

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General and Minister of Communications): I have never said anything like that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question.

Since somebody from the office of the Postmaster General and Minister of Communications said a few hours ago that the minister intended to seek the intervention of the Canadian armed forces in the postal conflict, would the minister indicate whether that possibility is being considered?

Mr. Kierans: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to check the allegation of the hon. member for Lotbinière.

[*English*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**NEW COMMITMENTS TO OECD RESPECTING TRADE CONCESSIONS TO DEVELOPING NATIONS**

Mr. Bruce Howard (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Did the government make any new commitments to the Secretary General of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development during his visit to Ottawa on Tuesday and Wednesday regarding Canadian trade concessions to developing nations?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): No, Mr. Speaker. It was not necessary to make any commitments to Mr. Van Lennep, the Secretary General of OECD, when he was here. We have already made a very substantial offer of concessions to developing countries in order to promote their trade.

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. What are the so-called sensitive items that Canada is intending to withhold from proposed concessions at the May 21 meeting of the OECD representatives?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think this is information of a general nature which normally ought to be given on motions by the minister.

GRAIN**APPEAL OF JUDGMENT DECLARING WHEAT BOARD QUOTA REGULATIONS UNCONSTITUTIONAL**

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): I wish to direct this question either to the minister in charge of the Wheat Board or the

Minister of Justice. In view of the decision by a magistrate's court that the Wheat Board regulations in reference to quotas are unconstitutional, is the Department of Justice considering appealing this decision? If the minister is not prepared today, will he report to the House later on this decision which affects the whole jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I have not yet received a copy of the judgment of the magistrate in the case of the Queen against Victor Jorgenson, to which I believe the hon. member for Calgary North is referring. The point at issue is of such importance that an appeal is being instituted immediately. In these circumstances I do not think it is proper for me to say anything more at this time.

Mr. Woolliams: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact this is a constitutional question affecting the whole economics of agriculture, would the minister be prepared to have his department pay for solicitors for the farmers and producers who will have to argue a difficult constitutional question before the high courts?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I think the Attorney General of Canada has an interest in preserving the validity of that legislation as well.

Mr. Woolliams: A further supplementary. I wonder if the minister would answer the question? I appreciate that the government will be represented, but is the minister prepared to recommend, because of the plight of the farmers and producers, that his department pay for counsel so their position will be put fairly and squarely before the courts?

LABOUR CONDITIONS**RATIO OF LAY-OFFS IN CANADIAN AND U.S. AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRIES**

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Can the minister tell the House whether the recent heavy lay-offs of workers in the Canadian automobile industry were in the same ratio or proportion as those in the United States?

Mr. Speaker: It seems that the hon. member is asking for statistical information. I doubt that the question is in order.