

S. O. 31

Democrats' northern caucus call on the minister to act now to bring in a fair and positive decision on the northern tax.

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[Translation]

RURAL POST OFFICES

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, as the Conservative government closes down rural post offices, allegedly to reduce the deficit, this will have a very serious impact on rural communities across Canada. These post offices provide a reliable service and invaluable employment opportunities. They are often the only federal presence in a small community.

Last week, in a committee report on mail delivery, the government proposed either closing or privatizing all rural postal offices in Canada.

[English]

The result of this ill-conceived measure would be the laying off of 10,000 people—80 per cent of whom are women. This would represent the largest lay off of women in Canadian history.

The Liberal party firmly believes that postal service is an essential public service which must be equitably provided to both urban and rural residents. We also believe that it is in the public interest to put the highest priority on providing quality service ahead of any government deficit reduction strategy.

The federal government must reconsider its plans to privatize and close rural post offices in order to ensure the continued existence of this important link between the federal government and rural communities.

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[Translation]

REMARKS MADE IN HALIFAX BY THE MEMBER FOR YORK SOUTH—WESTON

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents, all residents of Abitibi, have asked me to speak in the House with respect to what was said recently in Halifax by the Liberal Member for York South—Weston.

In May 1980, a referendum was held in Quebec. Today we all know that in our Quebec caucus, some federal members voted no and others voted yes.

An hon. member: That's true.

Mr. Saint-Julien: The same applies to the Liberal government in Quebec, where some members and ministers voted yes, others no.

An hon. member: Exactly.

Mr. Saint-Julien: Like the Liberal member from Toronto, I would like to refer to the dictionary, in this case *le Petit Robert*, in which 27 words separate "dépraver" from "député", and I would like to say to the hon. member that he "depraves" both the Quebec National Assembly and the Parliament of Canada.

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[English]

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, as a proud Canadian I rise in the House of Commons this afternoon to support the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord process.

Three years ago the Prime Minister and the provincial premiers agreed to an accord to chart the future of Canada.

The Premier of Alberta, the Hon. Don Getty, demonstrated leadership and statesmanship in helping to draft the agreement, and has been a strong supporter of the accord.

The people of Alberta, and the constituents of St. Albert riding, want a united Canada, a stable Canada that will ensure economic growth, employment and prosperity for Canadians.

Albertans believe in Canada—a united Canada. Canada has tremendous resources, the greatest of which is our people—talented, skilled and industrious.

As Canadians let us not dwell on our differences, but rather highlight what we have in common. Let us replace confrontations with consideration, tolerance and understanding.

The recommendations of the Meech Lake committee will be vital to the future of our country. Canadians working together will find a solution—a united Canada.