

The Address

a new federal-provincial forestry development agreement similar to the one they have now.

Coming from a business background I always equate government to business. Just as business must stay close to its customers, so must this government stay close to the people we serve. Just as a business must have high quality employees, so must this government have members of integrity. And just as employee trust is essential to a company's success, so is the electorate's trust vital to our government's success.

This is a very exciting time to be a member of Parliament. I have the highest praise for our Prime Minister for scheduling all-party debates on major issues before and not after a decision is made. We saw this open process this week when debate was held on cruise missile testing and peacekeeping, and I look forward to the pre-budget debates next week. If we stick to the philosophy whereby economic policy must sustain environmental policy, must sustain social policy, then with continued open debate and responsible public spending we will succeed, we will win the trust of the electorate.

[Translation]

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague for speaking about rural Canada. She seems to be very fond of small communities. She also spoke about post offices and it is true that the post office in a small community is a vitally important institution.

In my riding we have the *Ralliement populaire*. Before that we had *Opération dignité* the goal of which was to save small communities, because if small communities are allowed to die out, surely the same fate will befall small towns.

Therefore I share my hon. colleague's sentiments and she can rest assured that she has an ally in me.

Now, regarding the question of post offices, one of my constituents called to tell me that new postal outlets were still opening up. And while there have been no further post office closures per se since a moratorium has or will be imposed, I would like the hon. member to tell me if in fact it is true that new postal outlets are opening up?

[English]

Mrs. Brushett: I thank the member for his question. Across the country people are concerned with closures of rural post offices. It was a mandate of our government to cease closing post offices. As he will recall, shortly after this government was elected the Minister of Public Works stopped the closing of post offices. A freeze was put on the closure of post offices. It is our mandate to ensure that freeze stays on post office closures until we have a complete look at restoring rural services across Canada.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I would like as well to congratulate the hon. member for what I thought was a wonderful speech. She can rest assured that she has much support for what she said in the Reform Party caucus.

• (1620)

It goes to show what I have believed for some time. It is that the reform that is sweeping across the country certainly goes beyond the borders of the Reform Party of Canada.

I would like to ask the hon. member if she would be prepared to elaborate her thoughts, time permitting, on two areas that she touched on, the Young Offenders Act and the gun control bill. Would she be willing to share with us her thoughts about the amendment to these two bills?

Mrs. Brushett: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his thoughts that rural post offices transcend party lines and that all parties have the common thread in this House for us to seek to serve the people of Canada in rural areas because they are the backbone of this country.

Thinking of the Young Offenders Act and gun control, many constituents in my riding have brought forward their own thoughts. I spoke of the young teenage girl whose parents live in my riding. She was going to university in Vancouver and was struck and killed by a young offender. As I said in my speech there were very small reprisals for that offence.

They have brought forward numerous recommendations on the Young Offenders Act and on gun control and I believe without going into great depth that I am presenting them to the Minister of Justice and I will debate them in this House when those debates come forward. The whole purpose is to assure justice and some consideration for the victim and to ensure that we rehabilitate the young offender and not incarcerate him for a long period for a life of crime. He must receive proper punishment to suit the crime.

In terms of gun control we would like to not have a blanket obliteration of the use of firearms but let us be more severe in punishing those who offend rather than renege on all firearms across the board.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the throne speech was silent on two particularly important issues. But, before addressing these issues, I would like to thank my constituents for their majority support of the sovereignty option in Quebec.

Saint-Hubert voters have unequivocally sanctioned my decision to join the Bloc Québécois on August 12, 1991. My decision was endorsed by 56.6 percent of the electorate, or 15,000 more votes than my Liberal opponent.