

Private Members' Business

PAIRED MEMBERS

Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Della Noce
Kaplan
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)

Charest
Jelinek
Ouellet
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the third time and passed.

Ms. Langan: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Were he allowed to be present the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca would have voted with his party.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 30(6), the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved that Bill C-241, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (national flag of Canada), be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to be here this evening and to speak about my Bill C-241 at second reading. I am sure you have read the bill. It is a very short bill but it has a lot of meaning.

This bill calls for the displaying of the Canadian flag in all Canada Post outlets. The intent is much more, as I said before, than just the bill itself.

• (1920)

[Translation]

During the last few years the services offered by Canada Post have changed drastically. With its policy aimed at closing rural post offices, Canada Post is abolishing the only federal presence in those communities. This bill wants to re-establish those symbols in the communities.

[English]

Our national flag is an important symbol of our nation. It is a symbol that allows all Canadians from coast to coast to identify together as Canadians. Canada is a vast land of diversity, embracing vast differences within its borders and among its people.

Traditionally the flag has provided connections across the great expanses of space and time and has been a source of unity and pride.

[Translation]

Canadians are proud of their symbols. They reflect the history of our nation, its people, its environment and its cultures. Here, as in many other cities throughout the country, there are numerous symbols such as museums and other historical sites which remind citizens of their national identity. However, in rural communities such symbols are rare. Oftentimes the post office is the only one.

[English]

For someone living in an urban centre such as Ottawa, Montreal or Vancouver, it might seem strange to refer to a post office as a national symbol. However in rural communities this would often be the only federal presence in the community. For these communities these post offices were a source of pride, a sign that the federal government acknowledged the existence and the importance of their community.

I would like to quote from a letter I received from one of my constituents in which that person discusses the importance of the post office in their community.

[Translation]

Let me quote that letter: "We were born in Pointe-Verte and we saw, at least partly, the history of our post office in the making. We remember more particularly that small wooden building near the school. In those days, people were talking about the possibility of building a post office. When it finally happened, the population in our community was very, very proud since, for us, it was normal to have a post office".

This shows how much people consider their rural post offices as symbols. Now the government wants to take away those symbols. Even though Canada Post received numerous letters asking that these post offices be maintained it still continues to implement its disastrous policy. As I mentioned earlier, more than 3,000 rural