

*Canada Post Corporation Act*

surprise. In fact, the concept of a Canada Post corporation results from several studies. The first recommendations in this regard were made in 1962 by the Glassco commission and in 1966 by the Montpetit commission. In December 1978, Bill C-27, to establish the Canada Post corporation, was introduced in the House of Commons, but it died on the order paper when Parliament was dissolved. This concept was re-examined in 1979 and 1980 by successive governments and postmasters general in consultation with both the postal users and the unions concerned.

Bill C-27 gave me the basis for my discussions with all the major parties involved. In fact, each section of Bill C-42 now under consideration was discussed sentence by sentence and word by word, and all the wording has been well thought out so that there would be no confusion or misinterpretation. I am not suggesting that this bill is perfect, but it represents as never before the collective efforts of the administration and the postal unions. The legislation that Parliament is now asked to approve is the fruit of the efforts of many people. I would first like to thank Mr. Darling of the Privy Council, Mr. Uberig of the Post Office Department, and Mr. Kelly of the Department of Labour, who allowed this project to get under way with the publication of their report in 1978. I also wish to express my gratitude to my two predecessors, Messrs. Lamontagne and Fraser, for their excellent advice and opinions. I am also grateful to Mrs. Shirley Carr, Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress, for her support and her unflinching determination to create a postal Crown corporation. I also wish to thank the Deputy Postmaster General, Mr. Jim Corkery, who heads an inter-departmental committee which will be responsible for the enormous and extremely important work of transition and planning required to create this Crown corporation. In summary, Mr. Speaker, what I want to say today is that while I have the honour to sponsor this bill in the House, I would not want all those who have worked directly or indirectly on this project to be forgotten. It is always dangerous to give names because it is easy to forget some. I would like to say in advance that I am sorry if this has happened. However, I would still like to add to those I have already mentioned, the members of the umbrella committee established by the Canadian Labour Congress, first, Mr. Ronald Lang, director of the Research and Legislation Branch of the CLC, then, Mr. McGarry and Mr. Findlay, president and vice-president of the Letter Carriers Union of Canada respectively, Mr. Jean-Claude Parrot, president, and Mr. Jones, of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Mr. Myers, of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Mr. West, executive secretary and Mr. Haulena, of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

I would also like to mention various representatives of unions not affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress whom I have also met and who have made very useful comments: Mr. Simmons and Mr. Gélinas of the Canadian Post-

masters and Assistants Association, Mr. Wilson, president of the Association of Postal Officials of Canada, Mr. Donegani, president of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada and Mr. Crosby of the Association of Economists, Sociologists and Statisticians. Finally, I must recognize the extraordinary work of a first class team in the Post Office Department, under the brilliant direction of Mr. Rapley, Assistant Deputy Postmaster General for Corporate Affairs. In that team, I must thank particularly Mr. McInenly and Mrs. Walker.

● (1410)

[English]

The changeover from a department, Mr. Speaker, to a Crown corporation, has brought about a series of questions. Has this Crown corporation been touted as a panacea for the Post Office?

Will Crown corporation status make the Post Office more efficient? Let me try to answer briefly these questions. I want to say that I strongly believe that the changeover from a department to a Crown corporation will result in three specific benefits, namely, management accountability, financial procedures, and labour negotiations.

As it exists now, the Post Office Department, is answerable, in one way or another, to various other departments. For example, the Department of Public Works owns and maintains the facilities, the Public Service Commission controls hiring and firing, and the Treasury Board has the final say in labour negotiations. As a corporation the board of directors will have the responsibility for the day to day operation of Canada Post. This change in procedure and responsibility will greatly simplify and enhance efficiency.

The financial procedures will also be radically changed by the Post Office becoming a Crown corporation. The Post Office is a government department and operating funds are provided through government general revenues. The result has been that Post Office management could not make system changes and service improvements if additional funds were requested or required. If the Post Office become a Crown corporation, the board of directors will be able to make more decisions regarding expenditures of funds and make them much more quickly.

Labour negotiations will also undergo significant change. All government departments negotiate under the terms of the Public Service Staff Relations Act. If the Post Office were to become a Crown corporation, bargaining would take place under the Canada Labour Code. This means that many items that could not be brought to the bargaining table under the present system would be permitted under the Canada Labour Code. In other words, we would have more latitude to bargain directly with the unions. Needless to say, this change in labour negotiations meets with the approval of the unions concerned.

In summary, the change in status from a government department to a Crown corporation will give Canada Post the independence to function in the marketplace in a way that is not possible now.