

Private Members' Business

I think it is essential, and I am sure that the great majority of our fellow citizens agree, that we can obtain postal services right where we shop. Franchises are an additional asset. They help lower the cost of operating the postal service, which results in moderate rates and good service for all Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have the opportunity to rise and support my colleague from Restigouche—Chaleur and his private members' bill, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, which would ensure that the national flag of Canada is displayed in the manner prescribed by the regulations inside each post office and on every building in which a post office is located and of which the Government of Canada is the owner or the main tenant.

I cannot believe what I have been hearing from the government in the last 20 minutes. National programs and national symbols are how we create national will in this country. It is from national will, national symbols and the symbol of our flag that we develop a sense of patriotism in this country.

Over the last nine years Canadians have experienced national institutions and national programs being dismantled year after year after year.

Now we have a situation where the post office is no longer flying the Canadian flag. This is wrong. The federal presence has always been integral to holding this country together. There are regions in this country where the post office is the only federal presence. Just think, by comparison, of what happens in the United States. One could not find a United States government building or truck without the American flag on it.

I cannot understand when the member from Cambridge talks about franchises, that he wants to give them their own independence. When one gives a franchise one sets standards. One of the standards should be the federal presence. In the province of Quebec there is not going to be any mad rush to display the Canadian flag. Oh yes, there are thousands of buildings in the province of Quebec that are owned by the Government of Canada and the federal flag is not flying. Now, under the name of privatization and franchises, the government is saying: Oh, we will not tell them what to do. That should be a

condition of the franchise, that the Canadian flag is flying.

• (1955)

I think this government is taking the idea of federal presence too lightly. I know that when I first came to this town in 1980 it was during that period that we developed the Canada word mark, which is the word Canada with the flag over the letter a.

I remember one time we were working with Spar Aerospace and there was a group that did not want to put the Canada word mark on the Spar Aerospace space arm because it was a private sector company. We said that there is \$130 million worth of taxpayers' money that went into that space arm and so we insisted that the Canada word mark go on the space arm.

When that space arm opened in outer space for the first time and everyone in the world saw that space arm and we could all see the Canada word mark there was a great sense of pride in the technology and the people that put that technology together. It was a great symbol of our contribution to the space project.

As far as I am concerned that Canadian flag should be on every federal building, prison and post office. Every piece of Government of Canada property should always display the Canadian flag because it works at galvanizing the will of this nation, and when the will of this nation is galvanized the economy flourishes because it affects the spirit and everything else.

More than ever this country needs to be galvanized because for the last nine years we have been dismantling national institutions and programs to the point where Canadians have lost their identity to a great extent.

I stand proudly behind my colleague today from Restigouche—Chaleur in insisting on this. We have an act here which enshrines the Canadian flag at every post office in this nation. Whether it is a government-operated post office, a Crown-operated post office or a franchise it should be part of the package.