

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with a great deal of interest to the discussion that has taken place here this afternoon and I want to take this opportunity first to thank our colleague from Restigouche—Chaleur for having brought forward the whole question of national symbols and national identity, the Canadian flag and the whole sense of Canadian persona.

I want to say to anyone who is interested in this issue that the remarks of my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell were very revealing and the warmth, dimension and depth of feeling that was expressed by my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood—as well as from my colleagues from across the floor and on both sides of this House—were very meaningful.

I find it absolutely abhorrent in today's country that, after we have gone through the Spicer commission and all the agony and sometimes ecstasy of the constitutional discussions when Canadians have said that they love Canada: "I love Canada; let us show the flag". We can have differences of opinion as to what that flag means in terms of the Constitution of the country, but we have no difference of opinion with respect to our pride of belonging, our pride of heritage.

The concern that I want to express—I ask everyone to read the other speeches that were brought to our attention because they were worth while—is that if there is one thing that we need it is the tie that binds. The tie that binds has been cut and cut by this government.

Look at the post offices in many places in the small, rural sectors; the railroad lines; the privatization of Air Canada; the cutting of the air routes; the CBC in small parts of this country and the cutting of our cultural programs throughout this country that develop the sense of who we are as a people. There is no sense of pride in the way this government has picked its priorities.

One of the simplest ways to establish one's priority and to establish who one is across the nation is to put a flag

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up. It is at the back of the store, the front of the store and behind the teller. Whoever is serving us in that post office is the link. That is the Canadian voice that is going out or coming in as the case may be.

I really have a strong sense that our patriotism is being diminished by this government's lack of foresight. So we have 19,000 locations, so we have 3,600 corporate offices and sites. The member for Cambridge stood up and talked about the fact that we should not interfere with individual rights because they took a franchise. With a franchise people buy logos, responsibilities, and obligations. The obligation in this case should be to fly the Canadian flag. If the space is too small then put on a Canadian sticker. They do not get it for nothing. They have an obligation to use the rights and privileges to distribute the mail for Canadians across this land.

Canada was founded on a number of principles. One principle was the ties that bind with respect to defending our own borders, common sense and courtesy, and delivering the mail.

With you people it does not matter who delivers the mail as long as they have the right to negotiate, as long as they have the right to forget that they are Canadians and they have an obligation to demonstrate that to people across this country and in Quebec, as my colleague said, and anywhere else across this land.

I would like to support this particular motion and thank the hon. member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

It being eight o'clock p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 8 p.m.