

*Government Orders*

newed, efficient and community oriented postal system throughout Canada.

One area is electronic banking facilities in many small rural communities throughout Canada. The British post office was consistently in the black for years and years because it operated a banking service throughout the United Kingdom. In the last 10 years literally hundreds of small rural communities across Canada have seen local banks close down. They have been left with no local financial institutions. Sometimes there is a credit union, but there are no agencies of the major chartered banks in hundreds and hundreds of small Canadian communities.

But we do have post offices, or we used to, and there is no reason in this electronic age we could not have good electronic exchanges and basic consumer banking services in many of those areas, turn a profit and provide important community services at the same time. The private sector has abandoned those communities. Why can we not use an agency like the Canada Post Corporation to provide again those basic essential services to rural Canada?

We had a pilot project a number of years ago in the Canada Post Corporation involving Peterborough and two other communities in Canada to introduce catalogue shopping. Now that Eaton's disappeared from the catalogue shopping business a number of years ago, and now that the Sears catalogue is going to be no more, what could be better than to take another look at the results of that study? We could perhaps conduct one or two other pilot projects to provide many areas in rural Canada with an opportunity through the Canada Post Corporation that is already supposedly in the delivery business anyway to have catalogues available. They could be produced by that corporation or perhaps by a private company in concert with the Canada Post Corporation so that rural Canadians could once again avail themselves of those services. They would not have to send out catalogues through the mail. They could be available at local post offices.

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I urge this government or the next government to take another look at the results of the surveys. We spent two years on pilot projects. Perhaps it could embark on another whole area that could provide an important

commercial and public service to Canadians abandoned by the private sector through the Canada Post Corporation and reinstall some employment and some services in rural Canada.

I take the opportunity very briefly to congratulate and thank those hundreds and thousands of ordinary Canadians, many from rural Canada, who have been involved in the whole Rural Dignity movement. They have been active on a number of fronts but particularly in their campaign to save postal service and community service in rural Canada. They have done yeoman service.

Whether it is in small communities in the Kootenays, the lower mainland of British Columbia, the north coast, in Atlantic Canada or on the prairies, these people have been active in presenting briefs and sending delegations to Ottawa and across the country at great cost to themselves. They have been demonstrating to save local post offices and have been outlining dozens of alternatives for remunerative services the Canada Post Corporation could provide to Canadians. It could work in the black, earn a profit and put government service back into the good books of a lot of people across Canada.

In looking at the proposal of the government, the bill will make 10 per cent of Canada Post's non-voting shares available for purchase by Canada Post employees on a voluntary basis. The minister, the self-defined pit-bull terrier, claims that this bill will help to eliminate the labour-management tension that currently exists at Canada Post.

Finally, I want to reinforce what I began by saying. If this government or any government wants to restore some feeling of good will among Canadians about the whole idea of government, if it wants to provide an efficient postal service, if it wants to truly establish good employer-employee relations within the corporation or within that service, it ought to open up the board to people from other walks of life, particularly those who work within the post office.

Owning shares that do not even have a vote at shareholders' meetings does absolutely nothing. What they need is input. It needs to open the channels of communication, look at some fresh ideas, perhaps regurgitate some ideas that used to work, and put the whole idea of postal service and government service back into a positive framework that will appeal to Canadians. Then