member is not predicting that through his sources there is going to be another strike.

I repeat, the problem last time was that cheques from the government were trapped in Toronto where strikers refused to allow anybody to go in and recover the cheques. They illegally blocked entry and the police would not break the entry.

To avoid that happening again, all that needs to happen is 48 hours' notice so that cheques do not get trapped in the system. Perhaps he could use his channels to communicate that. If there is concern about the pensioners, give us some warning and we will make sure that pensioners are not hurt.

* * *

REFORM PARTY

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

Could the minister inform this House how a Canadian Reform Party policy of a reduction in agricultural support programs and a reduction of marketing boards would benefit western grain farmers?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, that is quite a challenge. It would probably be better directed to the hon. member for Beaver River.

Mr. Speaker: It is a challenge to me too, but do the best you can.

Mr. Mayer: Beyond their policy of advocating a reduction in support to all industries, you have to think that what they are presently advocating on behalf of agriculture would be very damaging at a time when farmers need our support.

I would suggest, giving that we are going through an opposition day with a debate on agriculture—and we have had some pretty good debate here this morning—it might be appropriate for the hon. member for Beaver River to enter into that debate to tell us what her party would do to support Canadian farmers in a time of great need.