

*Government Orders*

If this legislation is supposed to improve labour-management relations and lead to a more harmonious working environment in Canada Post, you would think that this government would have sought, through Canada Post, to negotiate the kind of share savings plan which it has proposed as a centrepiece of this bill.

What it is trying to do in typical Tory fashion is impose this share savings plan on the workers of Canada Post, a share savings plan which is very faulty to begin with, a small concession to the workers. It is a faulty small concession because, as other members who have spoken earlier have said, it provides non-voting shares. A small fraction of the dividends Canada Post can generate through profits that it has accumulated, very often by cutting service across the country and laying off its workers, would be returned to the employees.

To offer that to the employees who are being laid off at Canada Post or to those communities which are losing their rural post offices and which are being provided with very inferior substitutes is a bit like offering a condemned man one last meal. The meal may be tasty but when he considers his future prospects he loses his appetite for the meal.

That is essentially what is happening with this bill. It is a very paltry and insignificant contribution or attempt by this government to deal with the myriad of problems that Canada Post has perpetrated on Canadians through its reckless attempts to become profitable at the expense of service to many parts of Canada, particularly the rural parts of Canada where I live and where many other members of this House also live.

As well, it has generated the climate of labour-management relations which is legendary in the degree to which it is acrimonious and poisonous and which is characterized by endless grievances. I really do not see that this legislation is actually going to change very much. It really needs to improve the kind of treatment it gives to its employees.

I would like to cite an example of that kind of management style which is so counterproductive. For example, in the community of St. Peters in my constituency, very recently a woman who had been working as a part-time employee with the post office was led to believe she was going to lose her job. Canada Post

wanted to change her job classification to one that is bilingual even though she was a unilingual employee.

The community is overwhelmingly unilingual. She was told that she would not be able to continue in her job. This caused a great consternation among all of the community members who supported the service she was providing to the community and they wanted to keep her there. Although Canada Post led her to believe for weeks that she was going to lose her job, it finally had to recant and keep her in the job, after she had gone through all of the anxiety of thinking she was losing her job.

• (1310)

The whole community had to rise up and defend this person's job record and argue for keeping her in that position. That kind of case shows that Canada Post has certainly a long way to go in terms of developing its relations with its workers. It is instances like this and others that have poisoned the relationships among workers in Canada Post.

The rumours are right across Canada of the minister's intentions and the application of the minister's intentions to privatize Canada Post.

I realize I only have one minute left. I hope I will be back later on when we consider second reading of Bill C-73 if we fail to do what we should do in this House which is to reject further consideration of this bill.

I would like to speak to this issue of privatization and the effect that it will have on rural communities. I also want to relate the experiences of communities such as Mabou, which my hon. friend from Annapolis Valley—Hants mentioned earlier. Last year, this community valiantly attempted to maintain postal services after a vigorous battle with Canada Post. It wanted to close down and terminate Mabou's rural post offices. Last night the community of Judique was faced with an ultimatum from Canada Post to close its rural post office. The residents of Judique are strongly opposed to this decision but they realize that dealing with this corporation is like dealing with a steamroller in that it does not listen. All Canada Post wants to do is to privatize at all costs.

I hope to get back up again on this important issue.