

delivery to 50 homes built in 1985, when 85,000 people get their mail delivered at home? How do you explain this? What kind of policy do you have? That is the difference between a Liberal Government and a Conservative Government. They are not aware of the needs of ordinary people. They took good care of bankrupt financial institutions and wealthy depositors, but the average Canadian cannot even have home delivery service. That is a fact, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: It is true.

• (1610)

[English]

Mr. Gagliano: We definitely do not agree with the Government's plan. We believe that Canada's postal service is an essential service and that every Canadian has an equal right to that essential service. We do not accept the Government's creation of two classes of citizens, those who receive their mail at home and those who will, from now on, have to go to the corner of a street to pick it up. That is unfair because all people pay income tax, sales tax, and real estate tax.

The postal corporation is asking for a two-cent increase in the price of stamps. The people who will not receive home mail delivery will have to pay the same price for stamps as those who will. This is unfair. I am sure that Canadians across the country will remember this. I am sure that starting tonight the Minister will hear from groups which are already planning to protest because this Conservative Government policy is unacceptable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, today Canadians are asking whether postal rates will continue to go up and whether service at the Post Office will continue to be cut. We did not receive a clear answer to that in the Minister's statement. However, like the mail these days, the Minister was late today. He was late because he had a struggle in his own caucus to get his plan approved. It is right that he had such a struggle because the Minister hopes to increase rates and cut service. His own caucus has put the brakes on this.

There is a difference between the statement which was distributed to us and what the Minister just said in the House. The addition was that the rate increase components of this plan will be referred to committee. I am happy that they will be referred to committee, but it was obviously the intention of the Minister to go ahead with rate increases. It is only because Members of the Government have been hearing that people will not put up with this and put pressure on him that it is being referred to a committee and that people will be spared, for the moment, a rate increase.

The plan before us is not what Canadians had been hoping for. They hoped for a blueprint for good, reliable, reasonably priced postal service. Before us we have a plan which will mean more postal rate increases and service cuts in the long

Statements by Ministers

run. I want to touch briefly on three aspects of this plan. The first is the process of how we got here, the second is service, which most people are concerned about, and the third is some specific things which the Minister said in his statement.

First, with regard to how we got here, the Minister mentioned the Marchment Committee Report. He has mentioned this many times in the past as a justification for the fact that he did not consult with people. He said that Marchment consulted. People have not been involved in the making of this plan. It was not done through an open process, but rather behind closed doors. That is why the product is so unsatisfactory.

In his original statement the Minister did not say what he was going to do about postal rate increases. He hinted about it but was forced to retreat from that aspect. He was trying to hide his intentions with regard to postal rate increases. He makes no mention of the Post Office's plan to spend money to try to sell the new plan to the public. How much money will be spent on advertising to try to sell this plan to Canadians?

With regard to service the Minister mentioned three things; service standards, the monitoring of them, and a neutral third party for rate increases. Like most Canadians, I am skeptical about whether the Post Office will actually live up to standards. We want to have standards established, but we want to see the goods delivered before we will have any trust in the Post Office. With regard to monitoring, it would be nice to have an objective third-party monitoring system, but what standards will they monitor and how will they go about monitoring them? The real monitors of postal service in the country are citizens. They know when their mail is on time and when it is late, like the Minister today.

• (1620)

I want the Minister to continue to review the third party mechanism for examining postal rate increases as he suggests in his plan. We want to know the scope and effectiveness of this mechanism, because if it is simply a way to fob off postal rate increases on a so-called objective body so that the Minister can remove the political pressure from implementing postal rate increases we will be stuck with deteriorating service and postal rate increases. Thank goodness that there was division in the Tory caucus and back-benchers on that side who heard from the Canadian public and were able to put pressure on the Minister to at least delay this postal rate increase and refer it to committee. I am concerned about a Minister who tries to fob off his responsibility for postal rates to a so-called neutral third party.

The Minister has failed to extend door-to-door service to the new suburban developments. He is continuing an arbitrary and inequitable approach to mail delivery. Furthermore, he promises to extend that inequitable approach to rural routes by putting super mailboxes in rural locations. Canadians want to know if this inequitable approach will be extended to Canadians in other areas who presently enjoy door-to-door delivery. When Canadians see the Minister treat people in suburban