

Government Orders

• (1010)

The petitioners point out that the present Prime Minister in a letter dated August 1993 to Rural Dignity of Canada stated that the Liberal party had "vigorously spoken out against Canada Post's plans to close or convert existing post offices and that the Liberal Party viewed the closure and the conversion as a deterioration of services to the public resulting in poorer service, lower wages for employees and greater difficulty in guaranteeing the security of the mail".

The petitioners ask that a full corporate post office be reinstated in the town of Balgonie which is a growing and progressive community, and they want a full time postmaster.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present two petitions this morning on behalf of my constituents in Cumberland—Colchester.

The first petition requests that this Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is with regard to the Canadian Human Rights Act. The petitioners are requesting that we do not alter the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibitive grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

I am pleased to present both of these petitions on behalf of my constituents in Amherst, Nova Scotia.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present on behalf of my constituents today.

The first one deals with the young offenders legislation. My constituents have expressed a number of concerns. I am pleased to see that our government has addressed many of those in the present legislation before this House as well as in the study that is being undertaken by the justice committee.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my second petition has to do with changes to the Human Rights Act. My constituents are concerned that the

changes will concur or give societal approval to things that my constituents do not believe appropriate.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

Hon. David Anderson (for the Minister of Human Resources Development) moved that Bill C-54, an act to amend the Old Age Security Act, the Canada Pension Plan, the Children's Special Allowances Act and the Unemployment Insurance Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my very great honour to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill C-54, whose amendments which will assist over 3.5 million Canadian seniors, in particular the 1.4 million seniors currently receiving the spouse's allowance or the guaranteed income supplement.

The proposed amendments will enable these seniors, the majority of whom are women, to receive the benefits to which they are entitled with a minimum of red tape.

I am particularly pleased to speak on behalf of this bill because so many of its amendments display a unifying theme, namely establishing effective and efficient government and providing better service to the public while at the same time controlling costs.

This bill is a demonstration of our continuing commitment to both current and future seniors. It follows improvements to telephone service made earlier this year.

Members may recall that in February the Minister of Human Resources Development responded to public concerns raised by the Auditor General by ordering immediate action to ensure pensioners were able to get answers to questions about their benefits. These changes which involve the training of up to 200 additional client service officers and a \$3 million investment to expand and upgrade existing telephone equipment has certainly been very effective.