

hardships, are struggling to retain their post offices, banks, rail lines and bus services.

We must remember that when our rural communities fail, these people end up in cities, many of them in homeless, pathetic situations. All statistics indicate that in the long run it is less expensive to live in rural communities. What this government needs to offer is a certain minimum level of service to ensure the survival of rural Canada.

• (1610)

For rural Canadians the community post office is probably the only federal presence in their lives. If you remove their local post office, as Canada Post has done in over 1,400 small communities, including seven in my riding, you virtually say to them: "You do not matter".

I was struck by the Governor General's remarks last week that public trust in the institution of government is essential to the attainment of the government's agenda for Canada. I am pleased that my government is committed to maintaining rural postal service as I have fought to save the Truro post office and restore dignity to rural Canada.

My constituents in Cumberland—Colchester are very sensitive to anything that threatens their standards and values. Until very recently they lived in communities where doors could be left unlocked and where vandalism, theft, murder, assault and robbery were very rare. Unfortunately that is no longer true.

Their concern about crime centres on the Young Offenders Act. Many believe that the Young Offenders Act is not working, that it does not deter nor does it reform young criminals. Above all else, they believe the Young Offenders Act must be changed to give the victims real justice.

In 1989 the family and friends of Andrea Rogers founded the Truro branch of Citizens United for Safety and Justice. Their main objective is to ensure that the safety of children and all innocent citizens of Canada takes precedence over the rights of criminals.

A hit and run driver in North Vancouver killed Andrea Rogers. Subsequently caught and convicted the driver, a young offender, received a suspended sentence of 100 hours of community service, one year's probation and lost his drivers licence for two years.

I would like to thank the parents of Andrea Rogers, Citizens United for Safety and Justice and the Truro branch of the Canadian Federation of University Women for their recommended changes to the Young Offenders Act. I wish to assure them that I have presented their recommendations to the justice minister and will defend them vigorously in this House.

The Address

I want us to meet our campaign commitment to bring meaningful gun control to Canada. We must closely consult with the provinces and respected shooting sporting groups so that we can disarm the criminal and the irresponsible without undue hardship on responsible, law-abiding gun owners.

I therefore welcome the government's stated intent to restore the Law Reform Commission. I trust it will also have the promised mandate to consult widely with the public on sentencing, parole and other criminal justice issues.

We Atlantic Canadians are perceived to have a deep-seated economic problems despite the fact that we have thousands of successful small businesses as well as some outstanding corporate successes such as the Sobeys, McCains and Irvings. Our problem is not a lack of enterprise, it is the lack of a sufficient capital pool.

Ironically, Atlantic Canadians do generate considerable capital through their savings, pension contributions and investments. Unfortunately this capital flows into funds that leave the region. That is why I welcome the government's pledge to work with our national financial institutions to improve access to capital for small business and long term job creation.

I applaud the throne speech proposal to foster technology partnerships between our universities, research institutions and the private sector. In my riding the Nova Scotia Agricultural College has been doing this for some time. Not only has this college provided expertise to Atlantic Canada farmers and food processors, but to developing countries and the eastern European nations as well.

The Nova Scotia Agricultural College bachelor of science degree in agriculture is widely respected and now the college proposes a new bachelor of science degree in aquaculture. I applaud the staff for the foresight in recognizing that as the marine fishery continues its decline, there is a considerable opportunity for Atlantic Canada to get its share of the world's aquaculture production, which by the year 2000 is expected to provide 25 per cent of the total fish harvest. I also salute the staff for their vision in planning new educational opportunities for our young people in a growing field with potential for real jobs. The aquaculture project is very much in the spirit of our government's commitment to promoting training and new technologies that I would like to publicly support it and ask my colleagues to do the same.

• (1615)

Cumberland—Colchester farmers accept with good grace the fact that the new GATT rules mean they will have to eventually alter the marketing structures under which they now operate. The north shore lobstermen know they must increase the carapace size of their catch to maintain a sustainable lobster fishery. Woodlot owners know that they cannot realistically hope to have