

For my hon. friend to suggest that total independence is achievable in this world of global interdependence is totally unrealistic and he knows that.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Privy Council who stated last week, in reply to a question I asked him, that Mr. Raymond Chrétien had made an error of judgment in not apprising him of the Al-Mashat affair before he set off to meet with James Baker and tour the Middle East.

Does the same symmetry principle apply to Mr. Paul Tellier, who knew about the Al-Mashat affair on March 11, but did not inform the Prime Minister before he met with the US President on March 13?

Will the minister have the decency to recognize and tell this House that, in fact, the Prime Minister knew about the Al-Mashat affair when he met with the U.S. President?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): No, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): In that case, I would have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Now that we know that a four-minister committee tried desperately to lay on someone else the blame for something they were responsible for, can the minister explain why this committee did not instruct Mr. Shortcliffe to demand an apology from Mr. Tellier as well, for not having apprised the Prime Minister of the Al-Mashat affair before his meeting with the President of the United States? Why have they demanded an apology from two civil servants, but not from Mr. Tellier or those who approved Al-Mashat's application in Vienna?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there was no ministerial committee with such a mandate.

Oral Questions

CANADA POST

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Canada Post. On May 7, Canada Post announced yet another attack on rural Canada, by eliminating manual sorting in small communities. This means half the staff of the Campbellton post office, in my riding, will be let go. Considering the high unemployment rate and the fact that the loss of sorting jobs will seriously hurt the economy and postal service in the area, what will the minister do to save these jobs in Campbellton?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the post office, along with all modern, progressive corporations seeks to use the latest technology to improve its efficiency. So the use of optical character readers and machine sorters and so on, have done away with the hand sorting.

The hon. member is not suggesting that any time technology allows us to do jobs automatically that formerly needed to be done by hand, we should get rid of the modern machinery and continue to do the operations by hand strictly for the purposes of maintaining those positions.

The post office is now the most efficient post office in the world and we should all be proud of that fact.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary for the same minister.

Canada Post intends to relocate sorting operations from Campbellton, New Brunswick to the province of Quebec, even though this is not part of the consolidation process.

Since I have a letter addressed to me from the office of the President of Canada Post, which says: "I can assure you that we have no plans to remove sorting operations from Campbellton", will the minister instruct Canada Post to rescind its decision in light of this breach of commitment and if not, why not?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): The reason I will not do that is because in 1981, when the hon. member for Papineau was responsible for Canada Post,