

*Summer Recess*

in an administrative way, they can also have an end, hopefully, to the built in hostility which has been locked into that institution for the last several years.

In addressing that locked in hostility which we all know has been created, we must realize that one of the reasons for it was that the Post Office was set apart from those laws in this country which allow other working people the right to have a say in technological change. When major changes took place within the Canada Post Office over the last few years and working people were denied the opportunity to have any direct say in how their lives would be affected and how the existence of their jobs would be affected, we were sowing the seeds we have been reaping ever since.

We are finally at a position where we have a management and a union which, in a sense, deserve each other. It is difficult to say where the problem started. What came first—the chicken or the egg? However, once we get into that situation, the last thing we want to do is to raise irresponsible ideas in this House which will make the matter fester even more and build in deeper the deep-rooted hostility which surely it is within the public interest that we eliminate.

I find it difficult to find appropriate words to describe the near contempt I feel toward the irresponsible jibberish which has been emanating from parts of this House over the last few days on this subject. Members of Parliament certainly realize some of the horror stories within the Post Office. I think we realize them more than anyone else because we get letters, when the mail is moving, we get telephone calls and we are constantly hearing from constituents about the problems and frustrations they have when dealing with that organization. There is no doubt that it has gone downhill over the last few years.

I find it particularly annoying to get mail from constituents bawling me out for not answering correspondence I have not received, and then I finally get the first letter after I have written back trying to explain what happened. I am sure I am not the only member of this House who has been through that exercise.

Hopefully, we are going through a period now when some of the hostilities will wear down. Hopefully there will be an amicable settlement sooner rather than later, but later if it must be. It is important to build an agreement with which both parties can live in a constructive way but, as I said earlier, it is even more important to set the new Post Office Crown corporation off on an even keel and give it a chance for success.

● (1550)

There has to be an opportunity to introduce new mechanisms, new management processes, and a new climate of industrial relations into that organization. Part of that, and there is provision for it in the new corporation, is to give the people who work in the Post Office an opportunity to have a say in management. That may seem like a pretty far out idea considering the hostility there has been, but I can speak with some personal experience, having been an employee of a corporation which for almost ten years now has had employees

on its board of directors. While it did not eliminate the adversary system, which is a process appropriate to the grievance procedure and collective bargaining, it did lead to a much more understanding relationship. By checking out ideas before they were put into practice, we were able to provide employees with a feeling that they were genuinely participating in their own future. This is particularly important to the younger generation of workers. Indeed, the Post Office is a classic example of that, particularly in the major centres. They must find an outlet for the increased education and interest among today's generation of workers.

It saves money. Engineers can come up with all kinds of beautiful plans, whether for a postal system or a sawmill, but unless you check it out first and get some real input from the people involved in the industry, you are going to be wasting hundreds of thousands of dollars, sometimes hundreds of millions of dollars which could otherwise be saved. Again speaking from some personal experience, I know that money is saved and there is a great deal of production time saved as well. You can increase productivity, profits, you can increase good labour management relations. All of those put together are what we need in the Post Office if it is to serve Canadians properly.

Because we do not get the chance very often, Mr. Speaker, to deal with certain subjects in this House, I would like to say a few words now about the Canadian forest industry and some of its needs. Forestry is Canada's number one industry in many respects. It produces a greater share of our net trade surplus than does mining, fisheries, agriculture and energy, including both oil and gas, put together. That is not commonly known. It produces more jobs and revenue per investment dollar than do fisheries and agriculture, and it directly or indirectly provides close to one out of ten jobs in Canada.

The problem is that the industry, and those persons and communities dependent on it, are so widely scattered and diversified across this country that, in fact, they suffer from invisibility, not only to the public but particularly to politicians and governments, especially federal. Being everywhere, the industry is seen to be nowhere. Many members of this House and their assistants do not appear to recognize that the industry in many cases is the biggest employer and the most significant economic and political constituency within their own ridings.

That is a very odd situation. Most politicians are assumed to be a little more sensitive than that. When a lay-off or closure takes place in that industry, usually it is 100, 300 or 400 people affected rather than the thousands who are affected in the auto industry in Ontario. It does not make national headlines and does not appear in *The Globe and Mail* in the mornings before question period. That creates again a disadvantage not only for that industry, but for everyone of us, for government budgets, and for all the spending plans which each of us may cherish in our own way.

The forest revenues, which should be renewable, as well as the industry, suffer the same fate because the impact of such a closure is scattered in our communities. Canadians, whether