

reviewing the regulations pertaining to metric. Can the Prime Minister tell us whether the government will consider a tandem system of measurement in both imperial and metric, for packaging? This is particularly important when we see the devastating effects being experienced by farmers with their crops when they are forced to interpret metric only measurements.

[Translation]

Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is no doubt aware that when we announced the introduction of metric scales in retail food merchandising, we also said that for two years, in all communities where metric scales were to be introduced, prices would be posted for both metric and imperial weights. Now, I have not looked into this, and I would have to check with my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, on the feasibility of using the hon. member's suggestion for a tandem system of measurement in both imperial and metric. I shall look into the feasibility of the hon. member's proposal.

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[English]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

ELIMINATION OF SATURDAY RURAL DELIVERY SERVICE

Mr. Bud Bradley (Haldimand-Norfolk): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the minister responsible for Canada Post Corporation perhaps an acting minister could answer my question.

The Corporation was established not only to reduce the dependency on the taxpayers of Canada but also to improve service to Canadians who use the mail. In the first year we had an unbelievable increase in postal rates and an unacceptable definition of the term letter, which tightened up the monopoly. Now we are told there will be a reduction in service, that being the removal of Saturday rural delivery. There is something wrong in "Warrenville", Madam Speaker.

Will the minister tell the House whether the problem lies with the Crown corporation or with the deficit reduction program laid down by the government? Could he also tell us what steps are being taken to correct the situation?

[Translation]

Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, this kind of question is always rather difficult to answer. All the members of this House would agree that the government should reduce its spending and should try to operate as much as possible on a cost-recovery basis. On the other hand, we realize that the Canada Post Corporation has a deficit that is increasing from year to year, and yet, when the Corporation suggests how it could bring down its deficit, hon. members ask the Corporation

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not to drop the service in question. Madam Speaker, I myself come from a rural area where we have Saturday mail delivery, and I think that people in rural areas are prepared, like other Canadians, to accept a five-day delivery system, as is the case for most Canadians living in cities. I do not think this is tantamount to depriving Canadians of essential services.

[English]

Mr. Bradley: Madam Speaker, we see again why this is called question period, and not question and answer period.

REQUEST THAT COMMITTEE STUDY REDUCTION IN SERVICE

Mr. Bud Bradley (Haldimand-Norfolk): Madam Speaker, perhaps I could address a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. Since there is in excess of \$400 million of taxpayers' money going to the Crown corporation this year, could the Prime Minister assure Canadians that there will be no reduction in mail service in this country until the implications of such reduction are studied by a committee of the House?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I will do what the responsible minister would do, and undertake to refer the hon. member's representations to the Crown corporation for consideration.

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INDUSTRY

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF LOAN GUARANTEES TO NEW BRUNSWICK COMPANIES

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

An hon. Member: Announcement!

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Madam Speaker, we have the usual rash judgment from hon. members opposite.

In view of the government's apparent willingness to provide a loan guarantee to Maislin Transport whose Canadian employees, according to my information, number closer to 700 than 2,000, can I now offer companies in my constituency that are facing bankruptcy an assurance of loan guarantees from the Government of Canada?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, one of the programs of this government that has been in place for many years is the Enterprise Development Program. One of its components is to make loan guarantee assistance available on a last resort basis to help in the restructuring of companies in difficulty, in order to assist them to return to long-term viability.