

Oral Questions

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister, in lieu of the Minister of Transport. Is the Government aware that railway safety inspections have virtually ceased on international traffic between Ontario and Michigan? A great many cars have been found to have unsafe brakes, unsafe truck bolsters, defective wheels, many have had their safety cards removed, there have been some 20 derailments in the CP yard in Windsor, and a dangerous situation exists in the tunnel.

Mr. Hicks: Is that where you get your tunnel vision from?

Mr. McCurdy: Is the Government aware of this situation which not only indicates what has happened in international traffic but presages what may happen in railways across the country?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): The Hon. Member may not be aware of this but Bills C-18 and C-19, the regulatory reform proposals in the new National Transportation Act, do not take effect until January 1, 1988.

SAFETY INFRACTIONS

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, deregulation has existed in the United States. This traffic is going to the United States. I have cited a number of instances of safety infractions of a very serious nature. They represent a danger not only to the workers but to the people of Windsor respecting the possibility of toxic spills.

Will the Government take a look at this situation and see whether there is a solution to the problem that is being created? Will the Government also look at the potential for similar problems in Canada as a result of Bills C-18 and C-19?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, primacy of safety is always first and foremost in the minds of this Government in any transportation policy, and it is clearly outlined in the preamble to the new National Transportation Act.

I think it is very clear as it applies to the air administration. We moved very quickly on the tightening of the Aeronautics Act. I believe there is a new railway safety Bill that is being considered. There have been a number of areas where safety in the railway system has been tightened up. Certainly if the Hon. Member has some specific cases I will be pleased to draw them to the Minister's attention. Let me assure the Member that we take this matter very seriously and advise him that a lot of progress and tightening up has occurred in the last two or three years.

Mr. Speaker: I would advise the House that there will be two more questions. The Hon. Member for Saint-Léonard—Anjou and then a single question from the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap.

[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

LABOUR RELATIONS—DECISION OF CANADIAN LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers said yesterday that the Canada Labour Relations Board's decision paves the way for an early settlement of their current negotiations with Canada Post, yet the Minister expressed disagreement with this decision. Why is the Minister intent on having a postal strike at any cost? Could he not tell Canada Post to accept the decision and bargain in good faith, thus giving Canadians the hope that there might not be a breakdown in postal services?

• (1200)

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Hon. Member that no one on this side of the House wants a strike. No sensible Canadian would want a strike. However, I can also tell the Hon. Member that the worst thing I could do is to follow his suggestion that I involve myself in the items that are at the table and under negotiation now. In fact, it is contrary to the advice of the former Postmaster General, his colleague, the Hon. Member for Papineau, who has suggested that the Government should cut the umbilical cord of Canada Post Corporation. That was a decision made by the House in 1981 and we are trying to do that. Why is the Hon. Member suggesting that we go back to the bad old days?

CANADIAN LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD RULING

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, since Canada Post became a Crown corporation in 1981 there had been no strikes until the one last May which was caused by the Government. Why does the Minister not tell Canada Post to accept the ruling of the Canada Labour Board and avoid the next strike? Why does the Minister want a strike?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this Hon. Member and other Hon. Members on both sides of the House complained for literally decades about the service provided by Canada Post. Through franchising, the post office will be able to increase service to Canadians dramatically.

Why is the Hon. Member suggesting Canada Post should not carry through with this attempt to improve services to Canadians? Why is this Hon. Member being a mouthpiece for J.-C. Parrot?