

Oral Questions

local initiatives programs, because we don't want any other.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, and I are keeping in rather close consultation.

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POST OFFICE**SUGGESTION UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS BE PUT UNDER TRUSTEESHIP**

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a question to the Postmaster General, if he can give me his attention for a few moments.

Yesterday the postal system was disrupted again in Quebec and especially in Montreal by a new sudden illness of the employees in that area. Could the Postmaster General inform the House of the state of health of these employees, particularly in Montreal, and does he intend to request a royal commission of inquiry, perhaps medical, or to place the union under the trusteeship of a responsible person, in order to put an end to the troubles we have known in the province of Quebec, particularly as regards the postal system?

[*English*]

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I have been informed that the workers are suffering from what they call the "Mackasey flu". I do not know whether it is of very short duration or a prolonged illness. We do not want anyone back on the job who is ill; we may have to provide adequate medical facilities in order to make certain that they are not back on the job unless in excellent health. In the meantime, I think we must show a little patience and understanding of the frustration of these workers, who have been without any visible sign of a collective agreement for six months because their union negotiators have been preoccupied with the problem in Montreal, rather than with what should be preoccupying them, which is obtaining a collective agreement, as suggested by the hon. member for Brandon-Souris.

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HEALTH**REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE INSPECTION PERSONNEL IN QUEBEC AS RESPONSIBLE AS THOSE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Mr. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It has been my experience that the government has every right to be very proud of the federal government inspection services and staff that it provides in the province of British Columbia. From recent events it is very evident that a wide variance exists in the quality and integrity of this service across Canada. Can the minister assure the House that the federal government inspection personnel and services in Quebec are as responsible and have as much integrity as those in British Columbia?

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I can give that complete and total assurance to the hon. member.

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TRANSPORT**COMPENSATION TO TRUCKERS FOR LOSSES RESULTING FROM FREIGHT RATE FREEZE—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Transport which arises out of the request by the truckers for payment of compensation as a result of losses suffered due to the freight rate freeze. Has the minister met with the trucking industry, has an agreement been reached as to the amount of compensation to be paid, and has the submission yet received cabinet approval?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we did not, of course, have the same commitment to the trucking industry as we had to the railways, but I think there is a case to be made there. I received the submission of the trucking association and I also received a certain number of claims and letters from them—I do not know how many, but I think 30 or 35. I intend to bring the matter to the attention of the cabinet and try to resolve it.

Mr. Mazankowski: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since these negotiations and discussions have been taking place for quite some time, can the minister indicate to the House when a formal announcement may be made and cabinet approval granted?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member's guess is as good as mine, but as far as the Minister of Transport is concerned, it is going to go before cabinet very rapidly.

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HEALTH**REQUEST FOR REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN FOLLOWING DISCOVERY OF CONTAMINATED HAMBURG**

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and is supplementary to that asked by my leader. In view of reports several weeks ago that hamburger sold in this country contained unacceptable amounts of contamination, bacterial contamination and otherwise, would the minister indicate what follow up studies have been made, whether a report has been presented to him and he has taken any action as a result of such report?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I made a statement in the House on that matter several months ago, following which additional personnel had been appointed for that purpose. That personnel has carried out its work throughout the country, and in each identified case where a violation of the Food