

cerned even if the committee does not travel; he can be assured that the measures which are proposed here, namely, the entrenchment of the equalization principle in Canada, the individual's rights, the fundamental freedoms, the patriation of the constitution, are not in the least detrimental to the citizens of the west or the east, because they are beneficial to Canada as a whole. We are renewing our federalism. I am convinced that if he listens more carefully to the hon. members from the west, from the New Democratic Party, perhaps he will no longer make the request he has just made to me.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH CROWN CORPORATION

Hon. André Ouellet (for the Prime Minister) moved that Bill C-42, an act to establish the Canada Post corporation, to repeal the Post Office Act and other related acts and to make related amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.

Madam Speaker: It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

● (1400)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) appointed me for the second time as Postmaster General on March 3, the objectives he set for me were to improve employer-employee relations and to turn the department into a Crown corporation. It became obvious to me that to meet those objectives I would have to have frequent and frank discussions with labour representatives.

In the early seventies, when postal authorities undertook a vast mechanization program, the employees were not sufficiently informed of the process. The system had to be updated otherwise it would have become paralysed because of the ever-increasing volumes of mail to be processed. But more time should have been spent in trying to make everybody aware of the situation so as to achieve this objective with the full co-operation of the postal union leaders. But this was not done

Canada Post Corporation Act

and it was without the understanding and endorsement of several of our employees that substantial sums of money were invested in the construction of postal plants, the purchase of highly specialized equipment, and the creation and promotion of a postal code. Ten years later, I can appreciate that the Post Office did what had to be done because it could not stand in the way of progress. But I can also say that the implementation procedure was very wrong and resulted in a decade of labour unrest in the Post Office. Had management explained more clearly to the employees what it intended to do—

Mr. Dinsdale: *Mea culpa!*

Mr. Ouellet:—had it involved the employees in the change, had it guaranteed, from the very start, everyone's job security, the employees would have understood that the machines were not meant to replace them but rather to help them in their work, and union leaders would have taken part in the operation rather than opposing it. I do not mean this to be merely a criticism of postal management at the beginning of the seventies, those people acted in good faith—

[English]

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker I rise on a point of order. I would like to know whether the minister is talking about the constitutional situation in Canada and the need to understand the constitution, or about the Post Office. Is he talking about the important thing called the constitution, or is he talking about a minor thing called the Post Office with this talk about time and so forth?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): The order of business is the creation of a Crown corporation for the Post Office, and I suggest the hon. minister is addressing himself to the order of business before the House.

Mr. Dinsdale: He is quoting my speeches.

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, what happened in the early seventies was done to a certain extent without the support and especially without the understanding of postal employees. But I do not say this merely to criticize the postal management of the time, because I am sure those people acted in good faith and with good intentions. Of course, it is always easier to judge with the benefit of hindsight, as I am doing now. I mention this because the first major transformation of the postal service was so quick and so thorough in my opinion that the employees often felt pressured and threatened.

In rising to speak in the House on Bill C-42, an act to establish the Canada Post corporation, I can confirm that all the postal unions have been fully consulted and that it is with their complete agreement that we shall proceed with this major transformation. We have had a decade of conflict and I hope that we are now entering a decade of postal harmony. In any case, this second major transformation will take no one by