

Oral Questions

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, just last Friday the minister's colleague, the Secretary of State, denied funding for a conference held this past weekend on employment equity.

This government is sending a mixed message to Canadians who are disabled. Will the minister now, while there is still time before the issue of the 1991 census, consult with disabled groups to formulate a census questionnaire that will generate the data to provide the target levels and programs that physically challenged Canadians need?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): In answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the House that our government is very interested in the role of the handicapped and of visible minorities. Prior to the tabling of the next annual report, we had consultations in Ottawa Monday with a group of national leaders concerned about employment equity. Monday's gathering was the first in a series of regional and national meetings, and before the end of December we expect to table our third report featuring an assessment of progress made so far. We have a long way to go yet, but we are working together to improve the situation.

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[*English*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post.

Effective August 1, the cost of running post office boxes for individuals living in areas where royal delivery is present increased almost 100 per cent, from \$26 to \$50. Not only is this increase unacceptable, but for the elderly and particularly the disabled, it is very unfair.

Given that there are a number of Canadians affected by this, what assurances can the minister give us that this matter will be reviewed by Canada Post and by the minister with the hope of correcting it?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am informed by Canada Post that everyone in Canada is entitled to one free mode of mail delivery, be

it by letter carrier, community mail box, rural route, general delivery or postal box. It is free.

It is only in circumstances where people want special treatment, out of ordinary from their neighbours, that imposes an extra cost on the post office that they tend to recover it. As it is, the costs they charge are only a fraction of what the private sector charges for similar services.

However, the post office does have a provision for accommodating special circumstances, such as the elderly or people who are unable to make it to the mailbox. If the hon. member will bring to the attention of the post office the circumstances of specific people, I am sure they will take care of it.

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[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The minister changed the immigrant investor regulations without consulting the joint committees established under the Cullen-Couture agreement signed by Quebec and Ottawa in 1978. Why did the minister choose not to consult the joint committees? And why would the minister want to thwart economic development in Quebec where the new regulations are applicable immediately, whereas other provinces have 18 months to comply?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to extend a warm welcome to my dear colleague as critic of the Official Opposition, for this is his first question.

There have been quite a few discussions on the program with Quebec and other provinces in anticipation of the changes. Changes have been implemented for all provinces, and all provinces have endorsed the regulations.

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[*English*]

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works concerning a project which is extremely important to all