

Oral Questions

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, that is kind of nice, I think, except there were 45 of them in my constituency and it is still closing them down as we speak today.

I want to ask the following question of the minister. This government is converting, rationalizing, reconfiguring and plain old closing down post offices, immigration offices and everything else right across the regions of Canada. When will this government end the policy of abandoning rural Canada?

• (1515)

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated we are opening new post offices. We went from some 12,000 a few years ago and in the process, I might add, we went from a \$400 million a year loss to a profit position and increased the on-time delivery from about 85 per cent to 99 per cent. In that process Canada Post has become the most efficient post office in the world.

When polled, of those affected 90 per cent plus have said they are happy with the new service. I think that is a pretty good record.

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[*Translation*]

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, young students in this country are a productive work force for Canada. Students want to work during their school holidays to gain experience and increase their income.

In the past, the government has encouraged young people with its summer employment strategy for students. My question is directed to the Minister of State for Youth. Does the minister intend to extend the Challenge '92 program this year to help young people who are looking for summer jobs?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Youth), Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I intend to extend the program, which will be called Challenge'93 this summer. In fact, I would like to inform members, students and

employers that the budget for the Summer Employment Experience Development program has been increased from \$83 million last summer to \$88 million this summer.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Cadieux: Furthermore, the deadline for filing applications will be extended for one week, until March 19, 1993.

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[*English*]

NORTHUMBERLAND STRAIT BRIDGE

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): My question is for the Minister of the Environment.

As the minister knows, the environmental assessment of the generic fixed link between New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island recommended that the project not proceed.

Will the government honour its 1988 promise and do an environmental assessment of the specific project?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will know there has been an environmental assessment done on the project and the panel came forward with some recommendations. At the time the government took into account the recommendations made by the panel and when it asked for project submissions, it asked that the proponents take into account what the panel had come forward with.

I understand that is what has happened. Since then a court action has been initiated and is now being pursued, I understand, before the Federal Court. Given those circumstances, I think it would be wise to limit our comments to just that.

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SALMON FISHERY

Mr. J.W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Last week in response to a question about gill-netting of salmon, the minister stated that the preference was to negotiate the reduction of gill-netting by agreements as opposed to court action. I agree with that direction providing we can actually conclude such agreements.