

*Government Orders*

from post offices. Now what on earth is that supposed to accomplish?

When I protested about this to the officials of Canada Post, I told them that the day we decide to change the head of state of our country, it sure won't be a flunkey inside the postal system who will make that decision. It won't be a post office manager, it will be the Parliament of Canada after consultation with the people of Canada and no one else. But why did that particular manager make that decision? I never got an answer from Canada Post. The Queen's picture is back in the post offices finally. In one case it took about four months to put back the frame that took 30 seconds to take off, but they finally did it.

Why don't they just deliver the mail? Does that sound so hard?

In rural Canada, Canada Post got into this binge of shutting down rural post offices. Now here is how it went about doing it: It decided to shut down rural post offices if and when the postmaster died or retired. Now, in Canada Post jargon that is referred to as the "natural opportunity criteria". Here is how it works:

If a postmaster dies, that is natural and therefore there is a natural opportunity created, so you shut down the post office. That is how the natural opportunity criteria works. If the postmaster retires, he or she has aged and reached the age of retirement, ageing is also natural therefore the natural opportunity criteria has been met again. So that is how that works too.

So you shut down the post office and you franchise it out. There is no more post office and the mail is sorted 15, 20, 30 miles away. It is brought in weather permitting, and then of course people go and get it outside in supermailboxes that freeze in winter. That is known as improved service.

The way the criteria for this improved service works is the following:

[*Translation*]

Whether the post office in question made a profit or a loss was not a factor. There probably are examples where a rural post office makes a substantial profit, but Canada Post is not interested in such mundane matters. It is interested in closing a post office if it feels like it or if it seems like a good time to do it, without always considering there may be some very good reasons for keeping the post office open. No, it closes them regardless, to the

extent that we have lost about 2,000 post offices in rural areas in Canada, if I am not mistaken.

• (1550)

[*English*]

Some time ago we appointed in this country a Postal Services Review Committee. This Postal Services Review Committee was appointed by the government and led by Mr. Alan Marchment. This committee was to make recommendations on future postal increases, the quality of management and all kinds of things at Canada Post.

Guess what happened to this postal review committee? The committee was supposed to have been transformed into a board. There was legislation presented in this House. It died on the Order Paper. The government never proceeded with the legislation and never reintroduced it. This postal review committee and the future postal review board was to be the watchdog of the post office, a form of CRTC of the post office, if I can call it that. It died on the Order Paper.

Not only that but when the Postal Service Review Committee brought forward its report, the government read the report, did not like the contents and fired the committee because it did not like what it heard.

[*Translation*]

This is what the Review Committee on Canada Post recommended in its first and last report, after which it was disbanded by the government opposite. Some of its recommendations were:

That Canada Post examine the possibility of extending home mail delivery in urban areas.

Second, that Canada Post review its program for closing rural post offices.

Third, prevent deregulation of the majority of services offered by Canada Post.

These recommendations were made by the Review Committee on Canada Post. I myself appeared before the committee to discuss these three points and a number of other points, and I did so on behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal party who told me those were the kind of recommendations we needed. The Marchment Committee obviously agreed, since the committee adopted them. However, the committee was then disbanded thanks to the Minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation, who is sitting right across from