

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Employment and Immigration—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cullen:—let me just say that the initiatives recommended by the hon. member are not to be taken; they have in fact been taken. There is an interdepartmental committee established to study these specific problems and that committee has come up with some excellent representations. To give just one example, Mr. Speaker, under phase 2 of Canada Works 116,000 people were working in jobs who would not have been working without that particular effort. That is only one of a series of steps this government has taken to help the unemployed.

UNEMPLOYMENT—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE PRIME MINISTER
WILL MAKE STATEMENT IN HOUSE

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, which I will address to the Deputy Prime Minister since we can get nothing but empty rhetoric from the minister of unemployment. Given the fact that the only response we have had from the government is Canada Works, and since barely 10 per cent of the unemployed in the province of Newfoundland, for example, are able to enjoy the benefits of phase 2 of the Canada Works program, can the Deputy Prime Minister assure the House that the statement promised by the Prime Minister for tomorrow on new employment strategies will be made in the House, that there will be an opportunity for members to respond on motions and that the members of the House will be given adequate opportunity to examine the Prime Minister's statement before it is made in the House?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of any promise made by the Prime Minister that a statement would be made in the House tomorrow. I noticed in a headline today that a statement from the Prime Minister had been expected but that was the first I had heard about it. I asked the Prime Minister this morning in Montreal, and it is not his intention and had never been his intention to make a statement in the House tomorrow.

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POST OFFICE

WALKOUTS IN TORONTO—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO RESTORE
SERVICE

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General. In view of the fact that postal walkouts in Toronto are increasing to the point where only 200 out of 800 employees showed up for work this morning in one location alone, would the minister report on these apparently illegal walkouts and advise the House what steps he is taking, (a) to return postal service in Toronto to at least the snail's pace to which we have become accustomed,

and (b) to assure that this discontent does not spread to the national level?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the figures given by the hon. gentleman; I understand that sometimes communications can be difficult. In this instance, half of the regular employees are at work. Indeed, 900 of the work force of 1,400 are at work at the south central plant. In regard to the remainder of the force, we are now taking the necessary action through court injunctions to secure their return.

Mr. Jelinek: Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the Postmaster General that the figures I quoted I received from the head of his department in the Toronto post office. By way of a supplementary question, may I ask the minister whether he could ascertain if the operations which have caused the slowdown were alleged violations of the current CUPW contract which stipulates that part-time workers are not to use automatic equipment, or is this just another meagre excuse by the union to slow down mail service prior to the Christmas rush? Which is it, and what is the minister going to do to rectify the problem?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise the hon. gentleman that the dispute with the union relating to the use of mechanized equipment has been resolved. It was agreed by both sides that there was no conduct which was contrary to the collective agreement.

● (1442)

Mr. Jelinek: If the minister is so confident, can he assure this House and Canadians generally that they do not need to worry about the Christmas mail being stopped any time this year—or next year, come to that?

Mr. Blais: I am pleased to advise the hon. gentleman that we are doing everything in our power to ensure delivery of Christmas mail both this year and in the future. Discussions with the unions are proceeding at the present time. We are prepared to secure legal sanctions should those negotiations fail.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

MEASURES TO HELP FLUID MILK PRODUCERS

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture who is surely aware of the difficulties now being experienced by a high percentage of manufacturing milk producers because they have reached the limit of their quotas. In view of those circumstances and in order to prevent a large number of those producers from going under between now and April, has the minister discussed the matter with the federation of Quebec producers? If so, what steps does the federal government intend to take? If not, does the minister still intend to discuss the matter in view of its