

Oral Questions

a program which will really help the underdeveloped regions of Quebec. Will the Prime Minister tell us that after being inactive for three years his Government is without any policy on regional development and whether he will heed the provincial minister's suggestion and put its house in order?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, in the first place I should point out to my colleague . . . that I can also read newspapers. We inherited rather disastrous conditions. There had been no policy for regional expansion for 25 years. During that period, the Government was unable to reduce regional disparities throughout the country. This Government has taken several major steps. I mean more especially the creation of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the setting up of a special expansion program for Northern Ontario and the establishment of a diversification office in Western Canada. We have taken a new approach to economic expansion, and to industrial expansion, as well as a new approach combining the very important activities related to science and technology to enable us to be more competitive in a world where the high technology sector is continuously changing.

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER DECIDE IN FAVOUR OF
MONTREAL

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, if only this Government were that active! My supplementary is directed to the Prime Minister.

The Minister in the same interview stated that indeed the Montreal Space Agency was on the Prime Minister's desk, and all it was waiting for was a personal decision from the latter.

The Prime Minister himself stated over the weekend that he had not taken any decision because of a very heavy schedule.

Here is my question to the Prime Minister: Could he take a few minutes this afternoon, go through the file and decide in favour of Montreal for the Space Agency?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I would first point out to my hon. colleague that over these last three years, we have not been inactive as regards industrial development. We created hundreds and hundreds of jobs, contrary to the previous Government.

Speaking about a decision, why are you bent on killing Bill C-22? Why are you bent on preventing Canada from developing that area, from developing that high technology, which could create thousands of jobs?

• (1440)

[English]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

MEETING PROTESTING PLANS FOR FUTURE SERVICE

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Post Office. The Minister will be aware that a number of representatives of organizations representing ordinary Canadians held a press conference today to indicate that in their view the Government's plans for the Post Office will result in a reduction in service. They had received post cards from tens of thousands of Canadians across the country.

What has the Minister to say to these ordinary Canadians who are protesting the fact that the Government's plans for the Post Office will result in a reduction of service?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I understand the ordinary Canadians included J. C. Parrot and the Member for Winnipeg North Centre and a couple of his colleagues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Watch it, Harvie, you're going to screw up.

Mr. Andre: Perhaps we have different definitions of "service". By "improved service" we mean getting the mail delivered reliably, early, and in a fiscally responsible way. That is what the Post Office is trying to do and the Government is encouraging it in its efforts.

[Translation]

WOMEN—POSITION OF MINISTER

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg—North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the ordinary Canadians have included the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, The National Anti-poverty Organization, and the signatures of tens of thousands of ordinary Canadians in eleven mailbags. What did the Minister tell the women who understand services curtailment also entails a salary cut for postmasters?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there were several random and inaccurate thoughts in that statement. I will repeat that the corporate plan of the Post Office calls for the opening of 6,000 new postal outlets so that people will have services closer to where they usually shop and to where they live. The plan calls for independent auditors to provide independent verification that the mail is being delivered within the specified time, which may be two days or three days depending on its class and the distance involved.

We are trying to do that so that the price of stamps will remain within the reach of the famous ordinary Canadians the