

Supply

The Government has said that those living in new suburban developments will not get door-to-door delivery and will have to have a box. Canadians who live in those areas obviously feel slighted, that they are being treated unfairly, because just down the street others are getting their mail delivered to their doors. In fact, there are suburban communities in which those living on part of a street have to go to the box and those living on another part of the street get door-to-door delivery. That is where that resentment and feeling of unfairness comes from.

What is unfair about the Government's policy is that it is not only reducing service in the urban areas but it is also reducing service in the rural areas. I know from my visits to rural communities that the post office is seen as being an essential element of a rural community. If the post office is pulled out, one of the essential services of a rural community is pulled out. I find it unfair that the Government is closing rural post offices and is shutting down rural routes, home delivery in the rural areas.

The Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) is a government Member. If he feels that paying \$10 for a box is unfair, why does he not get the Government to change it? If he thinks, as he has suggested to me, that urban residents should pay \$10 for home delivery, why does he not get the Government to do that? He is the Member who is in Government. He is the Member who has the power and the responsibility. I would ask him to ask the Government why it continues the policy of reduction in rural services. Why does he tolerate that?

Mr. O'Neil: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious from today's debate that many members of the Opposition are not aware that in small-town Canada and rural Canada, for decades many people have walked a mile or so to the community post office. Door-to-door delivery in those areas was never contemplated.

I would like to follow up on the question put by the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) which was not answered by the critic for the New Democrats. How can the Hon. Member justify the preferential treatment given to urban dwellers? Perhaps he can respond by saying that in Mulgrave and Port Hawkesbury, which are in my riding, door-to-door delivery should be introduced. However, my constituents are far more realistic than that. They expect responsible Government and fiscal management.

• (1250)

If I went to my home village of 1,000 or 1,500 people and said we are going to have two or three postmen delivering mail every day to their door I do not think they would be very impressed with our fiscal responsibility. They are well aware of the financial position of the country—not of the Government but of the country. They are well aware of the debt load that not only they but their children carry. They are well aware that the greater the financial burden on all Canadians, the greater the risk to important social programs. They are well aware that the greater the resources freed up for social

programs, the greater the security for their long-term social well-being.

I have to say to the NDP critic that his Party cannot have it both ways. They either want to put in place a sound financial structure for the people of this country to ensure the long-term future of important social programs, or they do not. It seems to me that what I continually hear from the NDP is nothing more than the case being put forward on behalf of the big unions. I can tell him that no union dues are checked off at the pay office and directed towards my campaign.

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I am a little surprised at the last comment of the Hon. Member. He says no unions give money to his campaign.

Mr. O'Neil: Union dues.

Mr. Keeper: I wish the Hon. Member had balanced that by indicating what the banks gave to his Party's campaign. The major banks gave \$50,000 to the Conservative campaign. If the Hon. Member wants the debate to consist of those kinds of insults, we can do that. However, I think this is a time to deal seriously with the question of postal service.

The Hon. Member talked about a strong financial structure for the country. I agree with that. I agree that there should be an end to waste in the spending of public money. It should start with the tax system. Why has the Government insisted that anyone who makes capital gain of \$500,000 can do so without paying any taxes? That is an unfair use of public money. Why do we have \$30 billion or \$40 billion a year in tax write-offs? The Auditor General has asked if this money is being used effectively. Those are serious questions concerning whether we have a sound financial system and whether we can provide the services we need, including postal service.

The Hon. Member talked about preferential treatment for urban dwellers. I wish he would get up in this House and fight for adequate service for rural residents rather than seeking to divide and rule and sow the sentiment that somehow urban dwellers are getting special service—

Mr. O'Neil: It is true.

Mr. Keeper: —and therefore it is all right for his Government to continue to cut back on rural service, savage his rural community, and undermine the existence of rural Canada. If he wants to address a postal service issue, that is the issue he should address.

As everyone knows, Britain is a country governed by a right-wing free enterprise Conservative Prime Minister, yet that country has postal service twice a day. It is taking on thousands of new workers in the Post Office in order to deliver the mail. It is possible to have a sound financial structure and even a Conservative philosophy and still give good mail service. Why does the Member not take up that challenge and fight for rural postal service rather than trying to create negative attitudes towards urban dwellers?