

I would like her to explain why she sent a telex to the maritime chiefs this morning telling them she will not meet with them there, but wants them to come to Ottawa, when only this last Monday and last Friday she said she would go to the maritimes to meet with them to discuss this very serious problem.

Miss Bégin: Because in between, Mr. Speaker, the CBC made a statement that is completely incorrect and incompetent and I have asked for a retraction, and I am speaking English to make sure it is understood directly by all those who are representing English-speaking Indians in this country.

This subject is a most important one. The health of Indians and the health of anybody is sacrosanct. I will never accept that a member has the guts to stand up, without checking any facts, and accuse anybody of causing death. There is no fooling around on that question, and I will not accept it.

An hon. Member: Ten o'clock.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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POST OFFICE

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION USING PRIVATE POSTAL CARRIER

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Postmaster General. Is he aware that the Scarborough Public Utilities Commission is using a private postal carrier to deliver its bills, at a cost of eight cents a bill instead of the 14 cents, soon to rise to 17 cents, charged by his department?

Has A. J. L. Whitton, marketing director for the Post Office in Ontario, advised the commission that it may be in contravention of the Post Office Act which gives the Postmaster General the sole and exclusive privilege of delivering and collecting letters in Canada? If this is so, is this government policy? Furthermore, can the Postmaster General explain how a private carrier can deliver and make a profit at eight cents a letter when the post office is losing millions of dollars at what will soon be twice the rate, namely, 17 cents?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I should tell the hon. member that I am well aware of the incident. However, I have not yet had a full report on the incident in order to see who is right or wrong. I have asked for legal advice on this and I will take the proper steps depending upon the result of that legal advice. However, nothing has been proven, either—that a private carrier can deliver for six cents, seven cents or eight cents and make a profit. He might do that just for annoyance or in an attempt to do business with this commission.

I think it will be very interesting to see the legal advice we receive, because depending on whether we can apply the law or not we may want to ask for an amendment to the bill imple-

menting the Crown corporation in order to make sure this is well clarified.

I am surprised that a public commission or municipality is not ready to abide by the Post Office Act, if they are aware of it—and I am sure they are. As an ex-mayor of Quebec, I can say that I abided by the law of governments and by any law as it was submitted to me. I am surprised that a municipality does not want to abide by the law within the terms of the Post Office Act.

EMPLOYEES NOT RECEIVING FULL PAY IN CERTAIN AREAS

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could direct another question to the Postmaster General. Reports indicate that there has been a great mix-up in Calgary and in some other offices in respect of pay cheques, resulting from deductions due to the recent strike. Many employees will not be receiving their full pay before Christmas.

Can the Postmaster General inform the House what the problems are and what action he is taking to remedy this situation, so that everyone can go home with a full pay cheque and have a happy Christmas?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member not to believe everything he hears from people who call him—probably the same people who call me. Mr. Hall, president of CUPW in Calgary, probably has called the hon. member in the same way he called my office.

The truth is that they are being paid. The cheques are in the right amounts, but the coding on the cheques is wrong. That does not prevent them from cashing their cheques. I should like to mention to the hon. member, as well, that at the moment I do not think there is any justification for hon. members to ask questions which create confusion in the Post Office. We have had the best Christmas season yet. Morale is good, and we have delivered mail better than ever before during a Christmas season, particularly in the last seven years.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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IMMIGRATION

SUGGESTED INCREASE IN NUMBER OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEES ADMITTED TO CANADA

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration: it is a follow-up to the motion under Standing Order 43 which I proposed two days ago and which, unfortunately, did not receive unanimous consent.

Could the minister advise the House whether the government has taken into consideration the consequences of the motion I moved, which would allow into Canada, one of the most fortunate countries in the world, an appropriately higher number of refugees known as boat people?