

*Government Orders*

That is exactly the point made previously, Madam Speaker.

I would like to read the reply from the Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the minister responsible for Canada Post. He said:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know why I would admit that. It would not be the truth if I were to do that.

He made it quite clear that this bill was not intended as a step toward privatization and yet we have a member of the government sitting on the other side of the House not 10 minutes ago, in response to a comment from this side of the House that this is the first step toward privatization saying "that's right".

Is it any wonder that Canadians have a lot of trouble trusting this government? When the minister in April said "that is wrong, that would not be the truth, if I were to admit we were taking the first steps toward privatization" and now in the heat of June another member of that same government sits there and says that that is exactly what the government is doing.

If Canadians right here in this Chamber can hear completely opposite stories from two members of the same government, is there any wonder that the popularity level of the Prime Minister and his government is at the stage it is? Is it any wonder that Canadians can hardly wait to get rid of this government? Really, is it any wonder that they hold the government and this institution in such disrespect when from that side of the House we hear contradictory statements constantly. We hear denials one day and the accusations become reality weeks or months later.

The member opposite seems to want to debate the free trade agreement. I would love to debate the free trade agreement, the past one and the future one, and point out all the failings of that agreement if he would have the courtesy to put that item on the agenda of the House rather than trying to interrupt a member who has some important issues and points to say on behalf of her constituents on the bill that is before the House on Canada Post.

As well, I note today that the Liberal Party is alone in fighting against this abomination of a bill, the first step in getting rid of a service that has served this country well since Confederation. The socialists are not here. The

NDP, which speaks out against privatization, which would like the state to own and operate everything, is not here to say one word in defence of Canada Post. It is not here to say one word in defence of maintaining in the public domain an essential public service to a country like Canada that is so far and so widespread, with such a scattered population, that the ability to communicate with one another is fundamental to national unity. It is fundamental to our sense of being Canadian.

The Liberals stand alone here today defending the continuation of that service in the public domain and in the public interest, not in the interest of profits.

I want to make a few points about the treatment of employees in Canada Post. The minister has made the point that this is to try and get employees more involved in Canada Post, to let them feel a little more a part of the corporation and to make them a little more productive.

There are many ways in which Canada Post has shown that it does not care one whit for its employees. Its treatment of women is abominable. In the interests of profits it is contracting out work, putting on more part-time people, taking people who worked for it for a decade or more and suddenly putting them back on night shift.

It is entirely refusing to pay women equal pay for work of equal value. It has taken provisions out its contract that requires its contractors to pay women decent wages. It talks about shared decision making. Its day to day operations are a total denial of any respect for its employees or any attempt to let them feel proud of their work and to feel that they have a employer that they can work in partnership with.

Labour relations at the post office are no secret to anybody in this country. They are in an abysmal state. One can only question them since this bill before us is a shell. It gives us absolutely no details. It tells us not one thing about what is really going to happen here, what the shares are going to be worth, what they are going to mean to employees or which employees are going to be able to buy them. One can only speculate that if there is any value to the shares at all, they will go to senior managers and if there is no value to the shares at all, then the employees at the lower level might have some access to them.