

Government Orders

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for External Relations and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Monique Vézina (for the Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved that Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with Bill C-73 here in Parliament, a bill which is heading Canada Post in a totally new direction, a bill that many people have commented upon. Many people are very sceptical about the reason that this bill has been put in place and sceptical about what will happen in the future with regard to Bill C-73, a bill to sell 10 per cent of the value of the Canada Post Corporation to people working in Canada Post.

If I look back at the record of the report coming from corporate and consumer affairs and operations in April 1990, recommendations were made there which were at that time a bit alarming. The recommendation coming out of that committee was that the Government of Canada privatize Canada Post once adequate financial performance and comparable levels of practice to making profits in the private sector could be accomplished and once the relationship between employees and Canada Post settled down.

What we are hearing is if Canada Post has a good value and we can solve some of the employee relations problems, we should sell Canada Post, we should privatize Canada Post.

• (1025)

The Liberal Party at that time was very opposed to any moves to sell Canada Post and we submitted a minority report. The report suggested that would be a critically bad move.

However, the committee decided to go ahead with that report and submitted it to Parliament in April 1990. Today we are seeing the result of the beginning part of that recommendation, the part that suggested shares be sold to employees.

Recommendations 36 and 37 dealt with public sales and sales to employees. Step one has been implemented by the government.

I thought this morning at the initial part of this discussion it might be wise to point out what some other people across the country have said about this bill. If we look at articles in *The Toronto Star* I think we find some good insight as to how Canadians may view this legislation.

I quote from *The Toronto Star*:

Lately, Canada Post Corp. has begun to look like a steer being fattened for market.

The pressure is on to boost profits and squeeze costs so that in two or three years the Progressive Conservatives can sell the politically troublesome beast, or parts of it, to the highest bidder.

If all goes according to plan, Canada Post hopes to make a 14 per cent return on equity in 1993, and start paying Ottawa an annual dividend of 40 per cent of its operating profits.

That really means Canadians are looking at a new tax as a result of taking the profits of Canada Post Corporation and paying the government a 40 per cent operating premium.

There is even talk of Canada Post being required to pay corporate income tax for the first time. On the surface the campaign to fatten the bottom line is a good process. Unfortunately, if you look beneath that surface you see some real problems.

Much of the Crown corporation's recent business success has been earned on the backs of mail users. We have higher postal rates. Every one of us has gone to the post office and has seen the price of a stamp go up 1 cent, 2 cents, 3 cents, 4 cents on a regular basis.

Since being in Parliament, I have seen it regularly go up on January 1 like clockwork and so has every other Canadian in this country. We have seen this government move toward supermailboxes in new suburban areas,