

responding at this particular point to the statement I am making.

Very simply, Canada Post's losses this year—losses, not profits—are in the order of \$100 million. That is the loss we are talking about at the Canada Post Corporation this year.

The minister tells us today that the greatest thing he can do right now, his greatest scheme, is to sell off 10 per cent of the shares of Canada Post to employees. There is a lot wrong with that.

First, I do not think we should privatize the post office at all. My party has taken that position in a dissenting report to the report entitled *Moving the Mail: Canada's Postal Service in the 1990s*. This report was a report of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations. I am very familiar with it because I wrote the recommendations on behalf of my colleagues. I was the postal critic. I was the one who prepared, together with a very able staff, the recommendations in that report. I bring to the attention of the House some of those recommendations and the historic position my party has had on this issue.

Let us listen to what the Conservative majority on the committee said. Recommendation No. 36 reads:

That the Government of Canada privatize Canada Post once adequate financial performance, comparable to private sector levels, has been attained and once the industrial relations climate has improved.

That was the recommendation of the Conservative members of the committee. The Liberals on the committee said that Canada Post should remain a Crown corporation. That was Liberal recommendation No. 36. That was the position adopted by our caucus. That is the position I took on behalf of my colleagues and that is the one I still hold today.

• (1540)

Why? Is this some sort of a fetish that we cannot privatize anything? No, that is not the case. Very simply, the reason is that we are talking about a national postal service which can serve rural and urban Canada. It will deliver the mail not just in Ottawa, Toronto or Vancouver, not just electricity bills because of course that is a paying proposition, not just that kind of mail, but mail from someone living in St. Isidore de Prescott who wants to write to someone in Esterhazy, Saskatchewan. If that is what that person wants to do, that too is part of the system.

Government Orders

The destruction of our postal system is just one of those things that this government has been doing. It has been dismantling it piece by piece, along with some other elements of our Canadian infrastructure, the railways and everything else.

On every post office in my riding there was a flag of Canada. "Canada Post-Poste Canada" appeared on the front of those post offices. Do we know what it says now? There is a pigeon wing and it says "Mail-Poste". That is what we have now, and we are asking why we have a national unity problem when in some of our rural towns and villages the only place where there was a flag of Canada, the only place where the word "Canada" was written down, was on the post office. This government approved in cabinet an Order in Council necessary to make Canada Post change its corporate logo, change its corporate identity, and remove the reference to Canada on its operations, on its plants and on its buildings.

That is not the only place where that has been done. Why has it been done? To please whom? Not I, Mr. Speaker, and not my constituents. One has to wonder just what is gained by that. Is it to please those who would not want to see the word "Canada" in parts of our country? Is it to please those who want to privatize the post office and by removing the word "Canada" from it, by pretending that this is just another company like a chain of doughnut shops, think that it would be easier to sell later without that name on it? Which is it, or is it both?

[*Translation*]

People attending the Liberal convention in Hull several weeks ago had an accountability session during which they asked parliamentarians questions. Do you know what the first question was, even before national unity and all the other issues? The first question was asked by a lady who got up and said: "I will ask the first question. What will the Liberals do to put the Canadian flag back on post offices when you regain power?" That was the first question, asked by this lady from Quebec who was at the convention. What does that tell us? It tells us that Canadians care about these institutions, even if the government pretends that they do not. It also tells us that the service should be protected and improved. You do not do that by selling 10 per cent of the shares to the employees, to parliamentarians, to the businessmen's associations or to anyone else. That is not the way to improve service.