

ALLEGED DETERIORATING MORALE OF TORONTO EMPLOYEES

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): My question is also to the Postmaster General: it relates to the letter received by him from 28 Post Office line service supervisors in Toronto which warns of the collapse of the postal service because of deteriorating morale apparently brought on by the reinstatement of a number of suspended drivers.

What has the Postmaster General done to avert this potentially explosive situation which, to use the language of the supervisors who have corresponded with him, holds the Post Office on "the brink of collapse and it could go national"?

[Translation]

Hon. J.-Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I am under the impression that some people enjoy turning newspaper headlines into tragedies. I suggest that the letter had been sent to me by the 28 Post Office line service supervisors who have finally conveyed to me their grievance to the effect that their decision to suspend a number of Post Office truck drivers had been cancelled or overturned. During a snow storm on January 26 of this year, these truck drivers had refused to carry out their duties. The superintendent overturned their decision, claiming that their reasons for suspending these Post Office employees were insufficient and that he was looking into this matter. That is exactly what he is doing just now. One of the line service supervisors must have provided the newspaper with this letter. He probably had the right to do so, but he has certainly not contributed in any way to solving the problem. For the time being, we deem this incident to be a matter of internal administration and we are looking into it.

[English]

Mr. Jarvis: I might say to the Postmaster General that the tragedy is not the newspaper headline; the tragedy is the lack of service by the Post Office.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jarvis: With respect to the deterioration of service, morale within the Post Office has deteriorated from the abysmal to the cataclysmal. I ask the Postmaster General: Will the situation to which he has just referred be dealt with by way of public inquiry, which he has the power to order, and will he tell the House whether it is true that the supervisory staff in this area is now constantly subject to open ridicule by workers operating under him? If so, what action has the Postmaster General taken to restore proper labour relations in the Post Office?

[Translation]

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, we are now in the conciliation stage with the postal union. I have visited most postal establishments throughout Canada. Last week in Toronto, I held a meeting with all supervisors for the Toronto area to identify the major problems, and I must say that far from being as bad as some suggest, the morale in the Post Office, at

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the administration level and among the employees with whom I spoke, is far from deteriorating. We are constantly trying to improve confidence in the Post Office and we will continue to proceed as we have been doing.

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● (1422)

[English]

TRADE

REPORTED LACK OF DRIVE IN CANADIAN ENTREPRENEURS

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister, and the President of Privy Council, in the absence of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce who is having a tough battle getting the Liberal nomination out there in Alberta at the moment.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Minister of Public Works, "While ITC officials 'bust their behinds' to get export orders Canadian businessmen take it easy." The minister also said that when he reported this to the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister said, "Judd, Amen; that's the story I get on all the trips I have taken. We Canadians seem to lack the entrepreneurial spirit, lack that hustle". My question to the President of Privy Council, who is in charge of the cabinet committee on GATT negotiations, is whether he agrees with that savage attack on Canadian industry and businessmen that they lack hustle, and whether the President of Privy Council can hustle the House some information on the GATT negotiations that are going to determine the position of Canadian industry and business in the 1980s?

Could he tell us how the negotiations are going? What is Canada now doing as an alternative, now that our argument for sectoral negotiations has been pushed aside? When will a full report be made to Canadian industry and to the House on this question of such fantastic importance to the future of Canada?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member probably knows, the GATT negotiations are reaching a more definite phase. Through the co-ordinator of the negotiations, the Government of Canada is keeping in close touch with representatives of Canadian industry and has conducted confidential discussions with those affected by the ongoing negotiations. At this point I believe it is difficult to be certain about the outcome of the negotiations. It is a negotiation. Representatives of various countries are examining the bargaining positions of their other partners in the negotiations. They are undertaking preliminary examinations, for example, of the offer lists which have been made in agriculture and fisheries. Also, they are examining the general bargaining stance under industrial products.

I expect we will be entering into a much more critical phase of the negotiations probably late next month or in the early part of June if the timetable which has been tentatively