

Oral Questions

● (1440)

Mr. Kelleher: The Hon. Member tries to have it both ways. He wants to be in a position to charge me either with political interference or not involving myself.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF MR. KASDI MERBAH

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I want to draw Hon. Members' attention to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Kasdi Merbah, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and member of the Political Bureau of Algeria.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

[English]

SPECIAL CANADIAN GRAINS PROGRAM

PAY-OUT FORMULA

Mr. Jack Scowen (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Is it true if there is a future pay-out to farmers under the Special Canadian Grains Program, the formula will be based upon actual production for eastern farmers and upon an area average production for western farmers? If so, why?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Hon. Member's continuing interest in the economic well-being of Canadian farmers. No doubt his question is prompted by the third meeting of series two which we held in Winnipeg on August 27. It was attended by about 50 farm leaders.

A suggestion was put forth by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture after a great deal of consultation with other farm groups. It met with overwhelming approval. I believe there were one or two dissenting associations. I told them that if it met the test of fairness and equity, we would give it very serious consideration. That is exactly the process we are going through at the moment.

* * *

CANADA POST CORPORATION

HIRING OF STRIKE-BREAKERS

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Canada Post.

Yesterday the Minister certainly clarified the position of the Government with regard to the use of strike-breakers in the coming mail strike.

Now we know that Canada Post is allowed to advertise for strike-breakers and to train them, and that it is planning to use them to deliver mail during a strike, with the agreement of the Government, despite the dismal failure of the previous attempt to use strike-breakers which led to violence on the picket lines and an embitterment of the climate around the negotiating table.

Will the Minister not order Canada Post immediately to cease hiring strike-breakers—

Some Hon. Members: Why?

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Scabs, that is what they are. If the Minister will not ask Canada Post to stop hiring scabs and, rather, to negotiate honestly without confrontation, are Canada Post and the Government really serious about delivering the mail?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, again we have the Liberal Party giving contrary advice. The former Postmaster General, the Hon. Member for Papineau, says that what the Government should do is cut the umbilical cord, stop directing Canada Post in its operations, and let Canada Post operate.

That is what we are endeavouring to do in the circumstance. They must obey the law. The law provides that they can have strikes and that the employer can continue to operate if possible, within the law. Canada Post will obey the law.

If members of the Liberal Party are suggesting that there has been bad faith at the negotiating table with respect to Canada Post, let them provide me with that evidence and I will raise it with management, but there is no such evidence to imply that.

If members of the Liberal Party are suggesting that Canada Post should acquiesce to the union totally or shut down the Post Office in view of a strike, let them take that position publicly and defend it to the public that has to go without postal service.

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): If government Members feel content to follow suit with the management of Gainers by hiring strike-breakers and scabs, let them do it. Now we know that they want to do it.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT CANADA POST BE ORDERED TO NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, in fact the Minister is acting as though he did not fully grasp the implications, and that is what is likely to happen when scabs are hired. Yet the Minister did see that it led to violence the last time. The Minister knows the climate at the bargaining