

Supply

want to ask him to share the experience of his constituents in that regard with all of us.

Mr. Simmons: Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

There are two Canadas out there: the American Express gold card Canada and the Canada that buys its money orders at the post office.

That first Canada as represented by the cabinet over there—I am sure they all have gold cards—will not be found in François, in Belleoram, in Point May, in North Harbour, in Cape St. George, in Grand-Le-Pierre, communities in my riding. Not many of them have a gold card. But until recently, they had the option of walking down the gravel road, along the shore to the post office to get their gold cards or their postal money orders to send money to Nellie who has gone to Alberta to get a job, to send money to Joe who is off in Dalhousie doing his degree, to send money to Mary who is taking a cooking course in St. John's, to make the car payment, or to make the payment on the motor for the boat.

• (1100)

They could do all those things, until members of the gold card clique connived their latest strategy. Take away from Nellie's mother and Joe's father in that community their gold cards and their postal money orders. Shut down the post office. If they want their mail, they can go down with a key in one hand and a blowtorch in the other and if they can get the mail box open in the dead of winter and the mail is not too soggy, they can retrieve it. But they must close the door fast because the snow might get in and tomorrow's mail will be wet.

Or, they may want money orders. They go over to the window in the dead of winter and blow on the glass making a hole in the frost so they can peep out. They have to watch for the car coming down the road from the community 40 miles away because the lady in that car is going to sell them the money order, if they have the right change and if they do not miss her when she goes by.

An hon. member: Great system.

Mr. Simmons: What a system. The gold carders of this country are unnecessarily pulverizing the money order people, and why? The champions of national unity are

pulverizing national unity by removing from those little communities the very symbols of national unity which keep this country together.

I ask them to get out of their drunken stupor. If they want to do something for national unity, they should just go back to basics and give those people in those communities some service. They have as much right to it as those living in Toronto or Montreal or those with a gold card.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to follow the hon. member for Burin—St. George's. I particularly enjoyed his comments about postal service.

I did not enjoy them in the sense that I regret the conditions he was describing. I think he would want to agree with me and certainly other of his colleagues would want to agree with me that it is not just rural Canada that has had its post office service curtailed. The national symbol that the post office represents has been removed from other communities as well.

I have recently been involved in struggles with Canada Post over the closing of the traditional post offices in my riding, in Elmwood for instance which is part of my riding, and also the removal of services that existed in private outlets in longstanding businesses, for example, drugstores. Those services have been put in the 7-Elevens and other chains. It is not just in rural Canada that this is happening.

The member makes a good point and one which I have made before. That is, the government wants to talk about Canadian unity and holding Canada together. It is not a coincidence that we are having this problem when we have just come through a period of eight years where almost every national institution that we have as perceived by the people, not necessarily by the Conservatives, has been under attack.

Those include the privatization of Petro-Canada and Air Canada, the cutbacks to passenger rail service and VIA Rail, the downsizing of the CBC, the elimination of rural post offices and the reorganization of postal services in cities and suburbs. I am sure I could think of a few more things, but that is not what I got up on my feet to talk about.