

CANADA POST

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, last week Canada Post officials met with the residents of Westfield and Fundy Royal to announce changes to their postal service. The meeting was well attended by the residents of the community and they clearly expressed their extreme and deep concern about the continuing closures of post offices in rural communities across the country.

On behalf of my constituents, I will be forwarding to the minister responsible for Canada Post and the Prime Minister petitions containing the names of over 800 persons who are opposed to this closure. I trust their views will be given the utmost consideration.

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BROADCASTING

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, in 1988 as part of the broadcasting policy the government funded satellite transponders which improved the distribution of native broadcasting in the north and other parts of Canada. We have invested in a technical capacity to broadcast.

In today's budget we are faced with cut-backs in native broadcasting. Two programs are affected: First, the native communications program, which has to do with newspapers and some Trail radio and, second, the northern native broadcasting access program, which is TV and radio. These programs funded by the Secretary of State have been critical to the development of native media which can reflect native values, reinforce a positive native identity and, in particular, protect and enhance native languages.

During the UN decade of literacy, illiteracy among aboriginal people runs at an incredibly high rate. Native media are trying to do something about that. We are speaking about 11 aboriginal newspapers reaching one in four native households and 5,300 hours of radio and 750 hours of television programming and it is going to be cut back.

We in the NDP feel native people need the ability to broadcast in their own language. Here is another cut in the very fabric of Canada. There is more to Canada than the business agenda. These cuts are going to affect the

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native people and once again we are losing the glue that holds this country together.

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VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. J.W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, on this important budget day, I wish to pay tribute to all of the voluntary private sector organizations that contribute so significantly to the national debates about public economic affairs in Canada.

As we all know, the practice of democracy cannot and should not be confined to government in isolation from the real world. The process of consultation is especially important in terms of the financial integrity of our country.

In particular, at the considered risk of omitting others, I would like to single out those hundreds of economic groups to be found in virtually every Canadian municipality generally identified as chambers of commerce or boards of trade. They constitute an inherent and important component in the structure of our society, providing a format for public expression and debate which is ordinarily as objective and constructive as any to be found.

It is in that context that the Fredericton—Oromocto Chambers of Commerce have joined forces to sponsor a public information meeting tomorrow about the 1990 budget at which I shall be a participant.

This event, which I feel sure is being paralleled in many other Canadian communities, is but one demonstration of the continuing role of these organizations in providing relevant and timely public service in vital national issues.

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FUR INDUSTRY

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, representatives of the Canadian fur industry have repeatedly drawn the attention of the government to problems they are currently facing.

I congratulate the Secretary of State for External Affairs for last week bringing in clothing with fur on it for our foreign visitors. It is more of that action that we need from the government.