

*Government Orders*

The government is trying to put something over on the Canadian people once again. It is not fair. It should be called what it is, the first step in the privatization of Canada Post.

The government is going to get 90 per cent of the shares. The employees are going to get 10 per cent of the shares. Be assured there is really not a great deal of rejoicing among the employees of Canada Post about this. While they are given the shares, the employees are not allowed to vote. The shares are not fully participating and do not have the benefits they should.

The government is giving itself 90 per cent of the shares through Canada Post and giving the employees 10 per cent of the shares, but it is not letting them vote or have any say in the running and operation of this company.

That is absolutely unacceptable. The government and Canada Post have not learned one thing in the last eight years about the operation of this company. Not only are the employees not participating or voting, but there is no step being taken toward integrating the employees into the mainstream of the corporation. Canada Post still has the worst employee-employer relations in the country. I do not believe there is a company in Canada that has a worse employee-employer relationship than Canada Post.

It is quite prepared to give shares to the employees if they do not have any say in what they feel should be happening other than by perhaps dropping something into a suggestion box. This is totally unacceptable.

It is bad enough that there are no employee representatives on the board of directors of Canada Post. That has been put forward over a considerable period of time. One would think that a group with 10 per cent of the shares would at least have some say on the board of directors, but no. I understand there was a representative on a trial basis a few years ago but that was dropped. This is absolutely incredible.

What is the government hoping to achieve? I think it is hoping to disguise what is really the first step in the privatization of Canada Post. It will not be long before the government shares are sold to other parties.

Then of course the fears of Canadians will be even greater. Right now people from coast to coast to coast in this country are absolutely apoplectic about the record of

Canada Post with respect to service in their communities.

Canada Post is still trying to reduce the number of post offices, staff and service. If the service were heightened to the rural areas that would be one thing, but it is not. Canada Post. The Government of Canada cannot go on continually thinking that rural Canada does not count for anything in this country.

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The postal service is one of the precepts on which this country was built. It was one of the reasons for coming together in Confederation in 1867. Yet this glue which we initially had at Confederation has been melted down. It has been done away with gradually over a period of time and the process is still continuing.

There has to be an acknowledgement, a dialogue between Canada Post and the government on the one hand and the employees and the people of Canada on the other. There is an ivory tower approach that is not working. This bill is not going to help matters at all. It is not disguising what the government is trying to do. It hopes to show it is giving a significant benefit to the employees, has turned over a new leaf and is moving in a new direction. Well, it is continuing along in the old direction, contrary to the interests of the employees and certainly contrary to the people of Canada.

If this government and Canada Post feel that because most of the post office closures took place a while ago the people of Canada have forgotten, they are going to be very surprised indeed. The people of Canada have not forgotten. In fact the people of Canada are marshalled and awaiting the next arbitrary move of Canada Post. Certainly in my riding people do not want any further closures or reductions.

We need the post offices in our communities. Thanks to the depersonalization this government has brought forward in the country, we do not have enough of a focal point to keep the sense of community alive to the degree which we want in this country today. Post offices are vital in maintaining that, and probably more vital right now than ever before in the history of this country.

We need these post offices. They provide service and are the focal points of our communities. They provide what people want. People know what service they want. They are paying for service and they want the service that is in their interests. They want Canada Post to keep