

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Minister of Communications): I can give more exact information, Mr. Speaker. I said that the number of casuals is diminishing at a considerable rate. Between February and March we actually reduced the number of hours of casuals by 110,000, and that is almost 22 per cent or 23 per cent, and the dollar figure reduction was from \$916,000 to \$710,000. We are quite concerned about the problem.

At this moment in Ottawa the unions are meeting with my officers to discuss the whole problem of casuals right across the country. We have issued instructions to the regional offices that the unions and the administration should get together to discuss the problem.

Mr. Rose: Can the minister tell the house what proportion of these casuals have been taken on as permanent employees of the postal service?

Mr. Kierans: I could give the exact figures, but the hon. member will recall we had 2,000 surplus positions to fill and I would not judge that very many of the casuals have been hired permanently. We had to find jobs for the 2,084 who were rendered surplus because of the five day week.

SERVICE AVAILABLE ON SATURDAYS

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Postmaster General. Some time ago the minister said that he would give consideration to keeping open on Saturdays all wickets in the lobbies of post offices, rather than just a few sections. Has he anything further to say in this regard?

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Minister of Communications): We have not reached a decision on that. It does present a problem. We are giving half service, which is not satisfactory at all. We are considering it.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN
STAMP DESIGN REPORT

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Postmaster General. It is in reference to the crisp and critical report of the Cunningham task force on stamp design which although tabled today was submitted to the minister in February. Can he advise whether any action is contemplated to implement any of the recommendations for improving what was found to be a pretty unsatisfactory situation.

[Mr. Rose.]

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I have already expressed my opinion by saying we found the report to be unduly severe and critical. I did not feel, however, that that was any reason for not tabling it in the house. After all, the people have paid for it. A great many of the stamps we have issued have been of a high order, but there is tremendous room for improvement. With regard to the recommendations, we have them in hand and do intend to implement a great many of them.

[Translation]

NATIONAL PARKS

GASPÉ—INQUIRY ABOUT NINETY-NINE
YEAR LEASE

Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Could the minister tell the house whether the Quebec government has agreed to a 99-year lease for land to be used for the development of a national park in the Gaspé peninsula?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I have not yet received a final answer from the Quebec government; however, yesterday, I was in the Gaspé, and several citizens of the Forillon peninsula offered to give us their lands for the development of a national park.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[English]

Mr. Robert Simpson (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Can the minister say whether the national parks policy has been altered in any way to permit the establishment of new national parks on the basis of long term leases of the land, rather than on the basis of an outright grant of the land to the Crown in perpetuity?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the hon. member is not familiar with French law. The "bail emphytéotique" or long lease is a legal term to be found in the Quebec Civil Code, though not in English law, and which allows us to act legally.