

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I may move an amendment to the Standing Orders that once a member has spoken he shall put a gag on his lip physically and allow others to speak and not heckle and interrupt.

Mr. Gauthier: That goes for you too.

Mr. Andre: I don't heckle and interrupt. The hon. member knows that.

Mr. Gauthier: Never.

Mr. Andre: Now here he is, heckling and interrupting me again. And now the New Democrats. Everybody is picking on me, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would hope hon. members would not pick on the minister, please.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: I said, if the hon. member had kept his mouth closed and listened, I do not accuse the hon. member of any criminal act. That is what I said previous—

An hon. member: Now, Harvie.

Mr. Andre: Ah, come on. Once a rodent, always a rodent, eh?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will recognize the hon. member on a very short point of order, but I think that the hon. minister would probably withdraw that other remark. The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, if you will review the "blues" the statement has been made by the minister where he said that I had accused someone else of committing a criminal act. The insinuation was not that I had personally committed a criminal act, but that I had made that reference to someone else. I did not make that statement, and I do think that the minister should withdraw any statement that he made with reference to what I had said about someone else committing a criminal act.

• (1240)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We will review the "blues" and then come back if necessary to rectify whatever it is that has to be rectified.

Mr. Andre: He said that I said that he said that somebody might have done something which he says may be a criminal act. He says I should withdraw.

I would like something in return. I would like a commitment from the hon. member that if I withdraw whatever I might have said, and I did not say what he thinks I said, that he will keep his mouth shut, not interrupt me and allow me to continue with the rest of my remarks.

Mr. Boudria: No conditions.

Mr. Andre: No conditions.

Mr. Speaker, let me deal with the substance of his questions, which I thought he wanted answered.

The question of the policy in rural closures is not to fire anybody or dismiss anybody, but when natural opportunities come up, to look at retail postal outlets. Where that has happened in communities of sufficient size, or because of the nature of the business and so on, the reality is that they simply replace the postmaster, postmistress, whoever it may be. The fact is that where the change to a rural post office has been made, it is found to be very popular with the people affected.

On the question of ad mail, the hon. member is wrong to suggest that ad mail is a source of a huge amount of revenue, because that happens to be an area where there is intense competition. The Southam chain and another—I forget the owners of—are also in the business of distributing ad mail door-to-door. If he looks at the annual report, as he claims to have done, he will see that the revenues on that have been falling off, but they never did amount to anything like a significant percentage. The major source of revenues is the first class letter mailers, the billers from banks, businesses and so on. That is the major business revenue.

I again say: "If you are going to run a subsidy, if you are going to run deficits, it is tantamount to the taxpayers of Canada subsidizing those businesses." I do not think that is good economic policy. I do not think that is good social policy. That is why we insist—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have an opportunity to participate in the debate today.