

Inquiries of the Ministry

House a few days ago, there is a nil tolerance of this chemical in any food. The additional restrictions were introduced as a result of testing by administering minute quantities of this chemical to pregnant mice and rats.

Mr. Gleave: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that we have heard quite a few supplementaries on this subject. We should go on to another matter and return to this subject if there is time at the end of the question period.

POST OFFICE

POSSIBLE NATIONAL STRIKE—PRESENT POSITION OF NEGOTIATIONS—JOB SECURITY

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board. It arises out of newspaper reports about negotiations in the postal dispute. Is the impression given in those reports that only two or three major issues are left in the discussions correct, or are there still 10 or 12 issues not resolved? Also, we would welcome any general report that the President of the Treasury Board might feel it appropriate to make.

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, as I think the House is aware, the negotiations have been continuing throughout the weekend and are scheduled to continue today and tomorrow. The parties agreed on Friday that it probably would be useful if the negotiations were continued on a confidential basis. This being so, I would not want to do anything to impede or disrupt these negotiations and so will refrain from any general comment on their progress. I can say, however, that there are more issues still to be negotiated and under discussion than the two major issues the hon. gentleman mentioned.

Mr. Lewis: The minister just spoke about the confidentiality of the negotiations, which I can fully appreciate at this state. My supplementary question arises out of the statement made by the minister on some program yesterday that a certain pattern as to wage increases had been set by some sections of the Public Service and that the postal unions are seeking to pierce that pattern. Would the minister inform the House what unions dealing with the Treasury Board have set such a pattern and whether his statement to the public of Canada that the postal unions are

seeking to pierce that pattern—I ask this seriously—is in line with the understanding between the parties that the negotiations would not be given a public airing?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I have not got a list of the agreements with me to which reference was made but I will undertake to produce that tomorrow for the hon. gentleman. In relation to the remark attributed to me that the postal unions are endeavouring to pierce this pattern, this was in response to a suggestion that the government was endeavouring to make use of the negotiations with the postal union to set an example, in an endeavour to enforce anti-inflationary measures, to the public through the medium of the postal service unions. I indicated that one was not singling out the postal unions as an example of restraint but merely hoping that the postal unions would conform with the general pattern of restraint which other agreements have indicated.

Mr. Lewis: I wish to ask a further supplementary in view of what the minister has just said. Is the minister informing the House and also the postal unions that further negotiations with respect to wages at least are of no use and that the government is going to stand by a certain pattern and will not move from it?

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Lewis: I ask this question because of the statement just made by the minister and the deleterious effect it is likely to have on the negotiations. I am giving the minister an opportunity to straighten it out.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has asked a question. Perhaps the minister might be allowed to reply.

Mr. Drury: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): A supplementary question to the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the statement made on the weekend by the Postmaster General that there is not to be any reduction in staff as a result of automation and, indeed, there is to be an increase, is the government giving consideration to making an offer to the postal employees during the negotiations with regard to job security?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I think on reflection the hon. member will agree that he is asking me to conduct the negotiations, which other people are supposed to be conducting elsewhere, across the floor of the House.