

Oral Questions

We know that postal service is vitally important in many sectors of the economy, and that is why the conciliation commissioner recommended and observed in his report that the Post Office has no other alternative but to continue to try to deliver the mail.

Officials are trying to do that. I have asked them and they have indicated that they will try to avoid violence in all circumstances. I would ask other parties to do that.

In the meantime let us encourage the negotiators at the table to reach a solution, because I think it is in everybody's interest that we have an efficient, productive postal service to serve the needs of Canadians.

CORPORATION'S HIRING POLICY

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, the daughter of the Liberal candidate in the by-election in St. John's was refused a job in Canada Post because she refused to sign a form that she would cross picket lines.

Does the Minister agree with the policy of Canada Post that in order to be hired a person must sign a form agreeing to cross picket lines? Is that fair? Is that justice?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Hon. Member might spend some time profitably with his colleague, the Hon. Member for Papineau, in terms of what is the proper position *vis-à-vis* the Government and this Crown corporation.

The Crown corporation is endeavouring to fulfil its social responsibility. It is endeavouring to do that in a way which avoids violence but gets the mail out.

In the meantime they are at the table now, as I have indicated, trying to find a resolution to this dispute. I would hope that all Members of the House would try to be encouraging to that process rather than try to make mischief.

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THE CONSTITUTION

EQUALITY RIGHTS FOR WOMEN AND MINORITIES

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. As the Prime Minister knows, Canada leads the world in the constitutional protection of the equality rights of women.

Recently women lawyers in Canada, while welcoming the Meech Lake Accord, have raised serious concerns that the guarantees of equality rights for women and minorities have been overlooked in the Langevin amendments.

If this is the case, will the First Ministers be open to improvements which will ensure that the equality of rights of women and minorities provided for in Sections 15 and 28 of the Charter will not be put at risk?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely nothing in the Meech Lake Accord that would diminish or in any way affect equality rights for women and minorities.

On the contrary, the object of the exercise was to strengthen the country and, in the process of so doing, strengthen the rights of minorities and women across the nation.

REQUEST THAT FIRST MINISTERS CONSIDER EQUALITY RIGHTS

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the First Ministers will know that the Langevin amendments overlooked the guarantees of equality rights for women and minorities in the Charter. Surely this will be raised in the public hearings this summer.

May I at least ask the Prime Minister, and indeed all First Ministers, if they will now give very serious consideration to this concern, so that the rights of women and minorities will not be undermined and that indeed they will be enhanced?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am not in any way quarrelling with the right of my hon. friend to raise the question about equality rights for women and minorities. If someone wishes to raise this at the parliamentary committee, of course that is the place where I suppose concerns can be mentioned.

Surely my hon. friend will acknowledge with regard to the Meech Lake Accord that there is nothing which does anything other than strengthen the unity of the country. Specifically, I think that the action of the Government with regard to the promotion of the interests of women toward equality—plus, for example, the most recent action yesterday of the Government in the House with regard to the promotion of the rights of minorities under the Official Languages Act—indicates a commitment which is profound, durable, and I think beneficial to Canada.

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[Translation]

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

NEED TO PLACE CERTAIN CLAUSES ON AGENDA FOR NEXT FIRST MINISTERS' MEETING

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. In fact, the Prime Minister promised Canadian women he would fight to give them equality, but the kind of Bill that was tabled yesterday is certainly not going to help minorities or women and it certainly does not hold very well for having the equal status of women included in the new Meech Lake Accord. I wish the Prime Minister would give the House the assurance that in the next round of discussions, women's rights which were laid down in the Charter and the Constitution will not be threatened anymore than the rights of Indians and minorities. Could