

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, may I first refer to the opening remarks of the Leader of the Opposition when he talked about a bulletin of the labour department which predicted the inevitability of a strike. I am informed that that bulletin merely contained a list of newspaper articles in which this assumption is made. This is not the view of the Minister of Labour or of the Department of Labour. In reply to the second question may I say that we have this matter under consideration at the moment.

Mr. Stanfield: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I should like to avoid any misunderstanding such as the Acting Prime Minister has tried to create. I would ask your permission to read the opening half dozen lines of—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I doubt whether that would be in order. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition might indicate what he has in mind rather than read the statement to which he referred.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, the accuracy of what I at least implied in my question has been questioned by the Acting Prime Minister and I request an opportunity to remove any doubt from the minds of all members of the House as to what the situation is. The opening lines of Labour News Headlines issued by the Canada Department of Labour at an Ottawa address read as follows—

An hon. Member: Those are headlines.

Mr. Stanfield: This does not purport to be a quotation of any newspaper headline. It is from a publication called Labour News Headlines. The quotation reads as follows:

Canada's second mail strike in less than two years appears inevitable today.

It goes on to read—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Stanfield: It goes on to read:

The 27,000 members of the Letter Carriers' Union of Canada and the Canadian Union of Postal Employees will take formal strike votes—

And so on.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for York South.

POSSIBLE NATIONAL STRIKE—GOVERNMENT
POSITION ON UNION PROPOSAL FOR
JOB SECURITY

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I want to ask the President of the Treasury Board the

following question. In view of the fact that negotiations are likely to be resumed tomorrow between the Treasury Board and the postal unions and in view of the necessity to make certain that the union negotiators appear at the negotiating table without feeling that they have already been hit by the government before they even start to talk, will the President of the Treasury Board make clear to Parliament and to the postal employees that the accusation made by the Postmaster General that the unions have asked for money rather than for work in their request for job security was an unwarranted accusation, from his knowledge of the negotiations?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): I do not think I would agree with that interpretation of the Postmaster General's remarks.

An hon. Member: We heard them.

Mr. Lewis: May I then ask the President of the Treasury Board—I do not want to take the time to read what the Postmaster General said—to assure the House and the postal employees that from his knowledge of the negotiations the proposal of the unions for job security was a bona fide one?

Mr. Drury: I do not think the government for a moment suggests that any of the claims advanced by the Council of Postal Unions is anything other than bona fide.

Mr. Lewis: Tell Eric that.

[Translation]

POSSIBLE NATIONAL STRIKE—DELIVERY OF
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CHEQUES

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Acting Prime Minister.

A few moments ago he said he was not pessimistic. Perhaps it was for this reason that his colleagues mailed the social security cheques two months in advance.

I would like to ask him whether he can tell the House what measures he has in mind to counteract the effects of a postal strike on the delivery of unemployment insurance cheques and to enable the insured to get in touch with officials in unemployment insurance offices.

Mr. Speaker: I believe this question was asked yesterday. However, I do not recall whether it was answered. If not, the minister