

*Government Orders*

On many occasions the people who had been forced to wait found out that their cheques were not in and that they would have to come back the next day to stand and wait in line.

We also remember the hiring of scab labour, the helicopter drop-offs and paying non-unionized Canada Post employees room, board and travel expenses to replace the unionized staff all over the country which marked the strike last time. It was one of the most hideous periods in Canadian labour-management history many of us can recall.

As a result, to suggest that Bill C-73 will somehow mysteriously improve this very bad atmosphere in employee-management relations again indicates the government has no idea how to manage the post office properly.

I want to make a couple of points about how much faith we can put in the postal corporation and what it says. I go back to October 1991 when Parliament was considering back-to-work legislation to end the postal strike. Canada Post and CUPW came before the House of Commons committee and met with the Minister of Labour to report on outstanding issues. Canada Post said there were only eight or nine outstanding issues and that if CUPW withdrew its other demands they would come to an agreement quickly.

CUPW did this and the House of Commons passed the back-to-work legislation quickly. We will recall that to help speed up the bargaining process CUPW called its workers off the picket line before the legislation was actually passed. CUPW had been promised, and this was the understanding of the Minister of Labour, that the wage settlement would stand and the remaining seven to nine issues would be dealt with by an arbitrator. Canada Post agreed to have an arbitrator pick up where the two sides had left off in negotiation.

After the legislation was passed Canada Post withdrew all offers and said that it was up to the arbitrator to figure out just where the two sides had left off. It was not until July 1992 that an agreement was finally reached. This agreement was found during private meetings

between CPC and CUPW without the arbitrator. This suggests that if the Canada Post Corporation had been serious about reaching an agreement there would have been an agreement much earlier.

Operating in bad faith as the postal corporation did on that particular issue makes a lot of employees and Canadians generally rather doubtful about simply accepting its word when it says what this legislation is all about.

In terms of service to Canadians we do not have to elaborate on that at all. We can look at past practices that have been brought to the attention of the House of Commons: Canada Post using American fuel for its trucks and in some cases U.S. mail services in terms of fulfilling its operations, supermailboxes frozen up in the winter, postal closures, and rate increases. All these matters do not assist in any way to make employees at Canada Post proud of the company they happen to be working for.

In some parts of Canada this past winter the weather has been extremely harsh. We have seen how ineffective these supermailboxes have been and the problems encountered in terms of people not being able to collect their mail.

The most obvious indicator of where we are going in terms of Canada Post has been the tremendous amount of closures across Canada. I can speak with some experience on this matter. I think of one community in my constituency called Westwold in which there was a very dynamic post office. It was really the community centre. The government decided to close it down and did not replace it with anything. Now the people in that small community have to drive many kilometres to obtain regular mail service. There was a furore. The case was made that the government ought not to simply close down this post office. A facility was opened eventually in the Canadian Legion. The Canadian Legion is a wonderful institution. I happen to be a member of it myself. However I do not think it is really the proper place for a postal outlet but that is the reality of it. In this community it is the Canadian Legion that provides some kind of limited service postal outlet for people to pick up their mail.

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That is not what Canada is all about. That is not what the postal corporation of Canada is supposed to do. That is not the kind of important Canadian symbolism that is