

Routine Proceedings

[English]

WATER DIVERSION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and indeed an honour to present a number of petitions on the same issue from a variety of very concerned communities in British Columbia.

They believe that the North American free trade agreement holds a number of clauses that would facilitate the diversion of Canadian rivers into the United States to provide fresh water for the southwestern United States and northern Mexico.

• (1010)

They are asking the government to ensure that this not take place when we eventually pass legislation regarding the North America free trade agreement.

BILL C-268

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): On another matter, Mr. Speaker, these petitioners are calling upon the House of Commons to recognize June 21 as the most appropriate day to recognize our First Nations.

They are calling upon Parliament to enact Bill C-268, an act respecting a national solidarity day for the aboriginal people of Canada.

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, on yet another matter, the petitioners point out that alimony provisions in the Income Tax Act of Canada currently stipulate that taxpayers who receive child support payments must include the payments in their taxable income.

They point out the unfairness of this and are therefore asking that the Parliament of Canada amend the Income Tax Act to exclude child support payments from the taxable income of custodial parents.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk)

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 416 and 420.

[Text]

Question No. 416—**Mr. Simmons**

With respect to the post office in Newfoundland, (a) does it follow federal tendering procedures for mail delivery contracts and does the contract go to the lowest bidder and, if not, why not (b) does it follow federal hiring procedures and practices for temporary and permanent staff and, if not, why not?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): (a) Canada Post Corporation, while operating in a fiscally responsible manner, must ensure the best cost and quality when selecting suppliers and contractors. Consequently, the corporation adheres to the principle of a fair and competitive bidding environment. It follows a formal tender evaluation process that ensures an adequate and fair competition and allows Canada Post to consider the most effective package submitted. This process gives all Canadians a chance to do business with Canada Post.

In every competition all the technical, commercial and financial elements of the tender are taken into consideration. The final decision on tender competition is based on the corporation's ability to obtain maximum value for each purchasing dollar. Canada Post awards business to those suppliers and contractors whose offer reflects the best quality, cost service and delivery necessary to carry out the task. In the instance when all these factors are equal, the business will be awarded to the supplier and/or contractor in the locality in which the item or task is needed.

There are few exceptions to this policy. They are: when an emergency situation exists in which delay would be injurious to the corporation and/or the interests of its customers; when the nature of the task is such that it would not be in the best interest to all concerned to invite bids, for example when there are no other suppliers or contractors that do the work.

The above mentioned policy is applied nationally.

(b) Canada Post Corporation does not follow federal hiring procedures. The corporation's hiring procedures in post offices are as follows:

When a unionized position in a post office becomes vacant, it is filled following steps laid out in the collective agreement. For permanent placement, a unionized position is first offered to members of the bargaining unit under which it falls. If no successful candidate can be found, the position is then opened to other employees of Canada Post. If the position remains vacant, it is offered