

Oral Questions

these are regarded as subsidies? If so, will he also admit that what this constitutes is a profound shift in constitutional power, going right from Regina to Ottawa to Washington? Will he acknowledge that?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I will not acknowledge something that is completely wrong. Premier Bourassa has a complete grasp on this subject. This is what the Premier of Québec said yesterday, and he of course is very conscious of provincial rights. He said that Clause 6 is declaratory, it is more political than legal.

What Clause 6 does—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: If I might be permitted to answer, Clause 6 says that the Government of Canada, the Parliament of Canada, reserves its right to legislate in the future in connection with the free trade agreement if it deems it necessary in the future. It does not give the Government of Canada any additional powers because this Parliament cannot give the Government of Canada any powers beyond the legislative jurisdiction of the Government of Canada. Surely that is obvious.

Premier Bourassa went on to say that if the federal Government acts in a way in the future which affects provincial jurisdiction, Québec has options, including going to court or passing provincial laws. It has been that way since 1867. Why do members of the Official Opposition and of the New Democratic Party want to twist this obvious proposition?

[*Translation*]

UNILATERAL CHARACTER OF CERTAIN GOVERNMENT
DECISIONS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question was put very seriously, without rhetoric, and I am confident about the substance. My last question is this: According to the Premier of Québec and his responsible Minister, according to the Premier of Prince Edward Island, according to the Premier of the Province of Ontario and his responsible Minister, and according to many constitutional experts, the federal Government is out to change constitutional powers unilaterally. My question is just this: Why this unilateral action by a Conservative Government?

[*English*]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, why is there a debate in the country about the so-called *Meech Lake* amendments? One can only change the Constitution if one does it in a way that accords with the Constitution, the BNA Act and the Constitution Act of 1982.

Neither this Government nor this Parliament could unilaterally change the Constitution, and the only powers that we are asserting in our Bill are federal powers that have been federal since 1867, under the trade and commerce power, because we

cannot be a nation, we cannot enter into commercial arrangements with other nations, unless we have those powers. Normally, Ontario is one of the greatest supporters of these kinds of powers for the federal Government. We are doing nothing that the Constitution does not permit us to do, and if we are, the courts will strike us down.

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[*Translation*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW CERTAIN DECISIONS

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister, in the absence of the Minister responsible for Canada Post. Canada Post decided to penalize Canadians who omit the postal code or make mistakes in it. Today, as a result of pressure, Canada Post recognized that this decision was a mistake and withdrew the proposal that had been accepted by the Government. Will the Deputy Prime Minister recognize that installing supermail-boxes is also a big mistake and that Canada Post should reintroduce home mail delivery immediately?

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post's decision is known. This morning, the President of Canada Post issued a press release in which he admitted having made a mistake and it is over.

As for the Hon. Member's last question, he must remember that Canada Post wants to increase service, Mr. Speaker, and not decrease it, and I would like to remind him that by the end of its plan, Canada Post will have increased the number of places where stamps can be bought and letters mailed to 7,000. This will be very good in providing more service for Canadians.

[*English*]

COST OF POSTAL CODE GUIDE

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, now that the Government and Canada Post have admitted that they made a mistake, can the Government ask Canada Post to make available the postal code books at every post office at a minimum cost and not at the excessive cost of \$10? If they want Canadians to use the postal codes, they should give them the possibility to find the postal codes.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, obviously, Canada Post must do everything to encourage Canadians to put the postal code on their mail so as to help them make it easier to deliver the mail and minimize the delays in sending it.