

*Canada Post Corporation Act*

beats a quarter stuck under his or her pillow. Such an approach has been taken in the past by the government. We must not allow the creation of such positions under circumstances which would permit the government to continue its nocturnal visits.

Moving down through the proposed new system, let us examine the problem of labour. There are now 28 different unions which represent all inside and outside postal workers. As I understand it, under the bill all unions would be guaranteed the right to negotiate the first collective agreement. Then, in the final three months of that agreement, the unions would have to approach the Canadian Labour Relations Board for new accreditation. At this time other unions would also have the right to petition to represent the workers. Can one imagine the wrangling which would take place and the disruption this would cause? The minister said that he is almost certain this process would result in fewer than 28 unions. "Almost certain" is not good enough.

The creation of a Crown corporation would seem to be the perfect opportunity to reduce the bargaining units to one and to provide the opportunity for sector bargaining in its purest form. The delivery of mail is an essential service in the nation, the disruption of that service creates significant hardships at all levels. Surely the government recognizes this fact and would want to take steps to eliminate the potential for strike in one area which affects all others.

A few weeks ago I had occasion to speak on the private member's bill introduced by the hon. member for Halton (Mr. Jelinek) which recommended sector bargaining. This meant that all workers in one industry would bargain at the same time. Certainly we have been fortunate, and I touch wood, as far as strikes in the post office are concerned in recent times, but it is no guarantee as to what may happen in the future. If we have 28 different unions or even 15 different ones bargaining at different times, there will be labour turmoil. The private member's bill which I supported suggested that in the post office, whether or not there are different unions, each union would have a certain period of time in which to negotiate. For example, if the contracts ran for a three-year period, we may only be worrying about strikes every three years.

In the post office and in any essential service there should be compulsory arbitration. I have stated this, and I will state it again. I realize we are not at that stage yet, but I have suggested that the Postmaster General and the union heads, such as Mr. Parrot, should be immediately locked in a room with bread and water if they were asked to reach a settlement. I am quite sure before too many days went by, one of them would capitulate and come out with an agreement which had been hammered out, an agreement which certainly would be fair and would make the people of Canada very happy because they would not be confronted with a strike in the postal service.

**Mr. Beatty:** It would be a waste of good bread and water.

**Mr. Darling:** I do not know about that, but I hope the new postal corporation can work this out.

Another area of the proposed act which is causing a great deal of concern to Canadians is the delivery of time-sensitive mail. The bill before us gives the proposed corporation the sole and exclusive privilege of collecting, transmitting and delivering letters within Canada. I suggested in committee that the Postmaster General should consider its severe and detrimental effect upon the use of courier services which are so vital to consumers and business. The Postmaster General replied that couriers would merely be "tolerated" in the future. He drew attention to the clause 15(1) in the bill which reads as follows:

(e) letters of an urgent nature that are transmitted by a messenger for a fee at least equal to an amount that is three times the regular rate of postage payable for delivery in Canada of similarly addressed letters weighing fifty grams or less;

In effect, this means that Canadians will have to pay to other sources three times as much as the Post Office charges for a service which it cannot even provide. By including this clause in the proposed bill, the government is admitting that the new Crown corporation will be unable to provide such service. If the post office will not be able to handle time-sensitive mail, why should the consumer be punished financially?

The minister counters with the argument that the post office is being punished when people use courier services. He maintains that couriers are skimming the cream and depriving the post office of a lucrative source of income. May I remind him that the cream always rises to the top; if outside sources are obtaining the cream then there is obviously a vacancy of service at the top. By proposing to charge these exorbitant rates for the use of courier services the government is saying to Canadians: "We cannot do the job, but you will have to pay through the nose to have others do it." I certainly take exception to this attitude of the government to thousands of Canadians who depend on quick service for the delivery of sensitive documents such as insurance policies, real estate transactions, legal and financial matters, whether they be of a business or personal nature.

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In committee the Postmaster General said that under the new legislation the couriers would have a place in the system. He said that such services may now be illegal. Whether they are operating illegally or not, the point is they are certainly doing a job. If they are operating illegally then why has the government not taken some action against them? I suggest it is because the government knows how vital such services are. The government knows the hue and cry which would be raised if such services were terminated.

The government is now proposing to make the couriers "street legal", to use the vernacular, and Canadians will pay heavily for such legitimacy. Couriers have been, and I feel still are, a very great necessity. I urge the government to abandon this proposed rate structure for courier usage and allow Canadians the right to such service without penalty. To merely tolerate couriers is to merely tolerate the expressed wishes of the people of this country.

I speak from experience on this matter, Mr. Speaker, because I was an insurance agent and a real estate broker for a