

Oral Questions

What is the concern? What is the hold-up? What is the back-tracking on that commitment? Why do the minister and the government not live up to what they said on August 30?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am very amused because the referendum has not even happened yet. Nobody can renege on anything at this point.

What we are looking forward to is the event on Sunday. We have been totally consistent from the beginning. I too have discussed this with the foreign minister of Russia and with many other people, including our NATO allies and some of our other allies.

There is nothing to renege on until it is over. I think the hon. member is jumping to the conclusion that there will be something renegeed on, when there is absolutely no reason to believe that.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Mr. Gilbert Chartrand (Verdun—Saint-Paul): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour.

Once again the Canadian Union of Public Employees is in hot water, this time in its aviation division. The minister is no doubt aware of the lock-out of flight attendants at Nationair since November 19 this year, and I am referring to flight attendants based in Montreal and Toronto. The lock-out is due to the fact that the union, after receiving the company's firm offer on November 12, refused to submit these terms to its members at a general meeting, so members can vote on the offer.

Considering the lack of professionalism and lack of good faith shown by union leaders, is the minister considering legislation that would oblige it to submit the offer so that members will have the option of voting a genuine option, I hope to return to work?

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, we are now revising Part I of the Canada Labour Code, a process that will probably result in a number of reforms,

including one concerning pregnant women working on video display terminals.

As for the hon. member's question, I must say that I was watching very carefully what happened in Toronto, when Premier Bob Rae used a clause similar to the one my colleague would like to see in the Canada Labour Code. For the time being, we are looking into the matter, and I hope to be able to submit a recommendation to cabinet within a few months.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds.

Today the Vancouver Port Corporation, grain companies, employers' organizations and affected workers all condemned the federal government for creating economic uncertainty in the grain export industry with the shipment of grain out of the port of Seattle.

Will the minister clear up this uncertainty and help the industry by indicating exactly under what circumstances grain will be allowed to move through American ports?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should understand two or three things.

First of all, the Wheat Board assures me that the grain that is moving through Seattle is additional capacity to what would otherwise be moved.

I assume the NDP supports the Wheat Board, so I am taking the Wheat Board's numbers. It means additional sales for Canadian farmers who were yesterday in the gallery. If the hon. member is against that, he is against farmers.

Second, the Wheat Board has also said that this could result in additional work for Canadians because if we can satisfy a customer now when we are booked up to capacity and develop a business relationship with that customer, it means that country may come back again and make additional work for people in Vancouver.