

[Translation]

POST OFFICE

DATE OF COMPLETION OF JOB CLASSIFICATION—PAYMENT OF BONUS TO BILINGUAL EMPLOYEES

Mr. Serge Joyal (Maisonneuve-Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Postmaster General.

In the light of the situation prevailing in downtown Montreal post offices where postal employees systematically refuse to serve the general public in either official languages, could the Postmaster General inform members of the House if the classification of bilingual positions is completed, when he will proceed with the identification of bilingual positions and if employees filling these positions will be paid according to their additional linguistic aptitude?

[English]

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, to answer the latter part of the question, it is for Treasury Board to say if workers in the Post Office or other government departments who must work in both languages will be compensated financially. The working language in the post office in Montreal has been, basically, French, to everybody's satisfaction. Slightly more than 300 jobs or positions in the Quebec region are classed as bilingual, and most were so designated when the Official Languages Act was implemented. I am glad to say that strangers, tourists, English speaking minorities in Quebec and French speaking people in places like St. Boniface and Vancouver are entitled to enter their post office and be served in their official language. I intend to see that policy carried out in the Montreal post office as well as in the St. Boniface or Vancouver post offices, and, indeed, in any other post office in Canada.

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PUBLIC WORKS

SUGGESTED ADOPTION OF GUIDELINES FOR CONTRACT TENDERING—ASSURANCE OF PAYMENT OF MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works. As the minister admitted that his department let two contracts to a company owned by a public servant and a member of his family, contrary to what he said in the House on Monday, and since the government is in the habit of awarding contracts to companies whose principal owners are unknown, will the minister set out guidelines for contract tendering in his department which will require companies, before they can be considered for contracts, to disclose who their principal owners are?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked a complex question. An administrative group is looking into that precise matter.

Mr. Paproski: Oh, yes, how many horses do you have on the payroll?

Mr. Nystrom: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As the Department of Public Works does not require infor-

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mation concerning wages paid to workers employed by firms which obtain government contracts, will the minister so frame the guidelines as to make sure that firms which obtain contracts pay their workers at least the minimum federal wage?

● (1440)

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, it is one of the terms of all of the contracts for cleaning entered into that a scale of wages recommended to us by the Department of Labour will be paid.

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POST OFFICE

ALLEGATION OF THEFT IN MONTREAL OFFICE—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Postmaster General. It might be regarded as supplementary to the previous question. There are reports of other troubles in the Montreal post office, including the theft of mails by supervisory personnel. Can the Postmaster General either confirm or deny those reports and what action is he taking to deal with this problem?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I have always said that there are not going to be two different measures of justice in the post office. Five supervisors in question have been suspended. I felt there was sufficient evidence in the case of at least two to proceed with criminal charges and that has already taken place.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

ACCEPTABILITY OF HALL REPORT ON PENSIONS FOR RAILWAY EMPLOYEES

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. It is in connection with the fact that the report of the Hon. Emmett Hall is now ready, that is the conciliation report with respect to the dispute between railway workers and management. Has the minister any indication from either side how long it will take to determine whether the conclusions of the Hon. Emmett Hall are acceptable to the protagonists in this matter?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for giving me notice of the question. No, there has been no reaction. I expect a reaction from the parties some time later this afternoon. I will be able to comment on it with more exactitude to the hon. member and others tomorrow.

Mr. Fraser: In view of the seriousness of this dispute to the economy of the country, can the minister advise whether there is any indication now that in the absence of acceptance by either side, both sides are prepared to continue negotiations on the basis of the conclusions reached