

Government Orders

\$100,000 to \$150,000, while the inflation increased by over 50 per cent since 1980?

How could we believe a Minister of Finance who claims to "follow a consistent and comprehensive program which should make it possible for Canadians to benefit from a standard of living and a quality of life unprecedented in the world"?

[*English*]

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, in terms of small business there is a general comment that I would like to make about the lack of support of the government.

First, is the closure of post offices and the effect that has had both on the communities generally and small businesses particularly. The Halfmoon Bay post office would be a prime example to illustrate this. Halfmoon Bay is a small community with a small post office that has served that community. A large number of the people are senior citizens and there are some small businesses. The post office is one of the key communication systems for those businesses in carrying on their activities. The post office with a very high-handed approach has without consultation shut that post office down and, in the opinion of many people there, harmed those businesses and the people who live there showing no concern for them. The argument that they have privatized postal services into small businesses has, in fact, harmed the community and in many cases caused a great deal of difficulty for the small businesses involved.

That post office at Halfmoon Bay has been there since 1883. It is an integral part of the community and serves small businesses there. It was an arrogant process by which the postal corporation shut it down, with the approval of the government. It refused to negotiate with the community on the provision of those services. One business benefits, but many, many others are harmed.

• (1240)

I wonder if the government is taking into consideration, not only the budgetary items mentioned by the hon. member, but its attitude in harming the infrastructure by these postal closures. This process of privatization—cutbacks in services, higher cost services as

illustrated by the shutdown in Halfmoon Bay—is causing a serious deterioration in the community, and has a very negative impact on the majority of small businesses.

Does the hon. member have a comment on postal shutdowns and other services that the government has cut back that have caused some serious harm to small businesses?

Mrs. Maheu: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I think I would go a little further than the shutting down of small local post offices. Let us talk about the mail superboxes. They have caused great problems for Canadians.

I guess the simplest answer is that I do not have too much to say except that the government just does not care about people. It never has.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in this House to comment on the bill before us which involves amendments to the Small Businesses Loans Act and extends that act for another three years. As well, it gives me pleasure to be able to comment on the state of small business in the country, particularly in my province and community.

I think all of us recognize the very vital role that small businesses play in all our communities, be they rural communities, urban communities, neighbourhoods, small towns or whatever, even northern communities.

When we examine what we do with regard to small business it bears thinking that between 1980 and 1988 fully 70 per cent of the new jobs in Canada were created by businesses that employ five people or less. This means that rather than big business which the government tends to promote as being the instrument of growth in this country, it is the small business sector that keeps creating the jobs.

Small businesses are the mainstays of the communities in which they operate. Sure big corporations from time to time sponsor national events, get their names on billboards and so on, but when it comes to the week-by-week, day-by-day sponsorship of hockey teams, provision of prizes for different kinds of raffles that keep the service clubs operating in all these communities, it is the