

properly, and there may have been some difficulty in the translation, this is really a question of Canadian workers operating in the State of Maine and is certainly beyond my own jurisdiction. It is not a matter that would fall within the ambit of the Department of Manpower and Immigration. Having said that, I will certainly be interested in more details to see if this is matter for discussion with either the authorities of the State of Maine or the United States, and which might lend itself to some negotiation. It is not within my responsibility.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

In view of the reply of the minister, and considering ministerial solidarity, may I ask the minister to kindly acquaint one of his colleagues, possibly the Minister of Labour, with this problem, with a view to ensuring some measure of justice to the Canadian workers who rely on the government of Canada to make sure that their rights are respected?

[English]

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly discuss this with the appropriate minister and my colleague in Cabinet, but I am not sure in this case whether it would be the Minister of Labour who could take action with regard to practices in another sovereign state. However, we will look into it.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

REQUEST FOR ESTIMATE OF DAMAGE CAUSED BY PROLONGED STRIKE OF POSTAL WORKERS—POSSIBILITY OF CLOSING POST OFFICE

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, on Friday last the Postmaster General said:

In a democracy such as ours some segments of the economy must be severely, sometimes unjustifiably, inconvenienced, but that is the price of our particular system.

Would the Acting Prime Minister advise the House whether the government has made any estimate of the damage to the Canadian economy of a prolonged postal strike and, if so, has the government calculated that the Canadian economy can withstand a long strike?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I doubt very much whether it would be possible to make a calculation of that kind. What I do suggest to my hon. friend is I think there is a great deal at stake in this particular issue especially in relation to the program of restraint which I hope he supports.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, is the minister advising the House that the government is drifting into a prolonged strike without any idea of the consequences?

Mr. Sharp: No. We understand very well the serious consequences of a postal strike. We also understand, as I hope he appreciates, the serious consequences of breaking the government's own guidelines.

Oral Questions

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that it was several months ago that the Postmaster General threatened to close down the post office for three months if necessary, could the Acting Prime Minister tell the House whether that was then and is still government policy.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, the Postmaster General I think has made an offer that is very fair and just. He has offered the inside postal workers the same deal accepted by the letter carriers. That is the government's position and that is within the terms of the guidelines. On other matters, the government is ready to negotiate and stands ready to negotiate at any time.

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FINANCE

INTENTION OF CHARTERED BANKS TO INCREASE CHARGE FOR HANDLING CHEQUES—POSSIBLE BREACH OF ANTI-INFLATION GUIDELINES

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. I should like to ask the minister whether he has been advised of the fact that one of the chartered banks intends to raise its rates for handling cheques by 12½ per cent and whether this constitutes a breach of the guidelines and the intent of the white paper.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to the hon. gentleman. I will be pleased to pass this on to the Anti-Inflation Board.

REQUEST FOR ESTIMATE OF BUDGETARY DEFICIT—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO RESTRAIN GROWTH OF MONEY SUPPLY

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I too have a question for the Minister of Finance. As a review of federal government financial operations during the first four months of the current fiscal year indicates that revenues are below and spending is considerably above, the levels required to achieve the revenue and expenditure forecasts of the June 23 budget, would the minister tell the House if he has revised the June 23 forecast of a budgetary deficit of \$3.2 billion, and if so what is his new estimate of the federal budgetary deficit for this year?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Not as yet, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary again is directed to the Minister of Finance. As we have had much rhetoric concerning restraint and the assurances of the minister that the money supply in this country will be in restraint in future, would the minister indicate when we will see some actual and concrete evidence of restraint with regard to the growth of our money system, it having grown 16 per cent in the last 12 months alone.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could draw to the attention of the hon. gentleman the increase of the bank rate of three-quarters of one per cent