

ter on April 7, which is the document on which I am basing my questions, that the wage of these employees if they agreed to join the public service would be \$3.25. I should like to ask the minister whether that \$3.25 was to be a permanent wage or a temporary wage until settlement between the postal unions and the government? Assuming that the Public Service Staff Relations Board integrated these drivers with the appropriate section of the postal unions, was the \$3.25 to be a temporary wage which might later be reduced or red-circled or what exactly was it to be?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I think it was made fairly clear in the document on the question that the rate of \$3.25 was to obtain from the time of entry until such time as a new agreement between the Council of Postal Unions and the government was signed. From that date all the members of the Council of Postal Unions and the workers of Lapalme in whatever unit they might be would be governed by that new rate.

Mr. Lewis: If the rate was reduced in negotiations these drivers would have to accept—

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): David!

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, there are negotiations going on. Don't say, "David", Don. I know as much about it as you do. In view of the fact that negotiations are going on and the matter is before a conciliation board and that the Treasury Board offer was \$3.16, not \$3.25, does that mean that if the settlement for the rest of the workers should be below \$3.25 these men are to look forward to a reduction in their pay?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that perhaps negotiations are going on here as well as elsewhere, but the question is really hypothetical. I say that whatever rate is agreed upon between the Council of Postal Unions and the Treasury Board will be the rate at which, from the date of signature, all the drivers in the Post Office will be paid.

MONTREAL POSTAL DISPUTE—COST OF NEW DELIVERY SYSTEM

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Considering that much of this trouble started with an ill-starred effort at economy, was the last offer which the minister made to the workers such as to be similar to the total cost of the operation under the contractual system?

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure that I understood the question. If the hon. gentleman would rephrase it, I shall try to answer.

Mr. Macquarrie: I shall do my best, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if at the stage of the minister's latest offer, which he called a generous one, the total cost to the government and the department for operating the service was less than the contractual system which was being abolished under the Postmaster General's reform?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I think I can say without equivocation that the total cost of the terms and conditions offered will provide a better postal service for Montreal than was had at a higher cost in the past.

MONTREAL POSTAL DISPUTE—LEGALITY OF GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL TO LAPALME EMPLOYEES

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): In view of the procedures followed in hiring Public Service employees, may I ask the President of the Treasury Board if the offer to the employees of Lapalme has followed Public Service procedures? If not, has he had an opinion from the law officers of the Crown—without telling me what that opinion is—to the effect that he is proceeding properly?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I have been advised by our legal advisers that we are proceeding entirely legally.

[*Translation*]

TRADE

WHEAT—POSSIBLE SALE TO PAKISTAN

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Is the minister aware that Pakistan is seeking to purchase 30 to 40 million bushels of wheat and could he tell the House whether he intends to contact the Pakistani government with a view to negotiating a contract for the sale of wheat, if possible?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that in such a case it is quite exceptional for the Canadian Wheat Board not to be aware of such important offers. However, I shall