

● (1720)

To add insult to injury, the province of Saskatchewan will take freedom away from people who love freedom, from people who came to this country as individuals to make their mark, to better themselves, and make a better life for their families. The Saskatchewan government has set up a committee to study the size of farms, and to limit individual ownership in the province. This is intervention in private life. I know that hon. members opposite are not concerned about government intervention because in the throne speech I noticed the creation of four more Crown corporations.

Mr. Broadbent: In Alberta?

Mr. McKnight: Four more Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, and then they make the statement that the people do not want less government but that they want more efficient government. If the record continues as it has in the past, it will not be more efficient, it will be more expensive government.

I hear a member of the New Democratic Party asking what about Alberta? Well, what about Alberta? We in Saskatchewan know the meaning of government bureaucracy because we have the highest percentage of government employees for our population, west of Ontario. In Ontario it is .99 per cent; in Manitoba, 1.13 per cent; in British Columbia, 1.42 per cent; in Alberta, 2.41 per cent, while Saskatchewan has 2.79 per cent of the population employed by the government.

An hon. Member: They are a bunch of socialists.

Mr. McKnight: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think they are a bunch of socialists!

It was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne that the Post Office was to be made a Crown Corporation. Apparently that is a brand new idea. As I recall, a member of our party was commissioned to do a study of the Post Office. He recommended that it be made a Crown corporation and, Mr. Speaker, if we had continued in office we would have moved in that direction.

I should like to refer to the present situation in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I know the Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet) would not understand the postal service in Saskatchewan. I am sure he understands it in Papineau and Montreal, but he does not understand it in rural Saskatchewan. The condition of the post office buildings and the working conditions of the post office employees are abysmal—

An hon. Member: Pathetic.

Mr. McKnight: Somebody said pathetic, so maybe I could use both words. I suggest to the Postmaster General that he should look at some of these post offices and try to find a washroom, a bright interior—try to find anything in a post office in rural Saskatchewan in my riding of Kindersley-Lloydminster that would make it a pleasant experience to work there, or that would make employees happy and comfortable in their jobs.

The Address—Mr. McKnight

That is not the worst of it, however. Now they want to close up on Saturdays and at noon hour. People in rural Saskatchewan drive 20 miles and further to pick up their mail. When you drive 20 miles to pick up your mail you would like to do something else as well. The social and economic problems that will be created by post offices in rural Saskatchewan closing on Saturdays will be the death of some small communities. I know the Postmaster General is concerned with the quality of life in the new suburbs and the cities, and that he is concerned with daily door to door delivery. But when we in Saskatchewan and rural Canada pay 17 cents to mail a letter or a postcard, we at least deserve an open building when we go there to get our mail. I should like the minister to visit these post offices; indeed, he should spend a day in one.

I have an example of the patient waiting of people in Saskatchewan. In a letter to me dated April 8, 1980, the town of Landis informed me that the federal government has been considering upgrading the postal facilities at Landis since 1964. The people of the community forwarded a petition in 1978 requesting improvements, and to date they have not received an adequate response saying when they may expect some action. They are patient; they are in no hurry; it is only 12 years since they asked, and another 12 years later on they will have the same old rundown post office building, and I am sure they will petition again.

Is it any wonder that there is a feeling of alienation in western Canada? Is it any wonder, considering the callous disregard for regional aspirations in all parts of the country apparent in the Speech from the Throne, that the people of Canada are dissatisfied to the point of wanting to withdraw—to break up Canada? In my part of Canada we have concern. So that hon. members opposite and this government may understand that it is not just one region of Canada that is concerned, I should like to read from the *Montreal Gazette* of April 15, as follows:

In the western provinces, he said, 32 per cent of the population favour the status quo, compared with 33 per cent in Quebec; 58 per cent of westerners favour change in the form of renewed federalism or independence compared with 59 per cent in Quebec; and 10 per cent of westerners favour joining the U.S. compared with eight per cent of Quebecers.

These are the figures of the Canada West Foundation given by Stanley Roberts, the former leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired. He may continue with unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: Tell us about Dick Collver.

Mr. McKnight: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I should like to indicate my appreciation to my colleagues. My remarks will be brief. I shall try to explain my point of view and my feelings toward our country.