

for a living call scabs on a mass basis, bargaining in bad faith with the unions representing Canada Post employees, and generally taking an axe to it.

Now the government has the unmitigated gall to come before the House and the country to say that it will offer shares to its employees and that will patch up everything. That is a crock. If the government were seriously interested in improving employer-employee relations, improving efficiency and restoring what once was the good name of postal delivery in Canada, it would do a number of things.

First, it ought to reinstate employees to have at least an advisory role in the setting of policy within the Canada Post Corporation. It ought to open up those two positions on the board. That is not going to dominate anything. Instead of keeping those members once appointed in the dark it ought to ensure they have the information as do other members of the board to do their jobs.

The government ought to insist the president of the corporation do what a former president of that corporation did: open himself up to the public, to members of Parliament from all parties and to representatives to discuss openly and frankly the problems that beset the corporation and the whole problem with postal delivery in Canada.

I wish I had a little more faith that the self-defined pit-bull terrier, the government House leader and minister responsible for Canada Post Corporation, was really interested in doing what he says he wants to do to improve relations within the corporation. I can still be convinced, but he has to show some good faith in opening up the process again for people who work within the corporation to have some say and some meaningful input in the processes that take place.

I have 15 municipalities and a multitude of post offices within the rural hinterland area of Kootenay West—Revelstoke. In the last few years we have had closure after closure, privatization after privatization. We have had the ending of rural route delivery in a number of areas. It has been replaced by green boxes. There has been one local disaster after another.

Government Orders

My colleague, the New Democratic Party House leader, the member for Kamloops, mentioned a little while ago in the House a number of the services local post offices perform in their communities. One important service is security for the citizens of a rural area. If postmasters or postmistresses know the people in their community as rural postmasters and postmistresses do and a senior citizen does not show up for a couple of days, they ask their neighbours where so-and-so is and whether anyone has checked on him or her lately. They may find out a single person living at home has had an accident.

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That is one of the very human functions a small local post office performs in a community, especially in rural communities in a number of areas of Canada that suffer from a lack of policing and a lack of security. It is important to have hands on, to know everybody, to know what is happening in the area and to have the contact everybody comes into communication with on a regular basis. It is something very hard to replace. It is one of those human things I would ask the government to understand we risk losing. It is one of the strong links between government and people in rural Canada which is being destroyed by closing down rural services.

There are many other hardships on senior citizens as a result of the elimination of rural route delivery and its replacement with green boxes which they cannot get into in the wintertime. They have to bring their own snow shovels to gain access to them. They cannot open the locks of the boxes because they are frozen. They cannot even get the Canada Post Corporation to install small devices to protect the keyholes in the green boxes from snow and ice. They shovel their way to their boxes and cannot get at the mail anyway. The postal corporation says it is up to consumers to provide protection for the locks on their boxes. Is it any wonder there is disdain for the government in this country when it has that kind of attitude?

The government wants to show a financial return on Canada Post. The member for Kamloops, my House leader, referred briefly to some areas a little while ago but there are many areas in which we could provide more services and increased revenue to the Canada Post Corporation which in turn could provide again a re-