

minister considered the Public Service Employment Act in reference to the guarantee it gives to veterans, particularly the priority to war amputees over other Canadians in reference to employment in the Public Service of Canada?

Mr. Drury: I would like to point out that the employees in question have not been released from the Public Service but merely advised that they will no longer occupy the positions they now hold.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Drury: If the hon. gentleman would just listen to the explanation he would be wiser.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The explanation is—

Mr. Drury: The employees in question have been advised they will no longer occupy the positions they now hold. The priorities they enjoy in the Public Service as to preferential employment will be applied, such preference as they have, to their relocation elsewhere in the Public Service.

Mr. Woolliams: I wish to direct one more supplementary question because this is important. I ask the minister to recheck to determine if Mr. Kent and Mr. Weir of Calgary were released from their positions together with other amputees across this nation? The minister is a soldier. He should know better.

An hon. Member: He is a what?

Mr. David Lewis (York South): In view of one of the answers of the President of the Treasury Board that merit would come first and humanity second, I ask my question seriously. Could the minister inform the House what percentage points are applied to each in the consideration of what is to be done with regard to employees of the government?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

POST OFFICE

ASSIGNMENT OF NEW PRODUCTIVITY EXECUTIVE

Mr. Stan Schumacher (Palliser): My question is for the Postmaster General and Minister of Communications. It relates to the recent inflation of his staff by the appointment of a senior productivity executive whose function I understand is to counteract inflation in his department. Can the minister advise if this

Inquiries of the Ministry

new officer is to be charged with responsibility for working toward deflating the high postal rates now crippling the non-profit press?

NATIONAL DEFENCE

FUTURE STRUCTURE OF MILITIA FORCES

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): I wish to ask the Minister of National Defence if it is his intention to make a statement before the Christmas recess with regard to the new level of establishment for Canada's reserve forces?

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I anticipate I will be in a position to make a statement or at least table in the House a very documented report. A statement would take 20 minutes.

An hon. Member: It is worth it.

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): I hope to do it on Friday morning in whichever way I deem best.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

DISMISSAL OF EMPLOYEES AT U.S. BASES IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of National Defence a related question. Is he now in a position to answer the question put to his colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs yesterday regarding the lay-off of civilians at U.S. defence bases in Canada?

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact I have a prepared answer here. There seems to have been a misunderstanding as to terms. The answer is that our representations to the United States authorities were successful on some points but not on all points. For instance, we were unfortunately not able to secure a lengthening of the period of notice of lay-off given to individuals, but we were successful in persuading the U.S. authorities of the need to implement their decisions in a way which would minimize hardship to those involved—for example, those living in houses on the base. In addition, as a result of our representations the United States authorities were willing to adjust the timing and scope of their announcement so as to help Canadian government departments in their efforts to assist those adversely affected.

[Later:]

Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of