

*Supply***STARRED QUESTION**

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Starred Question No. 32? I have a reply.

***EXPENSES OF FORMER MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Question No. 32—Ms. McDonald:

1. Were the Expenses of the visit of the former Minister of National Defence to "Tiffany's" in Lahr in November, 1984 paid for out of public funds, either by the Minister's office or the Canadian Armed Forces, or paid for personally by the Minister?

2. Is it the policy of the Government to pay for expenses incurred in such establishments for travelling politicians and public servants?

3. Are the services of prostitutes and escort services allowable deductions as business expenses for taxation purposes?

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in response to the questions asked by the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood (Ms. McDonald), we would advise as to Question No. 1 that neither the Minister's office nor the Department of National Defence has any record that the former Minister of Defence paid out public moneys during his visit to Tiffany's in Lahr in November 1984.

The reply to Questions 2 and 3 is as follows: in light of the above reply by the Department of National Defence, it should not be necessary to answer these parts.

I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 82—CANADA POST—PROPOSED INCREASE—
POSTAL SERVICE

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre) moved:

That this House urge the Government to require Canada Post to forego the 2 cent postal rate increase planned for the new year, to reject the planned closure of hundreds of rural post offices, to reconsider the decision to replace door to door postal delivery in new suburban areas with super post offices boxes, to reconsider the ongoing reductions in urban postal services, and furthermore, that the adoption of this motion shall not be considered to be a question of confidence in the Government.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by making note of the fact that the motion before the House shall not be considered to be a question of confidence in the Government. This is something that has come about as a result of efforts at parliamentary reform and to make this institution more

relevant and more able to have an impact on the policy and decision-making processes of the Government without getting locked into partisan positions.

This motion offers an opportunity for all Hon. Members from all Parties to have their say about the postal service. It offers an opportunity to send a message to the post office and to the Minister responsible for the post office about how Canadians feel about the postal service in a way that is explicit and clear without calling into question confidence in the Government.

I invite all Hon. Members, not only members of the opposition Parties but also members of the Conservative Party, to give very serious consideration to this motion. Not only will the motion not call into question confidence in the Government but it is a votable motion so it offers an opportunity for Hon. Members to stand up and be counted.

I turn now to my comments with regard to the postal service itself. The policy that is being followed now with regard to postal service, Mr. Speaker, is a disaster. It is a disaster because it is asking Canadians to accept less service at the same time as they are being asked to pay more for it. In my view, we must go back to square one and find a new direction for the Post Office to take. We must establish a policy that will result in measurable improvements in service rather than the present policy which will result in a deterioration of service and a plan that promises a continuation of that trend.

I would like to touch on three aspects of the Post Office, Mr. Speaker: first, postal rates; second, postal service; and third—

Mr. Holtmann: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper) has referred to you as Mr. Speaker. I would like him to take a good, hard look at you to see that you are not a Mr. Speaker but rather a Madam Speaker.

Mr. Keeper: Madam Speaker, I hope my hon. friend takes as much concern for exactitude with regard to postal policy as he does with regard to decorum in the House. We will find out later on in the day where he stands, Madam Speaker.

To reiterate briefly, I would like to touch on three aspects of the postal service which clearly indicate that we are dealing with deterioration in postal service and that the policy that has been proposed is a disaster. I want to touch on postal rates, on service and on consultation.

With regard to postal rates, the Post Office has asked us to approve of an increase of two cents in the first-class rate. There are a number of alternative ways to respond to this request. First, we could simply say yes; we could tell the Post Office that the sky is the limit and whatever the Post Office wants in the way of increases in rates, it can have because it has earned it. On the other hand, we could say no, never; there is never any justification for an increase in postal rates because we are already paying too much. I know that many people feel that way. However, there is a third alternative and that is to