

Government Orders

The whole objective of the post office is to run at a profit. It is the wrong priority, the wrong objective. First and foremost the post office should be a service to all people in this country, regardless of whether we come from a large city, a small town, a farm or a fishing village in Newfoundland, it must be a service to the people of this country, provided at the same cost for every citizen of Canada. That is the whole philosophy behind the post office and behind a postal stamp.

With those words I want to encourage the House to hoist and defeat this bill. It is not good for Canada. Hopefully the Conservative Party will join us in making sure this bill is done away with. It is a bad bill for the country.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the member for Yorkton—Melville for his remarks here today. Quite frankly, I have not heard him talk so passionately about a federal presence. I am not saying he has not done so before, but this is something I share his views on, from the flag to the Canada word mark, and all the points he made about how the government has dismantled these symbols. I cannot argue with that.

My concern is that this approach to privatization or this approach to earnings per quarter versus public service is absolutely wrong. I am concerned that it is moving beyond things like Air Canada, VIA Rail and the post office into almost every department in this government.

I think specifically of the direction our constitutional debate is taking, where we are starting to take the federal presence out of some of our other areas of responsibility like tourism and housing. We are pushing it away, retreating from national governments. One of the things that has galvanized the will of this country over many, many years is the fact that we have had a national postal service and an airline service, the fact that it was not just Tourism Ontario or Tourism B.C., it

was Tourism Canada, soon to be abolished or pushed off again to the provinces.

My question is does the member not see that this dismantling of national services, national departments, is really going to mean that those regions of our country, smaller provinces or smaller regions, rural Canada, et cetera, are going to be the big losers in this government's thrust?

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, it really tears the country apart. We have had a dismantling of several national institutions: Canada Post, VIA Rail, the railway across this country, the down-scaling of CBC, other national institutions as well, and the privatization of Air Canada. All of these things have led to the dismantling of this country and to the alienation of Canadians from a central government, from the country of Canada itself. This really concerns me.

I mentioned today a whole series of post offices in my riding of Yorkton—Melville. The same is true of the abandonment of railways, the CNR and the CPR, which served all kinds of small towns. There used to be a connection there of the country east and west and that is disappearing very rapidly. It also ties into the trade deal where the east-west links are no longer as relevant, where again it is north and south. I am afraid the same thing will be happening with the signing of the NAFTA agreement, the free trade agreement with Mexico in terms of giving up a lot of of our sovereignty.

What we are seeing here is less of Canada pulling together. We seem to have more of a feeling in this country that we should have 10 little fiefdoms or kingdoms of provinces doing more and more things by themselves.

The point I make, and maybe people in the bigger cities have not thought of this before, but often the post office—and my friend from Nova Scotia knows because he has small towns in his riding—is the only building in town with the Canadian flag. The older people in particular are really proud of the presence of that flag. Mr. Speaker, on your right you have a Canadian flag. I was here on the day about 15 years ago when we decided to put the flag in the House of Commons. When you go to Dubuc and Springside and all those little towns in my