

member for Charlevoix, then the Leader of the Opposition, and then call orders of the day.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

In view of the unemployment rate in this region and the recommendations made in respect of the projects, as well as the fact that only two projects there have been granted extensions, does the minister intend to consider seriously the applications from that region?

[English]

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I will always take seriously the representations of any region and, of course, those of the hon. member as well.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

INQUIRY AS TO PUBLICATION OF DIRECTIVES ON BILINGUALISM BASED ON CERTAIN GUIDELINES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. It was to be a question for the Prime Minister who has slipped out, but I am sure the Acting Prime Minister can take care of it. It arises out of the statement of the President of the Treasury Board on December 14 that once the discussions with regard to the so-called Drury guidelines were terminated, the council would publish the directives set out to guide departments with regard to the application of the principles. I ask the Acting Prime Minister why these directives have not been published, particularly in view of the assurance in the statement by the President of the Treasury Board on April 12 that they would be tabled at the time of the debate on the Prime Minister's resolution relating to bilingualism?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I regret that I am not able to answer that question unless I look into the undertakings and what the intention of the President of the Treasury Board may be. Certainly, we have nothing to hide in this matter and it would be our desire to make our position completely clear not only to members of the Public Service but also to the members of the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

Post Office

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58—ALLEGED DETERIORATION IN SERVICE AND INCREASE IN RATES FOR POSTAL SERVICE AFFECTING SMALL PUBLICATIONS

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris) moved:

That this House regrets the drastic deterioration of the postal service in Canada during the past six years: including the closure of rural post offices; the reduction of urban service from six days to five days; the head-long costly rush to automation and computerization leading to job insecurity and low morale among employees—all this in the face of sharply increased postal rates which have seriously affected smaller Canadian publications, forcing many of them out of business; and urges the Government to take the necessary action to restore this fundamentally important communication system to its former excellence.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in view of the widespread interest on the part of members in this important subject, I wonder if there could be agreement to limit speeches following those made in the first round to 15 minutes?

Mr. Speaker: Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: It is so ordered.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, next to the Unemployment Insurance Commission, I believe that the department of government that has been most seriously disorganized and that has been of the most concern to the public in recent years is the Post Office Department. Hon. members, when they heard this debate was coming up, all wanted to speak, because there is not one who has not found in recent years that the time of a member of parliament has been taken up substantially, every day, in acting as ombudsman for unravelling the confusions, disorganizations and uncertainties relating to Canada's postal service. As the motion indicates, I will make some positive recommendations toward the end of the debate, but at the outset I want to review briefly why I feel that the postal service, during the past six years, has deteriorated and degenerated so rapidly.

The destruction of the Post Office Department began some six years ago under the direction of the then Postmaster General, Eric Kierans, who has gone to other places and other activities. He was one of a succession of Postmasters General who wrestled with this problem. There have been almost as many Postmasters General in the past six years as there have been years in that period. However, I think the low water mark began with the tenure of that office by the hon. gentleman to whom I have already referred.

We now have a new Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet). He is questioned from time to time in the House of Commons. A standard answer is all that is in the past, everything is now wonderful in the Post Office Department and it is the dawn of a new day as far as efficiency is concerned. He gave that answer as recently as on the late show last night when the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers) brought some specifics before the minister. The minister's reply in part was as follows:

I would like however to point out that it is somewhat unfair to judge the whole postal service by a few isolated cases.