

[Translation]

RETENTION OF RURAL POST OFFICES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, one might say the more things change, the more they remain the same.

In the same interview the Minister also said that rural postal services would not be reduced.

Can the new Minister unequivocally guarantee that rural post offices as they now exist will not be closed down?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as my predecessor indicated, changes will be made from time to time because of changing demographics, changing patterns and so on. Those changes will be made taking account of the interests of, and in consultation with, the people involved. I think it is very reactionary and wrong to make a demand that absolutely nothing ever change in the way things are done. To bring about improvements requires change. We will do it in a sensitive way which reasonable people can understand, appreciate, and support. That is particularly true in rural Canada.

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TARIFFS

TARIFF ON CHRISTMAS TREES IMPORTED FROM UNITED STATES

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Has he given any further thought to the severe economic repercussions which will accrue to the substantial Christmas tree industry of regionally depressed Atlantic Canada if the Americans retaliate against his ill-conceived decision to impose a tariff on the puny number of trees moving from that country to this? What is he doing to ensure that will not happen?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Member for his question. As he is very much aware, we have had a number of meetings with people from the Christmas tree industry, some of them from his province. We have explained what we are trying to do in the action we have taken. I think we are meeting with a good deal of success in achieving our objectives.

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TRADE

POTASH—UNITED STATES INDUSTRY'S ANTI-DUMPING POSITION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I have a serious question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

Yesterday the U.S. potash industry filed an anti-dumping petition against the Canadian potash exporters. The case is based on figures from the U.S. Bureau of Mines on the cost of production in Canada. In light of what happened with shakes and shingles and softwood, and since we have known about the potash threat for some weeks, can the Minister specifically tell the House what action the Government has taken to date in this case which is very important to Canada, and what action will it now be taking to protect jobs in the potash industry, an industry which is important to Canada and vital to Saskatchewan?

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of State (Forestry and Mines)): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister responsible for international trade I might comment on that. We were informed last night about the petition. It is no surprise. Senator Domenici of New Mexico has been threatening this for a long time. We expect to receive a copy of the petition very shortly and we will work as closely as we can to try to help the industry fight that anti-dumping petition.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I want to know from the Deputy Prime Minister specifically what action we will take to fight that petition. In light of the controversy over the export tax on softwood lumber can he assure the House there will be no export tax imposed on Canadian potash producers? Will the Government get off its knees and stand up for Canada and this very important industry?

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of State (Forestry and Mines)): Mr. Speaker, what has happened is just another indication of rampant protectionism in the United States. We indicated to the industry that we would be helping in any way we can. Consultations have already begun and we will take the necessary action to protect our industry.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

DISMISSAL OF IMMIGRATION OFFICER—REASONS GIVEN BY DEPUTY MINISTER

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the two Ministers responsible for immigration I will address my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. It relates to the firing of John Quigley, an immigration officer in Toronto, after he conferred with a number of Members of Parliament. In his letter of dismissal the Deputy Minister of Immigration writes that one of the reasons for the firing was that "these actions contributed directly to the media attention and political controversy which ensued and which brought into public question the integrity of the Minister."

How can the Government condone the termination of this individual's livelihood in an effort to hide embarrassing