

*Government Orders*

This amendment will make sure that employees buying into Canada Post will be on the board of directors to ensure that these heavy-handed tactics are changed to and there is recognition of those who serve this country. Then we will have no more of those instances ever being allowed to happen again.

I had a phone call just a few minutes ago. The village asked Canada Post again this spring and there has still been no answer.

I hope someone on the government side will recognize the folly of what is happening here and will recognize the Canadian people deserve to be treated better than to have all these institutions closed down and privatized.

I am very well aware of the fact that over the years, many of the people who fought for this country overseas were given priority to serve as postmasters in these communities on their return. Of course, in order to achieve that position they had to be bonded and they were. Now there is no need to be bonded. One can be a tremendous credit risk and still get the job if one is willing to work for next to nothing.

Canada Post completely ignored the fact that these post offices were usually the centre of activity in towns and villages. That is where the old people would come every day to converse with each other, to pick up their cheques and so on. They would ensure that somebody check on someone who was sick and needed help. If someone's mail had not been picked up for a couple of days, the postmaster himself as a concerned citizen would look into it.

As Canadians, we have a sense of obligation to small communities across rural Canada to maintain these post offices and to maintain the institutions in our villages. Above all, we must ensure that cenotaphs, such as the one in the village of Watford standing on property maintained by Royal Canadian Legion Branch 172 for 59 years, have a claim on that property. They deserve better than to be treated the way they are at the present time.

**Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Miramichi):** Madam Speaker, this is an important debate we are having here today. It is a debate that really should not have to take place but because of the penchant of this government for trying to

destroy rural communities, I am going to speak in this debate today.

Canada Post, aided and abetted by the government of the day, has set out to destroy rural Canada. In virtually all of the small communities in Canada the post offices have been removed.

In some cases the post offices are now in community stores. Some are efficient because the people are efficient but there is nothing efficient about Canada Post. We have heard a lot about the necessity for Canada Post to pay its way and to be a profit centre.

• (1550)

For a couple of years it was a profit centre for the government. Now, after bragging about how efficient it was and having destroyed the postal networks at least in rural Canada, we find that Canada Post now has a deficit.

This is certainly not the first time there has been a strike. I would point out when there is a strike, it is not just the employees who are at fault. I am sure in this case there is probably enough blame to go around but if the employees of Canada Post are treated the way that members of Parliament are and in the manner that small communities are treated by Canada Post, I have absolutely no sympathy for Canada Post at all.

I have never been able to get a straight answer out of Canada Post. Of course, the president of Canada Post is obviously too busy to talk to a member of Parliament. Instead, public relations people are sent to our offices or call us on the telephone when we have a problem. All you get from them is a bunch of gobbledegook. These people have no power to make a decision. They have no power to correct a wrong. They are simply there to make the boss look good.

We have lost our rural post offices in areas where they had been for a hundred years. We have also seen extreme increases in prices for services. I can give you one example in the community of Doaktown, a small community by Ottawa standards. The lock boxes in the post office used to have a fee of \$5 a year. When Canada Post took over from the post office that fee went from \$5 to \$50. That is one of the reasons Canada Post was able to make believe it was making a profit.