

of the reasons this lack of confidence is there is that the banking institutions of this country are not really providing the necessary service to the small and medium sized businesses.

There are many reasons, but I would like to ask my colleague, who is an experienced member in this House, what steps does he think we should take in order to ignite the confidence in this country again? When that confidence is ignited it will lead to people taking risks again. That will ultimately lead to people creating more jobs. Could the member explain to the House some of things we should be doing to try to get this economy going again?

Mr. Simmons: Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Broadview—Greenwood. He is right. He puts his finger right on the nub of the issue. The issue is one of confidence. People are despairing, even people who hold jobs are talking a much less optimistic line than one would expect. It can be demoralizing when travelling around this country.

The first challenge is one of inspiration. It is a challenge to send out to the people of Canada the message that there is some reason to hope. We do live in a great country. It is not the country that is at fault; it is the government. It is the government that has brought us to a point in time where all people can do is despair. Take the example I was on as my time ran out, of fishermen who through no fault of their own find themselves in very desperate straits. They cannot even get the time of day from the people in the administration they look to. We have a regional minister, a minister from Newfoundland, in the cabinet. He hardly gives them the time of day on this particular issue.

My friend the parliamentary secretary to the minister of fisheries takes exception. I understand he was unavoidably detained a moment ago when I was speaking but I invite him to read the transcript of what I said in the last five minutes. I am talking about a very particular incident.

I said that in general I have great admiration for his minister. But I said on the issue of the southwest coast he has turned his back on them. He has been given opportunities. He is making wild statements to people, including the press that he did not know they had a problem. I have been badgering him in this Chamber for a year, telling him about the problem. He has turned his

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back. I use this as an example of why there is a crisis of confidence.

What can be expected when all sectors of society are being pulverized. The fishermen, the plant workers on the southwest coast of Newfoundland, the industrial worker in southern Ontario, and the small businesses in border towns between the United States and Canada are lacking the signal that this government cares.

We are asked what needs to be done. The first thing that needs to be done is to restore some confidence, to re-establish a linkage with the people who put the government there in the first place.

There is the crux of the problem. If a government is only supported by 15 per cent or 17 per cent of the people, how can it reflect the wishes and aspirations of those people? I suppose without being too simplistic, I say the answer to the question of my friend from Broadview—Greenwood is to call an election.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I listened very attentively to the comments from my colleague and I want to congratulate him. I am sure that the electors of Burin—St. George's will be very proud of the profound statement he made today on behalf of his constituents who are suffering through these very difficult economic times.

Both he and I represent rural ridings. I have not yet had the opportunity to visit his riding, although I thank him for the invitation he has extended. I hope to take him up on it very shortly.

I can imagine just how difficult it must be.

In many communities in rural Canada some of the few federal government jobs that exist are with the post office. It pains me to see in so many communities in rural Canada that we have lost that institution, that the flag of Canada, which was in many instances the only flag in the community, has been removed and replaced with a pigeon wing, that the word Canada has been taken off the Canada Post mail box and replaced with the profound words "mail—poste".

I want to ask my colleague if his riding has been affected as mine has with such closures. How do his constituents feel about the loss of this national institution? I think only rural members can understand how profound it is in rural communities to see the loss of sometimes the only federal government building, the only federal presence in rural Canada that we have. I