

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I have a short supplementary.

I thank the minister for his short answer but at this time of frugality, freeze, and financial cut and slice, does the minister believe these projects send the proper signal to a hard-pressed and sceptical public and can he guarantee that the taxpayer will not pick up any part of the tab in any way?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. member opposite, who is an experienced member of this House, does not realize that this is not only an investment in Canada's future, but it is largely private money.

• (1500)

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works. The minister will know that he has promised up to \$40.5 million a year in annual subsidies for the private operator of the fixed link.

Could he explain to the taxpayers of Canada how that equates to the current \$22 million a year subsidy that provides 600 permanent jobs for ferry workers between P.E.I. and the mainland? Can he explain his mathematics to taxpayers?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, what my colleague opposite is conveniently ignoring is that there are many expenses other than just the subsidy to Marine Atlantic such as for example the replacement of these very expensive vessels which will have to be done in the next few years.

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[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Canada Post. The minister is aware that residents of Saint-Clément de Rimouski have barricaded themselves, taking over their post office, which could be closed as of December 14, 1992.

Privilege

Is the minister prepared to announce today that he is giving up any attempt to close the post office in Saint-Clément de Rimouski?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, when Canada Post was made a Crown corporation in 1981 there was unanimous agreement on all sides of the House that it should operate at arm's length without political interference. We have been operating in that fashion with great success for the last six years.

With respect to the conversion of post office run outlets to private sector outlets, post-change surveys show that the customers are pleased to the tune of 90 per cent. I think with that kind of approval reading even the hon. member would agree it is a good policy.

Mr. Speaker: I have a question of privilege, the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

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PRIVILEGE

CANADA POST

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 48(2), I wish to raise a question of privilege arising from an incident which occurred during the October 26, 1992 referendum.

Failing to resolve the issue with Canada Post, I feel I have no recourse but to raise the matter in the House of Commons, since my duties to serve my constituents as a member of Parliament have been seriously hampered.

This is the first opportunity that I have had to raise this question in the House.

I issued a special flyer on the referendum which was delivered to Canada Post, L/C Depot No. 3, 772 Dovercourt Road, Toronto, Ontario, on October 20, 1992.

Of the 20,837 flyers delivered to the above depot, 9,072 were delivered and 11,765 were held back. Someone at Canada Post made the decision that these flyers should not be delivered. This was confirmed by Mr. McBean, LIC supervisor.

My constituents still had six days in which to obtain information about the referendum prior to polling day.

I sent to you, Mr. Speaker, a copy of the flyer and pertinent information which I will not repeat here.