

*Government Orders*

mantled. This is one of the reasons Canadians oppose this general process so much.

I must add that when this bill was in committee, which is the stage where people knowledgeable about the contents of legislation make their views known, there were many criticisms about this legislation. Question after question put during committee hearings went completely unanswered by post office representatives. When the legislation was put to the test in committee more problems and questions came up than answers. For that reason alone the government should be rethinking this initiative as opposed to using its parliamentary majority muscle to push the legislation through. Much more could be done in terms of improving employee-management morale and improving the efficiency of the postal corporation if the board of the post office would simply listen to the people who actually do the work.

• (1105)

One thing has impressed me time and time again. When we discuss with individual postal employees, with representatives of their unions, or simply with groups of postal employees in various situations, there is an abundance of ideas and suggestions on how to make the post office more effective and more efficient. There is no shortage of suggestions, some very creative in terms of using post offices particularly in the smaller communities to provide a range of services otherwise not offered. There is much more in terms of offering a wider range of services throughout the entire postal corporation.

We notice that seldom are those suggestions heard by those who make the decisions. As a matter of fact, with the existing morale situation people presumably are now hesitant about making suggestions in view of the fact that whenever they have been made in the past essentially they have been ignored.

I oppose Bill C-73 on four main points. I believe this is the first step toward full privatization of Canada Post. I believe this will do very little, if anything, to improve the problematic labour-management relations associated with Canada Post. I believe Canada Post has proven in the past that it really cannot be trusted to stop harassing union members who provide the work and cannot be counted on to stick to its word. I will explain that in a moment or two. I suggest that this bill does very little, if

anything, to maintain or improve service to many urban and rural Canadians. There is absolutely nothing to enhance postal service at all.

Let us turn to the whole matter of this being the first major step toward privatization. I do not have to remind anybody that privatization has been a policy tool used by this government many times in the past. There is no doubt the government is eyeing the opportunity to sell off Canada Post at some point. The only question is when, not if. The minister responsible has publicly indicated that he does not believe this is the first step toward privatization, but he still clings personally to the hope that one day we will privatize Canada Post.

As I was saying, my thinking is totally different in this matter. The minister responsible has said he sees nothing in terms of problems associated with privatizing the post office and that he would like to see Canada lead the way in this area. As a matter of fact on May 1, 1992, in an article in *The Ottawa Citizen*, he had the following to say:

If I had to bet, I would bet that in the next couple of decades, you will see post offices being privatized all over the world and I would not mind seeing Canada first.

That is the minister responsible for the post office indicating his priority in life would be to see the privatization of post offices, with Canada leading the way.

When we look carefully at the contents of Bill C-73, we notice it is really an effort to make Canada Post appear more attractive to outside buyers or to potential purchasers in future. With this bill in place the government can say to prospective buyers that Canada Post employees have a stake in making a profit for the company yet have no say in how the company is run because the shares are non-voting. Therein surely has to be the proof of the pudding. When we actually start to look carefully at it, we notice the shares being offered to the employees are non-voting shares. It does not take much imagination to recognize it means the people most knowledgeable about the postal operations will not have any say in the operation of the company whatsoever. If the post office wanted to be serious about encouraging employee participation, participation in a meaningful way as members of the board of directors would be much more effective. We have seen that model in the past work reasonably well from time to time. However, the