

"mail", and the definition of a "letter". In fact, it will determine to a great extent whether they can remain in business, whether their operations will remain viable or they will perhaps be forced to go into bankruptcy or to cease publishing the papers. That is an important industry in our area where three or four small newspapers are faced with serious problems. The motion introduced by my colleague would be a significant factor in helping us address the situation. Even though it may not be significant in the larger sense, in terms of my riding and the smaller newspapers it is a very important facet of the motion.

● (2120)

Subclause (b) is also very significant. We do not have to look very far in any community to see that boy scouts, girl guides, church groups, community groups all depend to a large extent on their ability to deliver flyers of various types and mailings that allow them some sort of revenue for their organizations. The minister has indicated that perhaps that is not so important, but something we tend to forget when we get involved in debating a bill and considering the efficiency and the mechanics of the matter is that people are involved. When we consider the bill in its entirety, one of the matters we must address is service and how it will affect the people in all of Canada.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say I support this motion. I think it has a very significant impact on the bill and certainly will have a significant impact on the future and the public perception of the Post Office.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the motion presented by the hon. member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) let me first pay him tribute. In the time I have had the opportunity to serve with him in the House of Commons, I have found him to be a very active parliamentary and an individual who truly represents the views of his constituents with deep concern for them. I am pleased to support motion No. 1 which is one of twelve before us at report stage of Bill C-42, a bill to transfer the Post Office to a Crown corporation.

Tonight is a night of tributes, Mr. Speaker. I should like to pay tribute to the Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet) and convey to him my thanks on behalf of the residents of my constituency for allowing us to have additional mail carriers in the various growing areas of the constituency that so badly need them.

Mr. McDermid: What! Why can't I get that in my riding?

Mr. Elzinga: I should like to extend to the minister the gratitude of all those residents who have received additional mail carrier service.

We all hear horror stories about the Post Office. The hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) and the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Cooper) have given illustrations of the many difficulties individual constituents face when dealing with the

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Post Office. I hope that Bill C-42 will alleviate some of these difficulties.

Many sectors of our society rely on the Post Office in the conduct of their business. The small business sector, for instance, relies very heavily on the Post Office in order to develop cash flow. It is important that confidence in the Post Office be restored.

Although I am going to be critical of some aspects of the Post Office, I think it is important that we pay tribute to those individuals who make the Post Office what it is. I should like to pay special tribute to the regional manager in Alberta. On many occasions I have contacted him and he has been most helpful in dealing with the problems of individual constituents or the problems of district post offices. Our many mail carriers perform a very vital function, as the hon. member for Peace River pointed out. I should also like to pay tribute to the local postmasters.

Prior to making the Post Office a Crown corporation I hope the government will lift the freeze on mail carrier service. This drastically effects areas that have experienced high growth rates. In my constituency there are a good many high growth areas outside the city of Edmonton. According to Treasury Board regulations the Post Office is an essential service. Individuals who pay taxes to the Government of Canada deserve this essential service and I hope the government will see to it that taxpayers receive the mail carrier service they are paying for.

Some hon. members have indicated they think we in this party oppose this legislation. The record will show that when we formed the government and the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser) was postmaster general we introduced legislation similar to this, and today we are more than happy to endorse a bill to turn the Post Office into a Crown corporation.

If I were the head of a Canadian government and wanted by one single act to win back public confidence in Parliament and government, I would take every step necessary to restore the postal system to its former efficiency. Complaints about inefficiency in the Post Office are too numerous to be dismissed. Each of us has an obligation to represent constituents in the House of Commons and I am sure each of us has a list of examples of mismanagement in the postal service.

This is not an attack on the efficiency and dedication of smaller Post Offices and rural carriers in Canada. All of us can testify to many acts of kindness and neighbourliness performed without fanfare by numerous rural mail drivers and couriers. What bothers me is that despite increased mechanization and rates of all classes of mail, the delays are getting longer. The hon. member for Bow River gave illustrations of individuals who receive their pension cheques late and my constituency secretary has often complained that her cheque for carrying out such a vital service arrives days late.

In addition to public frustration, many business people are taking drastic action; they have stopped using the Post Office facilities, transferring their patronage to the new private couriers.