

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**POST OFFICE****REQUEST FOR INQUIRY INTO OPERATIONS AND TABLING OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES**

**Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris):** Mr. Speaker, because of the vital importance of a speedy, efficient and reliable postal service to the well-being of the Canadian community and Canadian business, particularly the small business sector, and in light of the threat once again of a strike by the inside postal workers this summer, would the Postmaster General consider recommending the immediate establishment of a joint, non-partisan parliamentary committee patterned after the joint committee which studied the 250 Finkelman recommendations for employer-employee relations in the Public Service, to examine the Canada Post Office operation and to recommend solutions?

**Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, the post office has always been a non-partisan department. It has always received much co-operation from members of the opposition, and I am sure the hon. member advanced his suggestion in that spirit. As the hon. gentleman knows full well, one of our difficulties is this: we have been examined too much. Hopefully, in the immediate future we shall engage in constructive negotiation in order to assure the Canadian people of continuous postal service. As of today we forwarded another invitation to inside postal workers to come back to the bargaining table in accordance with the suggestion of Mr. Brown of the Public Service Staff Relations Board last Friday. We hope the union will see fit to return.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. If the Postmaster General will not set up such a committee will he, at least, table the various management studies which the post office has done and commissioned, so that the Canadian public can get a glimpse of why the Post Office Department is in such chaos. Will he also urge his colleague the President of the Treasury Board to table legislation based on the Finkelman report as evidence of the government's intention to improve employee-employer relations in the Public Service?

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, I am amazed at the hon. gentleman, who in the past has always been helpful to the post office, for alleging—I do not accept his allegation—that the post office is in chaos. Indeed, the hon. member is merely encouraging the confrontationist attitude adopted by the members of CUPW. He knows full well that one of the tactics of that particular union is to attempt to demoralize management in the Post Office in order to advance its own bargaining positions. Surely, the hon. member is not intent on assisting them in that particular tactic.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Maybe I can get the point I am trying to make to the Postmaster General in a third question in spite of his belligerency. Is the Postmaster General considering positively the suggestion of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers

[Mr. Speaker.]

to set up a royal commission study of the Post Office with a view to involving the postal workers more directly in the planning process for technological change,—they have been left completely out of the planning process—a procedure that has been followed in all other modern industrial nations, as an alternative to the confrontation strike pattern that has brought Canada's postal service to the precipice of disaster or does he feel that his pre-written form letter campaign is all the action that is necessary at this time?

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that since my appointment I have attempted to engage the CUPW in consultation. We have invited them to all inter-group sessions we have held very successfully with the LCUC. We have attempted to change the win-lose power struggle that has been in the Post Office for the better part of this decade as a problem-solving mode. We have done that with the LCUC. We have excellent relationships with the other unions. If the hon. member does not know, he ought to know that the CUPW has adopted within its constitution a confrontational stance. It is using nineteenth century union tactics. The hon. member ought to know that. He himself has chastised that particular union for not attempting to cooperate with us in solving those problems relating to mechanization for technological change. As the hon. member knows, article 29 in the collective agreement provides for that. We have been in constant consultation with that union. Because of the stance they have taken constitutionally of not cooperating but confronting, it makes it very difficult for us to do what the hon. member suggests. He is not helping at all by the very destructive suggestions he is putting forward.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**PROPOSAL FOR DECENTRALIZATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

**Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, it is too bad the Postmaster General does not receive any mail. He would then understand that people are truly concerned and disappointed with the type of mail service they are getting and for which they are paying exorbitant prices. In light of the massive and increasing number of mail handling problems referred to Ottawa each day by local post offices in major cities, and I point out particularly Hamilton and Toronto, when is the Postmaster General going to truly decentralize the Post Office so that such problems raised in the local post office can be settled fairly and expeditiously at the local level, thereby eliminating or reducing references to Ottawa which invariably cause undue delays and lowers morale?

**Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the hon. member consult with the hon. member for Brandon-Souris. He would then know of the type of background information I have made available to all hon. members in order to provide them with the information necessary to answer inquiries from their constituencies. The information I have made available is factual. It provides the sort of