

*Statements by Ministers*

balance between the need to provide improved reliable postal services and the responsibility to ensure that postal services no longer operate at a deficit.

Canadians at large as well as Members of this Parliament of all Parties have expressed considerable interest in the development of this plan. I have accordingly felt that Parliament should have a full opportunity to review the rate increase components which the Corporation has assumed in the forecast included in the plan. I am, therefore, proposing to refer this aspect of the plan to an appropriate committee of this House. I would hope that this will be done as swiftly as possible.

This balance between improved reliable service and operational break-even is a delicate one. We all know that. The corporate plan put forward by Canada Post required that all Parties concerned, shareholders, management, labour and the general public make sacrifices in order for it to succeed. The shareholder appeals to both management and labour members to work together in an harmonious effort to restore their sense of pride of Canada Post.

The Post Office Department recorded surpluses on a regular basis in the first part of this century, and other postal administrations appear capable of operating on a profitable basis today. There is no doubt that Canada Post can achieve these goals provided we support its efforts.

The plan being presented goes a long way toward restoring these values in the postal service and toward moving Canada Post Corporation in a direction that helps it meet the requirements of the future. It may require new attitudes and approaches, but I am certain Canadians will support these well founded efforts aimed at ensuring that Canada has a postal service of which we can all be proud.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou):** Mr. Speaker, it seems that producing this summary of the 1986-87 to 1990-91 Canada Post budget plan has turned out to be a painful exercise this afternoon. We have been promised this plan for months now, and today we thought we would finally see the light. I commend the Minister for respecting parliamentary traditions and sending us a copy, but five minutes later he called to say a corrected version was on the way, but unfortunately we had a hard time finding the change. Apparently there was none. At 3 o'clock this afternoon the Minister was not feeling well, so here we are at ten minutes past four, the media are standing by, the Canada Post press conference has been delayed, and I am wondering. Maybe the Minister will have better luck next time. This is the second time. He once had problems with his Bill on pharmaceutical products and now he is experiencing difficulties with the post office. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I wish the Minister better luck next time.

After listening closely to the Minister's remarks I must say I am very disappointed because the Minister seems to think he is still on the hustings. You have been in office for two and a half years and you ought to assume your responsibilities, you are

supposed to administer the country. This document is full of nice words, but nothing here gives us a clue as to what the postal corporate plan might be.

For instance, in his remarks the Minister did not say anything at all about community boxes, not a word on that, Mr. Speaker. Why?

**An Hon. Member:** They would rather not brag about it.

**Mr. Gagliano:** It says only that Canadians who already have home delivery will continue to have it. Others will have a service equivalent to or better than what is available from commercial carriers. What does it mean, Mr. Speaker? Why would the Minister hesitate to come clean and not say to people who live in suburban areas or even to those who just bought a house downtown: From now on, forget it, home delivery is a thing of the past. It is a fact. Why not admit it openly instead of pretending they will be getting improved services? Just what are improved services, Mr. Speaker?

In today's statement, the Government has just created two classes of citizens: one gets home delivery, while the other has to brave our Canadian weather to fetch the mail. And why, I ask you? Don't they both pay the same taxes? And now we have a two-cent rate increase, will people without home delivery get a discount or will the rate be the same? Why not give everyone the same service, Mr. Speaker, instead of dividing people into first and second class citizens, into people with and without home delivery?

Mr. Speaker, in the Budget Speech of February 26, 1986, we read on page 8—I'm not making this up—and I quote verbatim:

The Marchment Committee has recommended another five years to reach the break-even point. This is not acceptable.

Following discussions with the President of Canada Post, the Government has requested a new operating plan to improve productivity at Canada Post so that the Corporation will reduce its operating deficit to zero by the end of fiscal 1987-88.

Mr. Speaker, the Marchment Committee recommended that Canada Post's deficit and its corporate plan be spread over five years. As far as I can see, the only reason the Minister of Finance announced on February 26 that he wanted to reduce that deficit immediately is that he wanted to impress Canada's big corporations and the business world, since he was unable to set the Budget deficit below \$30 billion. We were told after September that it would be impossible to reduce the deficit any further, and that it would actually be \$2.5 billion more than forecast. That is the only reason, Mr. Speaker.

Today, Canadians are being asked to accept these cutbacks in services. This is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister will realize that this is so, because today, across the country, there are movements afoot to protest these cutbacks because they are unacceptable, and the Minister knows that perfectly well. He even came to my riding, where people told him that Saint-Léonard was not somewhere out in the bush! Mr. Speaker, there is a small area in that riding with 50 homes. Now what excuse is there for not providing home