

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, we already have this strategy in place. Its purpose, as my colleague from finance said so well, is to upgrade our economy and to help workers, through the jobs strategy and the various programs that we offer them, to pursue their training and be competitive in a world of globalized markets.

We did not need to add to this budget because for the past three years we have had an employment strategy that was designed with employers, workers and the private sector and that meets the needs of today and tomorrow very well.

[English]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, obviously the strategy this government has implemented is not working because these people still exist.

The Statistics Canada study is supported by the Economic Council's most recent, and last annual report. That report states: "There is a group of people who are caught in regular cycles of unemployment. They may gradually become lengthier and more frequent thus forming a trap from which it is difficult to escape".

Why did this government not address this fundamental problem in the budget? When is it going to abandon its haphazard hit-or-miss approach to job training and throw a lifeline to these individuals who are trapped in the whirlpool of UI dependency?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, I remember very well the working sessions we had and the big discussions here in this House when we tried to have Bill C-21 passed unanimously. The main purpose of this bill was to break this vicious circle of unemployment and employment. That is why we implemented this reform. The hon. member will never agree that we are making progress, but we are, little by little.

[English]

CANADA POST

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post.

Every day communities are complaining about the fact that their post offices are being closed and not just post offices in the public sector. Post offices that have been in drugstores for twenty, thirty, forty years are being closed without any proper notice and without consulting the people and the communities affected.

Will the minister instruct Canada Post to set up a real process where the communities and people affected are being listened to and can participate in the decision-making process?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, in 1981 this House passed an act making Canada Post a Crown corporation. There was unanimity on both sides of the House that it was for the purposes of keeping out political interference so that we would not have these requests that ministers direct the post office to do this and that.

However, the question of the post office being responsive to its customers is an important question. I will communicate the member's concerns to the post office by way of a communication. I suggest that he might do the same thing.

We should let the post office do what we asked it to do unanimously in 1981 and that is to operate at arm's length, free from political interference.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I am not asking the minister to get involved in each and every closure.

What I would like the minister to do as a matter of public policy is to ask the post office to set up a mechanism where the public is really involved. I think that is a proper role of government. It is a proper role for the minister responsible for the post office.

I would ask him to make that request, which I am sure is shared by members of all political parties, to make sure there is a proper process for individual and community involvement in the decision-making process.