

month through the Port of Vancouver and report back to the House as soon as he has found out what the situation really is?

Mr. Lang: That is one service I am always very glad to perform. I will check into the matter with the Canadian Wheat Board and report back as soon as possible.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

DISPUTE WITH LETTER CARRIERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION ON CONCILIATION BOARD REPORT

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the President of the Treasury Board I should like to direct my question to the Postmaster General or the acting Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the conciliation board appointed to deal with the dispute between the letter carriers union and the government has now made a report, has the government reached a decision about whether to accept the recommendation contained in the majority report of the conciliation board?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Well, Mr. Speaker, I think upon reflection the hon. gentleman would appreciate the fact there is no indication as yet that the union has accepted the conciliation chairman's report as it is written.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the letter carriers union will be in a legal position to strike on Monday next week, and in view of the tremendous difficulty such a strike would create, would the minister consider making public the response of the government by the weekend so that the union can be encouraged to give sympathetic consideration to that majority report?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, I must emphasize that there is no majority report. There is the chairman's report which the union accepted with an addendum which changes basically the union's position beyond that of the chairman. Between now and Monday I am sure the talks will continue between the union and the bargaining team of the government, or Treasury Board or the Post Office or whatever, and when it is appropriate to make a public statement then I am sure one will be made.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North on a final supplementary.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that when conciliation board reports of a similar nature have been made the government has accepted the recommendations when it suited it, I appeal again to the minister to indicate publicly if the government is prepared to accept as a basis for settlement the recommendation of the chairman or if not what guidelines the government is prepared to accept in order to avoid, not just this strike, but any other strikes which have had and will have some serious effect upon the people of Canada as a whole?

Mr. Mackasey: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to appear obstinate—

Oral Questions

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): You are doing a pretty good job.

Mr. Mackasey:—but there is bargaining. There has been continuous bargaining with this particular union since January and we have established a very good relationship with it. We have no intention of jeopardizing this by making a revelation in the House of Commons. I think the union should be the first to know if and when we are ready to declare our final position.

POSTAL WORKERS—DATE OF GOVERNMENT REPLY TO UNION PROPOSALS

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary which relates to the question I asked the Acting President of the Treasury Board yesterday. Could he now indicate when the Treasury Board will be making a response to the representation of the CUPW union with regard to negotiations taking place in this important area of postal services?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Acting President of Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the plan is to endeavour to speed up negotiations in respect of this particular contract which have not been progressing perhaps as rapidly as they should. It is our intention to endeavour to make these move more rapidly.

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[Translation]

COMMUNICATIONS

CABLEVISION—ALLEGED FAILURE TO KEEP PROMISE TO PROVINCES OF CONSULTATION

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Communications.

Last month, the CRTC announced hearings would be held in the spring on the legislation which the federal government intends to pass on teledistribution and cablevision. This has prompted the Ontario Minister of Communications, supported by the Quebec and Manitoba ministers, to denounce this step as being an undue and exasperating intrusion into provincial affairs, especially since the federal government had promised preliminary consultations with the provinces. My question is as follows. Since there seems to be some inconsistency between the proposed consultation and the CRTC statement, can the Minister of Communications make a report on the matter and tell the House the position of his department in this regard and if there is any new development?

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I can try to enlighten the hon. member as briefly as possible on a matter which, I admit, has rather complex aspects. But first of all, I think the hon. member is not well informed. The CRTC will not hold any hearing on legislation. The CRTC holds hearings on certain matters regarding cable diffusion under powers the Broadcasting Act gave to it. Those hearings will be held in June.