

second and somewhat related area. Will the Minister herself guarantee on this question of provincial participation in the trade talks that there will be no agreement signed with the United States without clear provincial approval in the key areas which might affect them?

Mr. Andre: Robert Fulford is right.

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am having trouble following the Hon. Member's point.

An Hon. Member: Who wouldn't?

Miss Carney: I again refer to the fact that this has been the most extensive consultation ever undertaken by any Government on a national issue. There have been 12 meetings of provincial officials alone, in addition to the First Ministers' meeting. There have been meetings of Trade Ministers. There has been discussion and identification of issues for more than a year now. I am surprised that the Hon. Member does not seem to be aware of this. We have 15 sectoral groups which are meeting constantly with us and with officials in the TNO. Ministers and I will be meeting with SAGITs this week—and I meet with them regularly.

So at the end of the day we will have to find out what is going to be in an over-all agreement before we can identify whether it is federal or provincial jurisdiction which applies. I point out to the Hon. Member that the negotiation of international treaties is a federal responsibility.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

FUTURE OF RURAL POST OFFICE

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for Canada Post said yesterday before a standing committee:

This year 20,000 Canadians will have heart attacks. It would save the rest of us a lot of anxiety if we had a list of those people.

Does the Minister not realize that Canadians do not expect him to list 20,000 Canadians who will be suffering from heart attacks? What millions of rural Canadians want to know, in order to relieve their anxiety, is will the Minister now stand in his place and say that no rural post office in any community will close without the permission of the people in that community?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if one tempers some of the extreme language, in essence that is what I said. I can no more predict when there will be a circumstance in which the postmaster will quit, retire, resign, or a building will burn down than I can predict who those 20,000 Canadians are who will have heart attacks this year. In those circumstances we will look at the

situation and, if appropriate, there may be a change in the postal service. But it will be with the consultation of the Member of Parliament and the people affected. It will have to be a change that is reasonable to reasonable people.

RETAIL SERVICES

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, in his letter to MPs, the Minister said that Canada Post plans to place the majority of its retail services in rural areas in the hands of the private sector. Yesterday, before the committee he said:

McDonald's Restaurants are able to predict how many hamburgers Canadians will eat and where its customers are likely to live over the next five years, the period covered by the latest Canada Post plan.

I ask the Minister what in heaven's name has McDonald's Restaurants to do with Canada Post? Are we to expect that under the present Government rural post offices will operate out of McDonald's Restaurants soon? Rural Canadians do not want their post offices changed; they want them to stay where they are. Is the Minister suffering from a serious "Mac attack"?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am always delighted to receive a question from the Ronald McDonald of the Liberal Party.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, indeed, the plan is to look at privatization because we feel the public would get better service, for example, if there were post office outlets in retail outlets that operate for 12 hours a day as opposed to a post office that operates from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. We think there is an opportunity for giving better service to the public by privatizing which, incidentally, will save some money. Perhaps we may be able to save enough to buy one of those Muppet Babies from McDonald's for the Hon. Member. Gonzo might be appropriate.

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[Translation]

THE JUDICIARY

REQUEST THAT QUEBEC BE CONSULTED BEFORE QUEBEC JUDGE APPOINTED TO SUPREME COURT OF CANADA

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice, in the absence of the Prime Minister.

Recently, the Quebec Minister responsible for Intergovernment Affairs, Gil Rémillard, asked that the Prime Minister