

Inquiries of the Ministry

November 30, as it should normally be, in order to help underdeveloped and depressed areas in Canada?

[Text]

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): The Prime Minister recently made a statement in the house on the general policy of the government in this regard and gave reasons why it was felt the present dates selected for the operation of the winter works program would be most effective in creating the maximum number of jobs during the period of high seasonal unemployment.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: Does the minister agree that it is urgent to help those depressed areas?

[Text]

FALCONBRIDGE NICKEL—PROPOSED LAY-OFF
OF EMPLOYEES

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Real Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Labour?

In connection with the lay-off at the Falconbridge nickel mine, in the Sudbury area, can the minister tell the house whether his department has reached a decision concerning the proposals made by unions and union members of the Falconbridge nickel mine?

[Text]

Mr. Speaker: May I suggest that this is a question for the order paper?

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Gregoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege which applies not only to what took place today but to what has taken place on many other occasions.

Whenever a member of the house puts a question in French to an English speaking minister, the minister listens to the simultaneous translation and only gets the point a few seconds after the question has been asked. That happens every time and explains the apparent hesitation on the minister's part when he starts to get up, but you lose no time ruling the question out of order.

That is my question of privilege. When a question is put to him in French, we should allow an English speaking minister a few extra seconds to hear the question in full instead of always thinking he does not wish to answer. I feel it would be wise to wait a few seconds to make sure the minister has heard the question in its entirety. A case in point is what happened a few moments ago when the hon. member for Villeneuve asked his question.

[Mr. Caouette.]

[Text]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have listened very carefully in French and English, and I am capable of listening in French and in English, to the hon. member for Lapointe. The question asked by the hon. member for Villeneuve was out of order, at least should have been put on the order paper, because the information he expected to get from the minister was not such that a minister could, on the spur of the moment, be expected to give to the house. I did not need to wait for the minister to make up his mind, because the question itself was faulty.

Mr. Caouette: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I say that the minister was just going to rise to answer my question.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

SPRUCEDALE, ONT.—APPOINTMENT OF
POSTMASTER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I wish to direct a question to the Postmaster General. Were two veterans by-passed in favour of a non-veteran in appointing a postmaster at Sprucedale, Ontario?

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the hon. member would prefer to put that question on the order paper.

REQUEST FOR REFERENCE OF ESTIMATES TO
COMMITTEE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): I should like to ask the Postmaster General a question based on the disturbing information given by the hon. member for Hastings-Frontenac when he spoke on a question of privilege earlier today. Does the minister not think it is about time the estimates of his department were referred to the standing committee for close examination?

Hon. Azellus Denis (Postmaster General): It is not the question of the hon. member for Hastings-Frontenac that is disturbing to the hon. member. It is the answer.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

LIST OF CONSULTANTS—NAMES OF CANDIDATES
NOT FILING EXPENSE RETURNS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Secretary of State. My question relates to a current matter, but it is based on a question of privilege which I raised on November 30 of last year, when the previous