

*Government Orders*

seems to be logical that if I am working for a company that has turned it around, I could do that.

It is clear that the federal NDP is opposed to this. I have here the Speech from the Throne from the NDP government of the province of Ontario. On April 6, on page 10, the throne speech said worker ownership legislation will come forward for a final debate. In Ontario the NDP government is saying it is supporting worker ownership legislation.

• (1620)

In November of 1991 the same Ontario NDP government, in its controversial Ontario Labour Relations Act, had a positive part in there and the suggestion was that it wanted to encourage worker investment and ownership in Ontario companies in a manner which recognized the benefits of worker participation in both labour and business.

I am standing here a little confused. The federal NDP is saying no to worker participation in the ownership of companies, but the Ontario NDP is saying yes.

Could the member please explain to me, talking out of both sides of his mouth, which is it? Are you in favour or not in favour?

**Mr. MacWilliam:** I thank the member for his question. It certainly does not surprise me that the member is confused. However, I hope that I can go to some degree to clarify his long-standing confusion on this and other issues.

First of all, we already own Canada Post. You are trying to sell back essentially something that the workers themselves already own as being Canadians and voting members in this society.

We tried to do that out in British Columbia years ago when Mr. Bennett decided he would teach British Columbians a great lesson in capitalism and sell them something that they already owned. He created a massive enterprise called the B.C. Resources Investment Corporation, BRIC. It has become known, subsequent to that, as B.C.'s really incompetent incorporation; \$10 shares are now selling at 49 cents. If that was Mr. Bennett's lesson in capitalism, I would certainly be sceptical of the lesson in capitalism of which this government is about to try to convince the workers of Canada Post that it wants to entertain.

That privatization scheme by Mr. Bennett out in British Columbia was an unmitigated disaster and it lost

millions and millions of dollars for the people of British Columbia. I submit that this hare-brained scheme that this government has with respect to selling back shares of a corporation that the workers themselves already own is just as hare-brained as Mr. Bennett's was.

The minister has said that the share offering is to placate the workers to make them feel good about Canada Post. I say to my hon. friend, how can the workers feel confident, comfortable and good about their Canada Post when they see in British Columbia and Yukon 104 offices that have been closed, when they see in Alberta and the Northwest Territories 170 offices closed? In Saskatchewan 235 offices have been closed. All of these total across Canada some 1,598 closures and planned closures.

How can you feel confident about your future, about your job, about your family when you might be next?

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I was a resident of British Columbia when those infamous BRIC shares were distributed to the people of British Columbia. At the time of their distribution they had a value of \$6. Now I am told by my good friend from Shuswap that they are worth 49 cents. Somehow I always knew that I would never make a nickel out of those rotten BRIC shares.

**An hon. member:** Neither did I.

**Mr. Harvard:** My hon. friend from British Columbia has just confirmed it.

I want to make one comment and then a question with respect to the current debate. There is no doubt in my mind that through this particular bill the government is trying to plant a seed which it hopes will some day produce full-blown privatization of Canada Post.

I am opposed to it, my party is opposed to it and if it ever came to reality in this country it would be a disaster.

Let me make this one observation. There is a tremendous amount of commercial business intercourse between Toronto and the nation's capital. Because of that business activity, there is naturally a lot of postal activity. One can imagine that if Canada Post were privatized, chances are that the level of service between Toronto and Ottawa would be very good and chances are that the price, compared to today, to the consumer would be very competitive. In an area of intense commercial activity between Toronto and Ottawa, I would not be surprised