

Adjournment Debate

had been closed as a result of certain events which I am sure those who were in the House of Commons at the time will remember even more vividly than I do. The answer was no, because Iran's condition was that we would apologize for our actions at the time, which was of course unthinkable. One does not apologize for saving lives.

Mr. Speaker, the situation in Iran today is indeed of great concern to Canada. We have had reports of arrests without cause, cases of torture and arbitrary executions, and also of discrimination against this community over there.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking action on two levels. First of all, and the Hon. Member has already mentioned this, we are sponsoring a resolution before the United Nations on human rights in Iran. The fact we are sponsoring this resolution proves how seriously we are taking this matter.

Second, we are sending firm and clear messages, which have been communicated twice during the past month to the Iranian *chargé d'affaires*, to the effect that human rights should be respected.

Mr. Speaker, in the same vein, Canada is now urging Iran to abide by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of which that country is a signatory. Canada is appealing to the Iranian authorities to show compassion for the members of the Baha'i faith who are now being held in prison.

CANADA POST CORPORATION—RURAL POST OFFICES—REQUEST FOR HALT TO CLOSURES/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, on October 26, I asked the Minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation whether he would order the Corporation to stop all closures of rural post offices.

● (1810)

For about one year, we asked many questions about this and were always told that the Canada Post Corporation had a ten-year plan to close rural post offices. This plan was finally made public not too long ago. There is even a manual on how to close a rural post office which clearly indicates that Canada Post will avoid any participation in public assemblies and consultations on the eventual closing of post offices.

A committee of this House has examined the whole issue. I sat on this committee and we heard many witnesses from various parts of this country. These witnesses clearly underlined the importance of rural post offices. They are a means of communications and 80 per cent of the people who work in these post offices are women. Rural post offices are a major source of employment for women, and we all know how much money the Canadian Government spends on job programs each year. If we have permanent jobs which must be protected and which provide an essential service, why are we at the same time eliminating jobs and creating an awful fear in our rural communities?

Last week, I visited the rural constituency of Portneuf, in Quebec, where the post office is not being threatened by closure, but there was still a public meeting where people came and expressed the fear that their office would be closed one day or another. The Canada Post Corporation was not represented at the meeting. The Corporation is incredibly arrogant, which angers the population. The committee to which I referred earlier had specifically recommended that, before closing post offices, there be real consultation, and that if the local population, including the elected representatives, concludes that the post office must remain open, the Canada Post Corporation respect the will of the community.

The committee also said that, during the minimum 90-day consultation period, the Canada Post Corporation should listen to the various solutions proposed by the local population instead of saying: Your post office will be closed and here is what you will get.

We therefore have a serious national problem, Mr. Speaker. The Canada Post Corporation is following its own plan, simply informing the public without having consultations, and the Minister still lets the Corporation do as it pleases. I cannot accept this, Mr. Speaker, and this is why I wanted to say this evening that I disagree with the way the Minister is letting the Canada Post Corporation do whatever it wants. We have a Minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation and he should see to it that all Canadians have the postal service to which they are entitled.

[*English*]

I know, Mr. Speaker, your home town is Edmonton. I have here a copy of the Edmonton *Examiner*. There is an article entitled "Supermailbox angers residents". It concerns a resident who bought a house two years ago because he was sure he would have door to door mail delivery. Now, all of a sudden, he finds out he has to go to a supermailbox to pick up his mail. That man and his wife feel like second-class citizens. They pay the same taxes as everyone else. They invested their money to buy a new home, and created jobs by buying a new house. They are being penalized by this Canada Post plan.

● (1815)

The same article says there is no consultation. All of a sudden people wake up in the morning and see someone digging a hole for the supermailboxes. I have the same problem in my own riding. Everywhere there is new residential construction, we are facing what is almost a revolution. How long is the Government of Canada going to allow Canada Post to act with arrogance and install the supermailboxes anywhere it wants to, whether it is in front of a garage, a house, on private property or municipal property? This is incredible. We have to stop it, and soon, because Canadians cannot take any more.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon.