Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. In fact, I have not heard an outcry from the public, the workers, or even the management of Canada Post pounding on my door saying: "Please support the legislation. It is a good piece of legislation and we want to proceed."

● (1500)

I want to take this opportunity to say no. It has been on the mind of the government from the very early days to privatize not only Canada Post but also VIA Rail, CBC, Air Canada and Petro–Canada. It is part of the over–all mandate. What we have seen lately with the closure or the deferral of over 46 Crown corporations is a clear indication that this government is really interested in one thing. That is to wash its hands completely of anything that has to do with public service.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. It being three o'clock the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

ESTABLISHMENT OF TRI-LEVEL FUNDING PROGRAM

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should join with provincial governments to establish a tri–level program for the funding of infrastructure improvements, including improvements to sewage and water treatment facilities, road and bridge repair and the construction of grade separations at railway crossings.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am happy that I got lucky and my motion was drawn. At this point I want to thank my colleagues in all parties who, through negotiation, agreed to let me come on early since I may not be able to be here much over the next several weeks. I am happy that my motion was selected for a three–hour debate with a vote which I hope I can be here for.

I want to begin by saying that any government, provincial or federal, of any political party that becomes so hypnotized, mesmerized and traumatized by current deficits and total debt, become immobilized in doing very much if anything about reducing them or eliminating any significant portion of those debts.

Whether the debts are inherited from a previous government or as a result of the financial and fiscal actions of the government itself, it must take actions that result in a sounder financial position. This means it must start doing things that fly in the face of conventional wisdom of old line party policies going back many decades, namely, in tough times instituting cutbacks, reductions and eliminations of programs that in the end would allow them to reduce deficits and debts.

My Motion No. M–281 is one of the many ways available to government at both the federal and provincial level to start doing that. Policies aimed at full employment, increased production and thus more people paying taxes, are the only way to reduce deficits and debts, if not totally eliminate them.

We went through this before at the end of the Second World War, at the end of the Korean war, and in the early 1960s.

While I am on public debts and deficits, I am compelled to remind this House and the country that every provincial and federal debt has been brought about by Conservative, Liberal and Social Credit governments, every single one.

The Government of Ontario inherited about 80 per cent of the present debt it has and that was not done by NDPers. It was not any NDP government that got the country or any province into the financial mess we are in now. We did not do it and we refuse to accept any of the blame for it. However, in four jurisdictions in Canada, NDP governments will do something about it.

An hon. member: Les, where were you?

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I am going to get to that one in a minute.

Is it not strange that over the decades the CCF and the NDP were accused of being the party with the big spenders. Well, who were the big spenders over the last 50 years? I will not go back any farther; that could be even more embarrassing. Who was it who got us into this financial mess? It was our federal government and