

Government Orders

cheques would like to see that too. There is a coalition of interest there.

Most of all, we need a government with a policy that ends this fixation with big business—this fixation that only big business can help us compete in the so-called brave new world. What we need is faith in grassroots Canada and the communities of Canada to control their own economic destiny, so that every community and every citizen of this country has a personal stake in its economic future.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, I was just wondering if the perfect cap to the hon. member's absolutely reasonable and, indeed, incisive remarks, might not be an observation by him as to persons to be found in the gallery.

Mr. Funk: If that is permissible, Madam Speaker, I would like to introduce my mother, Helene Funk, from Saskatchewan; my sister, Carla Sheridan, from Ottawa, and her two daughters, Jessica and Anna.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Speaker being the only person who can officially recognize people in the gallery will be happy to join and transmit greetings.

• (1300)

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, the hon. member raises a good point, but I would like to make some observations about postal shutdowns, particularly, as an example, the Halfmoon Bay postal shutdown.

It is my hope that the minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation will also comment on this shutdown. It illustrates the absolute arrogance of Canada Post, particularly in the western region. This particular small post office has been in place since 1883 and is an historical facility in the community. It is interesting that the Canada Post Corporation and the Conservative government would remove that post office without negotiation or without consultation with the owners, two small business people in Halfmoon Bay. They placed their business in jeopardy. They placed the community in jeopardy, as well as the other small businesses and the senior citizens who depend on that post office.

When Canada Post decided to close the post office it sent in a PR flack, a person of incredible arrogance. The reaction of the community to that person was astound-

ing. It is no wonder that the Conservatives are 19 per cent in the polls and dropping because of that kind of arrogance.

The western regional people have to return to the Sechelt Peninsula, to Halfmoon Bay, to discuss with the small business people who run that operation about reinstating it so that it can once again serve the community and about restoring it to its current position in the community.

The arrogance in the approach of Canada Post toward those small businesses is unacceptable. The rural post office is an important infrastructure and it has to stop the arrogant high-handed procedure where a public relations person comes in and says: "We've decided this is what is going to happen. We are going to close it, and you are going to like it".

Does the hon. member have any additional thoughts concerning the high-handed approach taken on these postal services?

Mr. Funk: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for raising that point. It allows me to expand a little more on the issue of postal service.

In my own constituency we have seen postal services disappear in the community of Henribourg, a community that had had postal service for over 50 years. We have seen a postal service cut-back in the community of Shipman.

In communities in northern Saskatchewan that are rapidly growing, for example the community of Pelican Narrows which has 1,200 to 1,500 residents, we see the postal service operating out of a little hole in the wall that has hardly any heat. There is postal service only three times a week, which makes it very difficult to carry on any kind of economic activity.

This is the case right through northern Saskatchewan. Thrice weekly postal service is what many of those communities have come to expect. There are communities that do not have money order or c.o.d. services, so it is virtually impossible to use the mail for any kind of business.

Furthermore, as a result of the way the mail is routed, mail from the eastern, central and western parts of northern Saskatchewan has to go through the south; some of it through Flin Flon and down to Winnipeg and Regina, then up through Saskatoon and Prince Albert, to get about 100 miles across country. This makes it very