

Mr. O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I have the biography of Mr. Lefebvre and I shall be pleased to show it to the hon. member. He has a very broad experience in labour, manpower—

Mr. Hees: Just answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. O'Connell:—and his qualifications—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

SHERBROOKE—DELAY IN PAYMENT OF BENEFITS—
EMPLOYEES' WORKING CONDITIONS

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour but in his absence I will direct it to his parliamentary secretary.

Yesterday I asked a question about the delayed payment of benefits to a great many unemployed and I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary if it would be possible to decentralize the offices which issue cheques to the unemployed.

Since the regional office in Sherbrooke is much too small for the number of civil servants working there, could the parliamentary secretary advise us whether steps will be taken to improve the services in that area so that civil servants would be able to work in more human conditions?

[English]

Mr. Ray Perrault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, consideration will be given to this request. I should point out, however, that in effect there has been decentralization since 1970 with an expansion of 50 per cent in unemployment insurance offices—both main centres and service centres—servicing unemployment insurance clients.

[Translation]

Mr. Beaudoin: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

Is the parliamentary secretary aware of the fact that the Sherbrooke office staff has been increased by 25 per cent, with the facilities remaining the same?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is an argument put forward by the hon. member in support of his contention.

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Since the minister is prepared to see to the well being of the Unemployment Insurance Commission civil servants, would he be now prepared to look after the unemployed who are not receiving their cheques?

Inquiries of the Ministry

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INQUIRY AS TO INSTRUCTIONS TO CANADIAN EMBASSY
IN SPAIN TO ASSIST CBC CREW REPORTING ON ARREST
OF MR. AND MRS. GEOFFROY

Mr. Mac T. McCutcheon (Lambton-Kent): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Did the Department of External Affairs issue instructions to the Canadian embassy in Spain to offer assistance to Peter Daniels and a CBC crew in reporting on the arrest in that country of Mr. and Mrs. Geoffroy?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Not particularly, Mr. Speaker. We did not issue any instructions to help the CBC nor did we issue any instructions to hinder their activities.

Mr. Nielsen: Just asked them to do it.

[Later:]

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Did the minister or any of his officials have any conversation with anyone in the CBC with respect to the coverage of the Geoffroy matter in Spain?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the CBC has complained about the treatment it has received from the Spanish authorities who have placed difficulties in the way of taking pictures. This has been conveyed to us. This is a matter for the Spanish government to decide. The Spanish government laid down one stipulation, that there would be no interviews with Geoffroy and his wife. With that decision we agree.

Mr. Baldwin: Probably you people asked them to do that.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

NATURE OF PROCEEDINGS TO SECURE RETURN OF MR.
AND MRS. GEOFFROY FROM SPAIN

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): I have a supplementary or somewhat related question, Mr. Speaker. While the minister is dealing with this point, can he tell the House whether extradition proceedings have been taken and, if so, what is the result and will Geoffroy and his wife be returned to Canada?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite certain whether proceedings will be by way of deportation or extradition. I cannot answer that question yet.

[Later:]

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a minor point of order so as not to mislead the House on an answer I gave a little earlier today. I am now informed that both Mr. and Mrs. Geoffroy have expressed a wish to return to Canada forthwith.