

country by rural people. What is it doing to our rural way of life, to a service that people need, and a service that people want? Justify the decision and reverse it.

\* \* \*

#### POSTAL SERVICE

**Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke):** Mr. Speaker, there are many people on Rural Routes 1 and 2, Renfrew, Ontario, who wish that Canada Post would take their complaints about mail service seriously.

On October 1, Canada Post decided to award one contract for the two rural mail routes to a person who does not live on either route. Canada Post unceremoniously dispensed with two well-liked and efficient contractors who knew everyone along the way. In return, it gave the people a service where cheques and other types of mail were ending up in neighbours' mailboxes; letters that were put in mailboxes for the contractor to pick up were left in the mailboxes; a businessman lost the opportunity to bid on a contract because the tender was floating around in the system; and wrongly delivered letters that were put back into the mailboxes with instructions as to where they belonged were being delivered back into the same mailboxes a few days later.

Customers on RR 1 and 2 Renfrew want me to call on Canada Post again to treat their legitimate complaints seriously, to review the contract that was granted on October 1, to talk to the customers about the type of mail service they are receiving and to get this serious problem settled now.

\* \* \*

#### AGRICULTURE

**Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose):** Mr. Speaker, my compliments go out to the federal and provincial ministers of agriculture who recently agreed in Winnipeg to several initiatives recommended by agri-food policy review task forces.

One in particular will lead to the creation of an agri-food advisory council for environmental sustainability. This council will advise ministers on resource base and environmental policy issues for the agri-food sector. This is one element of a three-part strategy relating to the conservation of soil and water and the protection of the environment. The strategy will also involve the

#### S. O. 31

private sector which will advise on programs in each province relating to the sustainability of agricultural resources.

Hon. members anxiously await the ministers' next meeting scheduled for February when they will assess the situation following the conclusion of the GATT negotiations and discuss the cost-sharing formula of the proposed safety net system.

\* \* \*

#### GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

**Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence):** Mr. Speaker, we can see that the GST is already hurting our economy. For example, under the GST transitional rules all industries, except the housing industry, will get rebates for inventory on hand at December 31, 1990.

With new housing, purchasers of homes started prior to that date will qualify for an FST rebate of 2.8 per cent of the purchase price if they close before February 15, 1991. They get nothing after that date. All inventory standing as of December 31 carries the full FST and is subject to full GST if unsold by March 31. That inventory will suffer a double taxation.

A high interest rate policy and a phenomenon of walk-away purchasers are exacerbating that problem. Those in housing propose one simple, corrective solution. Specifically, will the Minister of Finance extend the deadlines for the FST rebate provisions, or will he allow builders the same rebates available to purchasers, following the March 31, 1991 deadline?

\* \* \*

#### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, the concept of regional development is frequently misunderstood by many Canadians, particularly those in regions who do not require such help.

We must always remember that Canada is a confederation of regional distinctions, some of which have economic advantages over others. One principle of Confederation is a fair balance between regions so that economic advantage and disadvantage are equalized.

All too often, regional development is characterized as charity. Nothing could be further from fact. Regional