

*Oral Questions*

Last week it was St. Catharines. This week it is Windsor getting kicked in the teeth.

Is the minister prepared to show some real leadership on this issue? Will he set up a program of community development help and early retirement support? Will he get out and negotiate directly with General Motors to try to see to it that the number of lay-offs is reduced during this significant period of retooling?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I think hon. members in the House should know this. My understanding is that the 1,600 laid-off workers at the Windsor plant will receive a combination of unemployment insurance benefits and supplementary company payments equal to 95 per cent of the base salary after taxes until they are recalled in August 1994.

The industrial adjustment service program will be offered to the company and the union for 400 employees who will not be recalled in August 1994 at the GM Windsor plant location.

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[Translation]

**CANADA POST CORPORATION**

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post.

The post office in Saint-Clément de Rimouski has been occupied for nearly a week and we just learned that people in Scotstown in the eastern townships have been occupying their post office since one p.m. and that a demonstration is being prepared in La Rivière, Manitoba.

Is the minister prepared, finally, to understand common sense and abandon his policy of closing rural post offices?

[English]

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that these are not my policies nor are they the policies of anybody else. The House agreed unanimously in 1991, in creating Canada Post as a crown corporation, that it should be free to operate at arm's length, free of political interference.

That was a good decision on the part of Parliament. Were I to ignore that decision and to interfere politically, I am sure the hon. member would be among the first to be up on his feet calling it contempt of Parliament.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, this is utter nonsense. The minister knows that he and his government approved the corporate plan of Canada Post calling for the shutdown of 5,221 rural post offices.

[Translation]

I will put my supplementary question for the Prime Minister, then, since his minister refuses to understand common sense. Is the Prime Minister prepared to announce today that the government is giving up the policy of closing rural post offices in Canada? Is he ready and does he have the courage to make that announcement?

[English]

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member really does not have to shout rudely to be heard.

Let me also say to the hon. member that the corporate plan respecting the opening up of new retail outlets in the stores where people normally go to do their other purchasing has been in place for several years. About 3,000 of these outlets have been opened up and another 3,000 are due to open.

There have been significant changes in the historic way in which the post office has been operating. When the post office has gone to those communities where those changes have been made, the approval rating is 90 per cent. To suggest that a policy which has the approval of its customers to the tune of 90 per cent is in my opinion a wrong-headed attitude on the part of the hon. member.

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**PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

**Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport and it concerns the announced redevelopment of Pearson airport in Toronto.