

was posed by the hon. member, I checked into it and found that the increase which was proposed for February has been cancelled. But he is quite right in indicating that an application has now been made for an increase in November of next year. I have asked that the increase be examined very carefully and that it be submitted to the Anti-Inflation Board. In addition, the parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development of which the hon. member is a member, will have the opportunity to examine the Northern Canada Power Commission on estimates between now and the time that the increase comes into place.

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AGRICULTURE

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OUTLINING HOW MARKETING BOARDS SET PRICES

Mr. Wm. Andres (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. Headlines were focussed upon the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency last week, emphasizing the one cent increase in the price of a dozen eggs, but the news media did not see fit to inform the public of any possible reason behind a price change at this time. No mention was made of the large increase in the price of heating fuel, which among other things is a major contributor to the cost of production. CEMA was referred to as representative of all marketing boards, which according to Mrs. Plumtre are price setters.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member has a question, would he put it.

Mr. Andres: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether the minister could inform the House how marketing boards actually negotiate prices for their commodities.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Some hon. Members: Order paper.

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HEALTH

PROPOSED GRANTS TO HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS WHOSE CHRISTMAS APPEALS HAVE BEEN HURT BY POSTAL STRIKE

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Is the government giving consideration to special hardship or ex gratia grants to the Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases Association, the Canadian Mental Health Association, UNICEF and any other group whose Christmas appeals have been literally devastated by the postal strike?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member I deplore the impact of the postal strike on the organizations concerned, and I merely hope that the conflict will be settled as soon as possible; however, I am not, for the time being, consider-

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ing the possibility of adopting special financial measures in that regard.

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[English]

POST OFFICE

STRIKE OF INSIDE WORKERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION ON BACK TO WORK LEGISLATION

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Postmaster General. Would he advise the House and the people of Canada how much more time he needs before he will recommend that this House move by way of legislation to require a resumption of postal service?

Mr. Speaker: Order. On a previous occasion I have ruled that it was in perfect order to ask whether or not plans were underway or under consideration in regard to taking such a step, but a question asking how much time is going to elapse before certain other events take place has a large hypothetical measure to it and in my view is not permissible.

Mr. Alexander: Then would the minister advise whether he has now reached the stage where he is prepared to recommend to his colleagues that legislation be introduced to see to it that a resumption of normal postal service is at hand?

● (1450)

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Well, the hon. gentleman makes his question difficult to answer since he has not specified what type of legislation he has in mind.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I resent the Postmaster General playing footsie with a very important subject. He is well aware of the type of legislation I am discussing. It is back-to-work legislation. Would he now answer the question.

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, the reason I asked the question in all sincerity was that there are two types of legislation, one asking the government to legislate its own employees back, which normally is reprehensible legislation. The other is legislation which I thought was advanced the other week in a very serious manner which would recommend to the Public Service Staff Relations Board that they hold a secret ballot for the union members which would be much more acceptable in light of the fact that the board is superior to both the government and labour. Probably that would have happened by now if the NDP Party had not in turn stymied us and recommended a 52 per cent increase as basis for a settlement.