

**Mr. Howard:** Mr. Speaker, may I thank you very much for your advice. I might say that this bill is in precisely the same form, and the explanatory notes precise to the word, as the bill accepted by Your Honour last session.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### POST OFFICE

#### DISPUTE WITH WORKERS—ALLEGED SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES BY GOVERNMENT IN CONCILIATION BOARD REPORT

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board. May I ask the minister if he is now prepared to tell the House whether or not the government accepts the conciliation board report on the postal dispute, and whether or not the government accepts it in its unedited form.

**Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, the Postmaster General announced last week that the government was prepared to accept the majority report of the conciliation board provided that it was also accepted by the Council of Postal Unions.

**Mr. McGrath:** In view of the fact that the report was accepted by a vote of the postal unions, and in view of what appear to be substantive changes in the report which was presented to the negotiating team from the unions, I would ask the minister whether he is prepared, as a sign of government good faith, to call the chairman of the conciliation board before the negotiating team to give evidence whether or not substantive changes were in fact made in the report by the government?

**Mr. Drury:** Mr. Speaker, I think I would prefer to let the Postmaster General respond to that question because he is the one in charge of the negotiations.

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, may I redirect my question to the Postmaster General since he now seems to have assumed the role of chief negotiator for the government, which is a new break.

[Translation]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite evident that the government's announced position is to accept the conciliator's report. We have made no alteration to the terms of this acceptance. I, however, want to tell the House that upon the request of the Council of Postal Unions the President of the Public Service Staff Relations Board has called upon the conciliation board to clarify the matter of classification.

[English]

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, I have one further supplementary question. Since the Postmaster General now admits there were changes made in the report—

### Oral Questions

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. McGrath:** He did say that, Mr. Speaker, and the record will indicate that he did.

**Mr. Hees:** You heard him.

**Mr. McGrath:** May I ask the Postmaster General and/or the President of the Treasury Board whether in the interests of getting the talks back to the table they are now prepared to call the chairman of the conciliation board so this matter can be settled once and for all and negotiations can be resumed?

[Translation]

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Speaker, I can repeat what the hon. member may not have understood, that it is clear that we made no changes. As far as our interpretation of the report is concerned, we feel that the report is very clear on that matter of job classification. The matter is explained quite clearly in the report and we are ready to accept all its articles. We have said so to the union and we hope to be in a position in the very near future to sign a contract with its representatives as they were recently authorized to do by vote.

[English]

#### DISPUTE WITH WORKERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION ON JOB CLASSIFICATION

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact the conciliation board report recommends that the question of job classification should be a subject permitted to be dealt with under the grievance procedure, may I ask the Postmaster General whether in fact the government and its representatives are insisting that this question of classification shall not be covered by the grievance procedure before they sign an agreement?

[Translation]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, in the old contract the matter of job classification could not even be considered as a grievance. We have agreed that it could be one of the grievances that can be discussed within the department itself. However, that a job classification grievance could be submitted to arbitration is something that, to our mind, was not suggested at all by the recommendations of the conciliation board. We feel that this exceeds by far the mandate and recommendations of the conciliator's report.

We are willing to approve immediately the contents of the conciliator's report but we feel that particular part goes far beyond its recommendations.

[English]

**Mr. Orlikow:** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact the Public Service Staff Relations Act excluded the question of classification from collective bargaining, in view of the fact the chairman of the Public Service Staff Relations Board specifically instructed the conciliation board to look at this question because it is so crucial to the whole matter of reaching an agreement, and in view of the fact there is obviously a difference of opinion as indicated in the statement just made by the minister and the interpretation of the union as to what the conciliation board recommended,