

in the House at this time, could the House just suspend its sitting so that Members who are on the list can proceed?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The first two members, namely, the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) and the Hon. Member for Don Valley East (Mr. Attewell), are here and I am sure the Hon. Member for Laurier (Mr. Berger) will get here.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Are the Parliamentary Secretaries here?

**Mr. Kilgour:** I will check that, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to use this opportunity, since we do have a moment or two, to comment on what has just transpired in the House. This is Private Members' Hour when members of all political Parties have an opportunity to present Bills or motions before the House for due consideration. I think that we have seen an excellent example of the co-operation that individual members can provide for one another. The motion today was moved by a member from one Party and seconded by a member from another and much of the leadership came from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Kilgour) who indicated his strong support.

The spirit of parliamentary reform particularly, but also the good will of individual members and the willingness to set aside differences at times to work together have been demonstrated conclusively this afternoon, and I think this ought to be commented on.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 66 deemed to have been moved.

CANADA POST CORPORATION—RURAL MAIL SERVICE—WEEKLY  
NEWSPAPER POSTAL RATES

**Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River):** Mr. Speaker, on December 9 last I asked the Minister responsible for Canada Post the following question:

Has the section of the corporate plan dealing with the disruption of rural mail service and the section dealing with an increase in the rate of delivery of weekly newspapers been killed? Or have they just been given a sleeping pill so that they will later on be able to raise their ugly and cruel heads again?

The Hon. Minister of Regional, Industrial Expansion (Mr. Côté) replied:

I think this matter has indeed been a concern of the Government. Canada Post submitted a plan. Once again it was referred to a committee for study. This

### Adjournment Debate

Committee studied the matter very extensively. We are waiting for its recommendations, and will respond once we are apprised of them.

• (1750)

My question dealt with two items. First was the matter of rural mail service. The rural people of Canada have never been treated fairly by the Post Office, not when it was a government Department and not since it became a Crown corporation. Rural people pay the most and get the least service. For instance, mail delivery to city homes costs the city home owner nothing. On the other hand, thousands of residents in some cities, towns, villages and hamlets must walk, drive their car, or take a taxi to the nearest post office. Similarly, thousands of farmers and rural residents who do not live on a rural mail route must drive at their own expense to the nearest post office. In both cases they must stand in line at the general delivery wicket or pay for a box. In other words, those who pay the most get the least service.

The corporate plan, if carried out, is even worse as many small post offices will be closed, making it necessary for rural people to drive further and further for postal service. Many of those people are senior citizens. Some are handicapped and unable to drive and will consequently have to depend on others to bring their mail to them. Furthermore, it appears that Canada Post is now planning to close a post office in a town or village x-miles from another post office in another town or village. That is simply not acceptable. When a town or village is incorporated it has its own town council, business facilities and, up until now, its own post office. It is not satisfactory to close one and send these people x-miles into the next town or village.

I understand that in committee the president of Canada Post rationalized the loss of postal services in rural communities by saying that residents in rural centres would be given 90 days notice. Big deal! They do not want notice, they want to keep their post office. I understand that rural routes will continue, but that does not help those who have already been closed. The early ones that were closed should be reopened so that all rural people will be treated fairly.

Canada Post is also trying to reduce its deficit by firing rural people when our rural post offices are already the least staffed. I believe the heads of Canada Post, who are forever trying to or are in fact closing rural post offices, have no idea of the many functions of the staff in our rural post offices. If they think a super mailbox can take the place of a local postmaster or his or her assistant, they are miles away from reality. A super mailbox cannot answer questions or advise the people about rates, schedules or the hundreds of other queries which have to be answered. I am telling Canada Post, deficit or no deficit, that rural Canada wants its post offices and staff retained.

The deficit does not exist because of the operation of rural post offices. It is there because of costs incurred in our large cities and in the size of salaries of top officials whose wages are completely out of proportion to their productivity. Their effort