

Adjournment Debate

out that many Canadians who do not receive door-to-door delivery are hiring enterprising young people to pick up their mail from community boxes and deliver it to their homes on a daily basis.

Just last weekend I noticed an article in the *Ottawa Citizen* which profiled a local entrepreneur who has begun this kind of service for a monthly fee of less than \$12. I believe this is an excellent initiative, and I certainly hope Canada Post officials will encourage more enthusiastic business people to undertake the same service in other communities. Had the Speaker afforded me the opportunity on February 25 to put a supplementary question, it would have concerned whether the extra amount paid by Canadians to obtain adequate door-to-door mail delivery service could be tax deductible. I look forward to speaking about that at another time.

Canadians are well aware of the serious problems facing Canada Post. Despite a five-year deficit reduction program which was to have eliminated Government subsidies by this year, Canada Post continues to mount severe losses. In 1985 this loss amounted to well over \$300 million. Projections indicate that further deficits will continue. The Marchment report highlighted a number of other problems such as service, delivery, labour relations, financing and management.

• (1810)

In the recent federal Budget, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) stated that the Government is determined to come to grips with the financial and operating problems of Canada Post. The Government has also indicated that the corporation will be required to develop a new operating plan to improve productivity in order to reduce its operating deficit to zero by the end of fiscal year 1987-88.

I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary if that plan is now in place and if it includes greater contracting out of services. In addition, I trust that entrepreneurs will be allowed and encouraged to provide delivery service door-to-door from community boxes. I understand that this kind of service may involve a violation of the "exclusive right" privilege Canada Post enjoys to collect and deliver mail. If so, I would suggest that it is time to redefine that "exclusive right" privilege in order to increase the competition of mail delivery.

If this country is to enjoy effective and efficient mail delivery, we must meet the challenge of improving Canada Post. It is time to take immediate action to reduce costs by

contracting out services and introducing greater private sector opportunities in mail delivery.

Mr. Bill Domm (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post has the mandate to provide Canadians with convenient and efficient service at a reasonable cost. Over the last three years, the corporation has extended door-to-door mail delivery to over 340,000 addresses in Canada.

Last June, the corporation announced plans to upgrade delivery service to more than 200,000 additional addresses during the current fiscal year by readjusting letter carrier routes or by providing mail delivery through group mailboxes or community mailboxes.

These initiatives clearly demonstrate the corporation's concern in providing convenient service to all its customers and achieving financial self-sufficiency as requested by its shareholder, the Government of Canada.

These alternate means of mail delivery—group mailboxes and community mailboxes—are not exclusive to Canada. While these alternate modes of delivery offer convenience to customers and contribute substantially to reduce the deficit of Canada Post, it is understandable that some private citizens might want to contract the delivery of their mail from the postal station or group mailbox directly to their home.

Although Canada Post does not support such a service, principally on the grounds of security of the mail, it cannot refuse to hand over the mail to a third party when authorization that can be verified has been given by the customer.

It should, however, be clear that these particular arrangements are made solely between these individual contractors and their clients, and that Canada Post is not part of the contract. The corporation's responsibility for ensuring the security of the mail extends only to the point of delivery, should it be a local postal station, a lock box, a group mailbox or a community mailbox.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 3(1).

The House adjourned at 6:14 p.m.