

Canada Post said and I quote: "Over the next 10 years, we will be shifting most of our retail services to the private sector". Does the Minister agree with Canada Post's plan to close the majority of the post offices across this country?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I think that was a *non sequitur*, Mr. Speaker. I do not see how privatizing certain activities has anything to do with closing or not closing post offices. They are two separate questions.

It has been agreed by everybody who has looked at the Post Office that there can be genuine improvements in services to the public while saving money through the contracting out of some of the activities of the Post Office. That policy will continue.

CORPORATION'S INTENTIONS

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, if there is no intention of closing post offices, then why did Mr. Villeneuve inform me in the same letter that Canada Post will consult the residents to establish what type of a service they prefer to receive in replacement of the existing post offices? Why does the Government wish to close post offices that are giving good service, especially in rural Canada? Why does the Government wish to close that service?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could give an example to the Hon. Member. On Monday this week on the Ottawa River at Dunrobin two post offices were merged together with the enthusiastic approval of all the people concerned because it resulted in improved service to the people affected. Why in heaven's name would the Hon. Member suggest that the Post Office should not go through that type of rationalization and merging two smaller, less efficient operations into one more efficient operation which improves service? Why does the Hon. Member keep asking that we not allow that type of thing to happen?

FUTURE OF RURAL POST OFFICES

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question with regard to the closure of rural post offices. Yesterday at the Government Operations Committee the Chairman of the Committee and member of the government Party said, "I have it on pretty good authority that Canada Post will resubmit its plan to Committee to back off on its amalgamation formula". Is the Minister now ready to say that the Government is ready to back off on its plans to close hundreds of rural post offices? Will the Minister clear up the confusion in this area?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, one of the causes of the confusion is activities like those that occurred in Devon last weekend where the Hon. Member attended with some people who have other

objectives in mind, and who were making outrageous statements about the closures of post offices in Devon, Calmar, and other places, which was unnecessarily enraging and causing concern to the people affected, when the Hon. Member knows that there are no such plans in mind.

AMALGAMATION PLANS

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question to the Minister is this. The President of Canada Post has admitted before the Government Operations Committee that it has plans to close hundreds of rural post offices under the amalgamation plans which are in the Post Office plan. Is the Minister now ready to say that he will abandon those plans, and that the Government will bring in a new plan for the Post Office? Will the Minister be frank with Canadians?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, what I am prepared to be frank about is the Hon. Member and his objectives of trying to raise fear and anxiety with his distortion of facts and distortion of intent, and he is not contributing at all to what we should collectively share as our responsibility to the people who elected us to see that the Post Office does the best job possible.

• (1500)

As I indicated, the kind of assurance he just asked for would have in fact made it impossible to have the merger of two post offices near Ottawa, which was announced on Monday and was greeted positively by the people affected. For goodness sake, I would ask the Hon. Member to be reasonable in making those kinds of suggestions and demands.

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CORRECTIONAL SERVICES CANADA

LOCATION OF PAROLE SUPERVISION FACILITY IN TORONTO

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. It concerns the decision to fund and locate the Exodus Link parole supervision facility in Parkdale in Toronto without regard to its impact on the community. The Minister knows that the decision was taken in a sneaky, surreptitious fashion, with absolutely no consultation with the local community. In view of the concerns expressed by the community, will the Minister reconsider the decision to fund that particular operation, and will he refer the issue to the Justice Committee for further consideration to allow interested parties an opportunity to express their points of view?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows full well, I am sure, the contract was for services only. It was the responsibility of the applicant to locate the site somewhere within the city of Toronto. That in fact was determined in accordance with the