

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the hon. member for York South might ask a further supplementary question, after which the Chair will recognize the hon. member for St. John's East.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I understood the minister to say yesterday that the government was agreeable to making objection to a classification matter a subject under the grievance procedure but that it is not agreeable to this going beyond internal discussion, that the government objects to it going to arbitration or adjudication, as it is called in the Public Service Staff Relations Act. May I ask the minister what procedures the employer has suggested to settle such a grievance if the parties remain apart? If the matter is not going to adjudication under the law for final and binding settlement, what alternative suggestion is the government making for a final and binding settlement of such a grievance?

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, as recommended in the conciliator's report, the government is prepared to accept amendment of clause 9.03 of the contract, allowing any grievance concerning classification to be discussed within the department. We said we were prepared to accept the recommendation made in the conciliation board's report.

As for clause 9.04, dealing with grievances which can be submitted to arbitration, it has already been signed by both parties and there is no change, so that the exception relative to classification still stands.

I want to tell the hon. member that the matter can be discussed within the manpower committee, according to the suggestion made in the report, which we are prepared to accept.

[English]

DISPUTE WITH WORKERS—INQUIRY AS TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES BY GOVERNMENT IN DRAFT AGREEMENT FROM CONCILIATION BOARD REPORT

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Postmaster General whether the draft agreement proposed by the government contains any additions to or any substantive omissions from the majority report of the conciliation board?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Postmaster General): I would tell the hon. member what I already stated here yesterday, namely that we have in no way altered the substance of the majority report. We are prepared to accept the report in its entirety, as recommended.

Furthermore, I would remind the hon. member that he would do far better if he encouraged the representatives of the employees to sign a contract, instead of making certain allegations.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McGrath: The minister used the word "substantial" today. May I ask him what changes have been made, or what departures did he make from the majority report of

[Mr. Ouellet.]

the conciliation board in the government's proposal which was placed before the unions' negotiating team?

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: At the request of the employee representatives, we have submitted in a contractual form the recommendations of the majority report. We have submitted these recommendations in contractual language which means that if the union does not agree on certain words, the matter can certainly be discussed at the bargaining table without the service having to be interrupted, as workers do in certain cases.

[English]

Mr. McGrath: May I ask the minister whether he is prepared to lay the government's memorandum of settlement, which is the basis of the government's position, on the table of the House so that members will have an opportunity to compare it with the majority report of the conciliation board, which the government claims it has accepted?

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, as I said a few moments ago, Mr. Shime has been asked to clarify the matter. Until it is done, I see no advantage for both parties to make our contractual representations public. I am willing, if the hon. member so wishes, to table the majority conciliation report and I can assure him that the recommendations contained in that report are fully endorsed by the government.

[English]

Mr. McGrath: On a question of privilege—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member rises on a question of privilege. Before I recognize the hon. member I might refer to the fact that there are a number of other hon. members who want to ask further supplementary questions. They will be given an opportunity to do so, but after hearing the question of privilege I will recognize first the hon. member for Témiscamingue. For the moment the hon. member for St. John's East rises on a question of privilege.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is based on the replies given by the minister today, and the replies given by the minister and by the President of the Treasury Board yesterday which can be found at page 391 of *Hansard*. At that time the President of the Treasury Board said the government was prepared to accept the majority report of the conciliation board provided it was also accepted by the unions. Well, Mr. Speaker, the unions have accepted the majority report. The issue is that the government has not accepted it.

The Postmaster General the same day indicated it was clear that the government had made no changes in the report. Today, Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister, in order to clarify the matter because it would appear the minister is misleading the House—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: —which in itself would be a very serious matter, to table the government's memorandum of settle-