

tee meetings hour after hour. We had Bell Telephone, CP Telecommunications; some 20 groups bringing in a joint resolution requesting that certain things be done. The right wing element of the Conservative Party fought for the courier services and the telecommunications groups, trying to make it wide open so they could get in and take the cream off the top; the profitable parts of the post office.

Mr. McDermid: Nonsense.

• (2010)

Mr. Parker: The hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser), the former postmaster general, had to fight off his own party members on some of the things he knew must be included in this bill. He knew we must bring this bill forward.

The Tories do not want the Post Office to have a monopoly on the mail. The Tories agree with the president Mr. R. M. MacIntosh of The Canadian Bankers' Association who came to the committee meetings. In the committee hearing on December 4, the president said:

We still need the post office for the really remote locations, but the rest we can service ourselves.

Is it not wonderful to cream off the top and say the Post Office and the taxpayers can serve other areas? They want the people of Canada to pay the cost of servicing their own locations which are unprofitable, while big businesses from the United States, our huge banks and telecommunications carriers skim off the rest of the market for themselves.

An hon. Member: That's free enterprise.

Mr. Parker: We reject this idea 100 per cent. We favour the legislation as it presently stands. If somebody wants to use a courier, then we will insist they pay a price greater than that charged by the Post Office. This will ensure that the truly urgent mail is sent by courier, if need be, but that these large U.S. firms do not steal money from taxpayers' pockets by skimming the market in our big cities, leaving the Post Office with the dregs.

I should point out that this amendment is not supported by all the Tories. The critic for that party, the member from Vancouver South, understands that we cannot kill the Post Office. Unfortunately, he has no control over the extreme right wing of his party. Men such as the hon. member for York North (Mr. Gamble) and the hon. member for Mississauga South fought constantly with the official critic in committee. In fact, they spent more time fighting between themselves than they did speaking on the bill. Now the hon. member for Vancouver South has lost control of this right wing element and the right wingers are having a field day in the House.

We completely and totally disagree with this amendment. We urge quick and speedy defeat of it. If the Post Office is to continue to exist in Canada, it must be given the resources to do the job. Clearly, the members proposing this amendment would prefer to see a Post Office controlled by the U.S. dominated courier industry operating in Toronto and Montreal while the rest of the country goes without postal service

altogether. We reject that kind of amendment. Therefore, we will not be supporting it.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, in following the member for CUPW, I would like to speak briefly about the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn).

When the minister was before the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments, he indicated to the committee he would be proposing this exact amendment now proposed by my colleague. As you will remember, concern was expressed by many members of various industries about the fact that the bill, as it is presently worded, gave the government great discretionary power to move into areas, to extend its monopoly in those areas without the agreement of Parliament.

The concern which members of the industry had was not that expressed by the hon. member who spoke a few moments ago. Rather, their concern was that the government would have the ability to move in, overnight in the dark, by regulation, acting alone, to extend its monopoly to take over elements of the telecommunication industry, which previously had been operating independently.

This is why representatives of various industries came before the standing joint committee to make recommendations that changes must be made to ensure that the monopolistic power of the Post Office could not be extended simply by regulation. The Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments expressed concern even about the proposal made by the minister with regard to defining what is a letter. We felt the government's proposal should go further. We felt it was essential the industry and Canadians know that the government would not take that power to extend the Post Office monopoly, simply acting by regulation.

When hon. members recognize that other portions of the bill gave the government the power to move into areas where the Post Office currently is not at all involved, for example, in the electronic or optical transmission of mail, it was very clear then that what we would have with a postal Crown corporation, under the bill as initially worded, was a situation in which the monopoly would be extended further and further, beyond the delivery of the traditional forms of mail, into the newly developing technology on which Canadians will increasingly be relying to deliver messages from one place to another in this country.

What my colleague from Mississauga was trying to do in proposing this amendment was fill a gap left by the minister. When the minister left our committee, he left it with the impression that he would be moving this amendment himself. Yet when he got to the other committee, I believe it is the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, to which the bill had been referred, he dropped his intention to propose this amendment. He felt that it would be better for the bill to be mute in this area.

The concern of our committee was that the industry and Canadians would both be better served if there was greater