

[English]

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member, in response to his question, that I am, indeed, in communication with my provincial counterpart on a frequent basis. I have read stories that my provincial counterpart has been making some statements with respect to that subject, but to my knowledge I have had no direct communication from him indicating that he is suggesting that broiler producers within Quebec withdraw from the board. If that is his thinking, I would hope that he would reconsider his position.

[Translation]

POULTRY IMPORTS—REQUEST THAT PERMITS BE GRANTED TO
VOLBEC

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, on a supplementary, considering that one must always beware of press reports on ministerial statements, and since last November 9 Ontario and Quebec poultry producers came to Parliament Hill to ask the government to review the Canada-U.S. agreement, could the minister assure the House and also, of course, producers that all future permits issued for imports of poultry will be issued to the Canadian marketing agency, in order to protect the production quotas of poultry producers?

[English]

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): In response to the hon. member's supplementary question, I want to make it clear that my department does not issue supplementary permits. But I am certain that should the question of a requirement for a supplementary permit arise, the national board would have the opportunity to supply the product first. In the event it was not possible to supply that product to the Canadian market from Canadian sources, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce would then have to consider the advisability of issuing supplementary permits.

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LABOUR RELATIONS

ALLEGED GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE WITH COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING PROCESS

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. At the end of last week, the minister tossed off from the top of his legs a suggestion regarding a public interest disputes' commission which, by its very existence and powers, would circumvent Parliament since reportedly this commission could order a 20-day deferment of a legal strike. Indeed, it is a deliberate attempt on the part of the government to distract attention from the serious economic problems facing Canada. Can the minister tell us why he thinks it is necessary at this time to interfere with the collective bargaining process by taking such Draconian measures as this?

Oral Questions

Hon. Lincoln M. Alexander (Minister of Labour): I want to thank the hon. member for giving me the opportunity of answering that question again. He knows that what we are attempting to do, and what we hope to do this session, is to introduce legislation which will remove the incidence of work stoppages in essential aspects of services. As I said, we would attempt to introduce it in this session of Parliament.

There was no unwarranted or undue intervention into the collective bargaining process. We would hope that when the legislation is introduced in order that the hon. member might have an opportunity of looking into the definitive aspects of it, he will realize that there is a need, no matter how small, for such legislation to be introduced and give it his complete support.

Mr. Rodriguez: Obviously, a deliberate attempt to bamboozle Parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rodriguez: In view of the fact that this proposal makes the Department of Labour both a mediator and a cop, and in view of the fact that the minister recently boasted of declining wage settlements, stating that 95 per cent of labour negotiations and disputes in this country are settled peaceably, why is he changing the policy of the Department of Labour from being a supporter of Canadian labour to being a policeman for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce?

Mr. Alexander: I am so used to the hon. member and his rhetoric that I just look at him with complete amazement. The whole gist of this measure, as devised by officials in the Department of Labour, will be a means to reduce the incidence of strikes in essential aspects of service. It is time we bit the bullet, whether the hon. member likes it or not. I feel there is a need and that there is public support in this regard. If the hon. member does not want to go along with whatever legislation we intend to introduce, and that we will introduce, that is his problem and his risk.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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● (1440)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

REPORTED DIFFICULTIES WITH ENGINES OF NEW FIGHTER
AIRCRAFT

Hon. Judd Buchanan (London West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. The minister is in possession of information indicating that there are substantial difficulties with the engine for the F16 as well as with the industrial offset package, and that the F18A is falling short of its expected performance standards on speed, cost and range. In view of this, would the minister again give further consideration to enlarging the competition to include the F18L?