

Government Orders

When they were talking about employees being able to purchase shares in a corporation, they were talking about the private sector. I do not think they were talking about public sector institutions or public sector Crown corporations.

The minute we allow or make provisions for employees to invest in a corporation, if that corporation is a public corporation, automatically we have admitted to the fact that we are privatizing at least part of that corporation, whether it is 5 per cent or 6 per cent or 10 per cent. In the case of Canada Post, we are privatizing, as of the date the legislation is approved, 10 per cent of Canada Post.

I want to say that is the case. It is not in the act, looking at the five different objectives. I would like to read the last part of the act: "The need to maintain a corporate identity program approved by the Governor in Council that reflects the role of the corporation as an institution of the Government of Canada". Already the act states that Canada Post is a Crown corporation, it is in the hands of the Government of Canada.

This legislation amends the act. However, one would suggest to stop moving it out of public hands and into private hands at this time at a rate of 10 per cent.

I want to say that the best way to deal with the question of morale, whether we are talking about the public or the private sector, is through encouragement, training of the work force, dealing with issues of fairness and dealing with issues of the ability of an employee for advancement. Those are the kinds of things that would improve morale in both the public sector and the private sector.

As my colleague has indicated, in the case of Canada Post, the employees have not had a contract for the past three years. That is not a good thing. That will not help morale. It will not improve productivity. If anything, it will be to the detriment of the corporation.

That does not reflect on the corporation as well as on the government who oversees the operation of the corporation. In cases like this, it is the obligation of the government to step in in order to ensure that the question is resolved. To that extent, I would say only by doing that can we address the question of morale in Canada Post.

The minister is on record in *The Ottawa Citizen* dated May 1, 1992. He is quoted as saying that one of the main reasons he is introducing the amendment is that it is a proven vehicle for improving morale. I presume he is referring to the employees in Canada Post.

Then let us see what the employees have said on this. They have said that their best share in Canada Post is their wages and their security rests on the services provided to Canadians and not the profit and the dividends of the corporation.

So right here we have the minister making a statement which is immediately refuted by the workers' representatives. On that I would suggest that the government with this legislation is privatizing Canada Post not through the front door but through the back door and that is not fair. I do not think Canadians should accept this. We have to be up front with Canadians.

Perhaps what the government is trying to do with this legislation is to throw a trial ball. If there is an outcry in the public domain and the public complains then it might think it over and might not proceed further. If government comes to the conclusion that it might be able to get away with it, I am sure that we see here today will be the beginning of the end of Canada Post as a Crown corporation.

I suggest that the government at this point in time withdraw the bill and go back to consultation both with the public as a whole and with the workers at Canada Post. Try to bring back legislation that will truly address the question of morale of employees at Canada Post, that will help Canada Post to continue to do the quality work it is doing in the community.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member if he has a clue of anybody outside Canada Post management who has requested this bill? I know none of the postal workers in my riding and my city came to me saying: "I really want to have a share in Canada Post Corporation". Did any of the postal workers in his riding? I suspect he cannot come up with an example like that.

Would he not agree that what we have here is a situation like exchanging gifts at Christmas without ever asking what anybody wants. Granny winds up getting a train set maybe and the six-year old nephew gets the night-gown. If nobody, and I mean nobody, outside Canada Post management has requested this then why the heck is it being done?