

me, Mr. Speaker. I can see him quite plainly, the Minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation!

[English]

The question today is not whether we support the government. The question is: Do we need a postal service in this country? Any support for this bill should not by anyone be mistaken as supporting the Tories, the government or even the Prime Minister, most of all the minister responsible for Canada Post.

In conclusion, I say to the government across the way that when there are problems at Canada Post a *mea culpa* is needed on its part. It has created the mess we are in now.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great care to my hon. friend. I concede his depth of knowledge in postal matters. I learned a fair amount just by listening to him, as I can do from time to time.

I want to ask him a series of fairly straightforward questions. He began by speculating on fault as to the current dispute and the legislation the dispute has led us to. I understood him to say that Mr. Parrot was not at fault. I surmised from his subsequent remarks that he felt that the 1986 corporate plan was at fault. If it was, I would like to know specifically in what respect.

Second, I would appreciate knowing from the hon. member whether he embraces a particular position in the dispute. Does he embrace without reservation the position of the postal union?

Third, what would the Canada Post deficit be today if the corporate plan had not been invoked and if we had proceeded along the merry path the previous administration had set us upon?

Fourth, does the hon. member regard the Canada Post Corporation as an essential service? Does he think its employees ought to have the right to strike?

I do not want to be misunderstood on this because I do not believe there have been many cases of law breaking or even suggestions that there has been law breaking on the picket lines, but there were suggestions during the previous strike, the strike by Public Service Alliance of Canada members, and so I ask it in the broadest sense, when strikers are seen or are believed to have broken the

law is it the role of the police to keep the peace or to apprehend or arrest suspected law breakers?

Finally, I heard a very tantalizing observation by the hon. member at the conclusion of his speech when he seemed to suggest that he might be going to vote for this bill, and I would like to ask him whether that is what he meant.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, if I can start with the last remark, I never meant to tantalize my colleague across the way.

If I can get back to the first point that was raised, the member said I speculated on the fault. I do not have to speculate. The corporate plan of Canada Post has leaked from the day it got into the cabinet room. It leaked so much it was as bad as the Minister of Finance's budget. It was all over the place and we all knew what it contained. So there was no necessity to speculate.

I was asked that if the corporate plan was a mess, to give an example of that mess. I will be glad to do so. Let me repeat something that is very tangible with the people of Canada. Before I even do that, let me remind the member that it was his own colleague from Winnipeg, the late Dan McKenzie, who organized the party of Conservative backbenchers to do, shall I say, a raising of the feathers in the caucus room—I cannot use other words in this illustrious Chamber—in order to get that policy changed. That particular one was changed because it was so bad. They could not get the others changed such as the closure of all 5,221 rural post offices that were there in 1986. That is a disastrous example.

I have illustrated the plan to remove rural mail delivery save on county and regional roads. That is another example. That one was changed. There was the plan for the supermailboxes that do not open but freeze up in winter. Ask anyone who owns a supermailbox that will not open and freezes up in winter how great those contraptions are.

Many Canadians will say that was not such a hot idea.

I was also asked by the member across the way what the profit would be if that corporate plan had not been adopted. I do not know what other corporate plans were submitted to the government but if that is the best corporate plan it could come up with, it should have sent the officials back to the drawing board and made new drafts in order to make one that was more acceptable.