

*Government Orders*

They want to go home for the Christmas holidays. Their minds are on Christmas and they are reflecting on the past year and not necessarily on whether they should be meeting to address the concerns of a few thousand people in the north. Those few thousand people in the north are going to feel the effects of that 32 per cent rate increase on January 31. Yet the people at Canada Post or the minister responsible for Canada Post do not seem to care very much about what will happen when that rate increase goes into effect.

We know what is going to happen. People are going to feel that they can do without that extra cucumber or orange or milk and use substitutes instead. Here it is taken for granted that you can go to any grocery store and buy any one of those things I just mentioned to feed your family so that you have good nutrition. People in the north do not have the luxury of being able to jump in the car and drive to the nearest supermarket to buy oranges, apples, celery or all those other good nutritional foods that accompany what your main meal might be. I must admit that we do have some good food up north in terms of caribou, seal, whale, walrus, whatever. However, we now know that we need that produce to make sure our kids stay healthy.

• (1910)

On January 31, we are going to feel the effects of this 32 per cent rate increase. If there was a 32 per cent rate increase down here there would be chaos in members' ridings. Everybody would be screaming bloody murder from all areas across Canada. I talk about screaming bloody murder because people would not accept a 32 per cent rate increase down here. They would never allow it, never mind a 10 per cent or a 5 per cent rate increase on postal services on which the lifeline of the north depends.

The *Ottawa Citizen* on Wednesday said: "Northerners Lifeline Goes on Block". It is very true. It is the lifeline that is going on the block. What will happen is that people will go without.

Just by way of example of this happening, earlier in the year there was a report that mothers from Broughton Island had some PCBs in their milk. One mother decided that she should not be feeding her baby on her milk. Because she could not afford the milk that was in

the store, she bought Coffeemate. How much nutritional value does Coffeemate have? That is what will happen to the people up north with this increase of 32 per cent added on to the 9 per cent goods and services tax. Added on to that is the fact that unemployment insurance benefits are now going to decrease by three weeks from 42 weeks to 39 weeks for those who work 10 weeks or less, and for those who work 18 weeks or less from 50 weeks to 47 weeks.

With all that, we are not going to be able to afford to buy any store bought goods. We can hardly afford to buy them now. Earlier in the summer we heard on national radio that one of the members from our party went into a store in the Iquluit, looked at a turkey, and could not believe that that turkey cost \$70. Here you can go into any store and buy the same turkey for about \$25. No wonder we do not really have Thanksgiving. To give thanks for Thanksgiving you have to spend so many dollars just for the turkey, without the trimmings. It is always an honour for me to address the House and try to teach the members a little bit more about the north. I hope that before the end of this Parliament a lot of members will be more knowledgeable about the north.

• (1915)

In the Throne Speech earlier this year in April the north was mentioned quite prominently. At that time my remark was, "Great, we were mentioned quite prominently". I figured that we were sort of being handled with a velvet glove before the hammer came down. It seems that this has been the case today.

In conclusion, I would just like to take this opportunity to say that there has to be some recognition that the north is a very unique area where special concerns have to be addressed in terms of the economy, how the people live and where the cost of living is two to three times higher than here.

**Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East):** Mr. Speaker, I rise, not entirely unmindful of the consternation this may cause in the breasts of some members, to participate briefly in the debate tonight. In the form of something of a protest. I understand the question before the House at the moment is and seconded by members of the Liberal Party. It takes the form of a six-month hoist.