

Oral Questions

planning is in the hands of NCC and CMHC, both federal government agencies—

Some hon. Members: Order, order!

Mr. Poulin:—and has the approval of the mayor of the city of Ottawa, progress is too slow.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member has a question would he please put it now?

Mr. Poulin: I am at the question, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister advise the House, in view of this concentration of authority and promised co-operation, that he will endeavour to advance the commencement of construction on this site in order to demonstrate that this government with this much support can move projects in an exemplary manner, provide much needed housing and reduce unemployment?

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Brandon-Souris.

* * *

POST OFFICE

STRIKE OF LETTER CARRIERS—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON PROGRESS OF NEGOTIATIONS

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General. Now that negotiations on the ratification of the recent contract with the Letter Carriers Union is reaching the critical stage, particularly in the Montreal area, can the minister bring the House up to date on the progress of those negotiations, particularly the steps he is taking to achieve their successful conclusion?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear to the House that the letter carriers who have been off work during the week were entitled to be because they are in a strike position. They went off work when the national executive insisted that the ratification vote be by secret ballot and placed the Montreal local in trusteeship. They are to be commended for this. In a positive vein, the letter carriers met this morning and agreed to go back to work, hopefully by tomorrow morning.

REQUEST FOR REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): A supplementary question. In view of this obvious success under the new policy of close consultation and the responsibility displayed by both the National Letter Carriers Union and the majority of the employees, can the minister inform the House if these factors are at play in the negotiations under way with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, it would be misleading the House to say that we have reached the same degree of consultation but we are

[Mr. Poulin.]

working at it and I must say the climate is much more positive than it was a week or two ago.

* * *

HARBOURS

HAMILTON—REQUEST MINISTER OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION APPEAR BEFORE COMMITTEE TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO FILE FROM MR. CAMPBELL

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Since the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs stonewalled a very reasonable request to have the minister appear to explain what happened to the Hamilton file from Councillor Campbell, would the minister repeat his earlier assurance to the House that he would be glad to appear at the committee and testify so that this particular aspect of the matter can be clarified.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I must say, although I was phrasing the question to the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion heard the question and knew what I was getting at. I will ask him the question that I asked almost a month ago. At that time the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion said that he would be only too glad to appear before the appropriate committee to clarify all uncertainties on the Hamilton harbour problem and the allegations in particular levelled by Councillor Campbell. The Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs is seized with this matter and there was an interesting precedent when the Minister of Supply and Services volunteered to appear. Would the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion agree to appear to help clarify this matter?

● (1500)

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, once again I have to say that in answering that question I would be going against the ruling of the Chair, according to which I cannot be asked questions on this matter. I do not want to avoid the answer. There is a short, one word answer with regard to the substance of the question the hon. member asked me. It is this: I had no awareness of the matter in question and the matter, as far as I know, has been cleared up by the appearance before the committee of the Solicitor General and the Minister of Supply and Services. There is really nothing I can add to that.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Poulin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa Centre is recognized on a question of privilege.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hugh Poulin (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege relates to the serious substance of the