

Inquiries of the Ministry

half the question period on questions regarding this very important matter. A statement was made yesterday by the minister and lengthy statements were made by hon. members on behalf of the parties in opposition. I doubt very much that we should engage again today in a series of questions and answers on the very same subject.

Mr. Stanfield: May I then ask the minister whether he would be prepared to make such a statement in the course of the debate tonight?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): If I am asked to take part in the debate tonight, I will.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baldwin: You are like a bunch of go-go dancers. You don't need to be invited.

Mr. Stanfield: May I then extend a formal invitation to the minister to take part in the debate tonight.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pepin: May I very informally accept the invitation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Baldwin: Don't make it a Hesitation Waltz.

POST OFFICE**POSSIBLE NATIONAL STRIKE—PRESENT POSITION OF NEGOTIATIONS—REPORTED INTENTION OF MEDIATOR TO WITHDRAW**

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): I wish to direct my question to the President of the Treasury Board. In view of reports that Dean Carrothers will be announcing today that he can play no useful role as mediator in the postal dispute because the two parties are so far apart that there is at present no hope of reaching an agreement, would the minister tell the House what the government's position on this matter is at the present time?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, Dean Carrothers has invited both sides in this dispute to a meeting starting at 2 p.m., at which time his views will be expressed to them. I do not know what the outcome of this meeting will be and I think it would be unwise to try to second-guess him.

Mr. Orlikow: I should like to ask the President of the Treasury Board whether it is true [Mr. Speaker.]

that the only offer made to the postal employees by the government during the meetings with Dean Carrothers was an increase of 60 cents per month per employee for the life of the contract over the government's offer made during the conciliation proceedings?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I think the House is aware of the request of Dean Carrothers that during the currency of his mediation there should not be any public comment on the negotiations.

Mr. Orlikow: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that Dean Carrothers is meeting with both parties at the present time and it has been announced that he will say he can serve no function, surely the government should tell the people of Canada what it proposes to do in this extremely serious situation.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister. As the actual words used by Dean Carrothers—I heard them on the one o'clock broadcast and I am sure the minister did too—were to the effect that neither the Treasury Board nor the Postal Union had moved far enough or fast enough to give any indication that a satisfactory conclusion could be arrived at, is it the intention of the Treasury Board to set an example by moving considerably farther and considerably faster than it has seen fit to do so far?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, that is a suggestion as to how the negotiations should be conducted. I will take it under advisement.

POSSIBLE NATIONAL STRIKE—REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER INTERVENE IN DISPUTE

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I put a supplementary question to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the government has not even accepted the recommendation of Judge Lippe, the Chairman of the Conciliation Board, and in view of the widespread dislocation which would be caused by a postal strike, would the Prime Minister consider intervening personally in this matter to see if a satisfactory solution, acceptable to both parties, can be worked out?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader of the New