

I say to you, Sir, it is important that we as parliamentarians realize we are in a changing world where services needed today may not be needed tomorrow and where services today are obsolete tomorrow. What we think is necessary now will not be necessary tomorrow, and tomorrow we will have other things that are necessary. A new direction should be given, a change should be made. Therefore, we say, sir, all these bills should have a sunset provision incorporated into them, a provision which would provide that Parliament have the ability to review what has been going on, the ability to say, we want to look at it again as we do with the banks.

Every ten years we bring the banking legislation before us. This time we waited 13 years before doing so. We look at those organizations deliberately, we review their powers. We may change them, we may contract or expand them, but we call them to account. Similarly, this corporation should be called to account in a specified period of time.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling):

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:

"Bill C-42, an Act to establish the Canada Post Corporation, to repeal the Post Office Act and other related acts and to make related amendments to other acts, be not now read a third time but be referred back to the Standing Committee On Miscellaneous Estimates to enable the committee to consider further Clause 24 of the bill."

Mr. Lalonde: Shame on you, Stan.

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to see the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) here. I was really worried earlier this evening when I did not see him in his place. I must admit he attends this House faithfully because I have had the privilege of speaking on two occasions in the last month or so, one on the Constitution and another time earlier this week, when I had two and a half minutes to speak, half of which time was taken up by the minister, usurping my time. Needless to say, I will be very disappointed if he does not intervene some time during my remarks.

Mr. Lalonde: I will try, Stan.

Mr. Darling: I welcome the opportunity to speak to the House on Bill C-42 and to present my views, those of my constituents and a great many others on the proposed creation of the Canada Post Corporation. As almost anyone old enough to lick a stamp knows, Canada's postal service is in drastic need of change. There have been continual management-labour disputes, the mail service is unreliable, and the department is going deeper and deeper into debt. There is not one member of Parliament here who cannot tell us horror stories on delayed mail, damaged parcels, and so on. I recall Christmas time a few years ago when, I believe, the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Blais) was postmaster general. I received a cake by mail which arrived completely squashed. I brought it in here and made a present of it to him. I wanted to get it back for evidence but he would not give it back to me.

An hon. Member: He ate it.

Canada Post Corporation Act

Mr. Darling: Perhaps he ate it, but I never got it back.

There have been continual management-labour disputes, as I said, and this, in my view, has been one of the serious problems with the postal department. I do not think machinery and equipment is the reason behind it. This is a people dispute between management and labour. Until we can get both management and labour working together, the Crown corporation will not experience much of an improvement.

● (2110)

It has long been recognized that the fundamental part of the problem can be directly attributed to the fact that the post office, as a government department, is obliged to deal with many other departments. The responsibility for hiring new employees rests with the Public Service Commission; Treasury Board negotiates the contracts; The Department of Public Works is responsible for plant maintenance; purchasing is conducted through the Department of Supply and Services.

When appearing before the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates recently, the Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet) commented in frustration by saying:

Too many people are trying to run this operation.

This is so true. Perhaps as a Crown corporation the post office may improve. I use the words "may improve" advisedly because this bill, as presented, still leaves grave doubts as to the predicted efficiency and financial stability of the operation. Certainly we are in favour of the bill. We hope it will be a step in the right direction. Hon. members on this side of the House have contributed with amendments and changes, some of which were adopted. I believe this could be stated for all sides of the House.

As I mentioned, these doubts with respect to the new postal corporation begin right at the top. I am speaking of the board of directors and senior management. It has been proposed that the board consist of a chairman, president, and nine other directors. These 11 men and women will be appointed by the governor in council, which of course means cabinet. The board, with the approval of cabinet, will also be given the right to appoint and fix the salaries of any number of vice-presidents it considers necessary.

Although the minister stated in committee that the composition of the board would include representation from all segments of Canadian society, I would feel more comfortable if such assurances were incorporated directly into the act. There will be an obvious need on the board for input from labour, business and the consumer. The Post Office services the requirements of these groups, and their views are of paramount importance.

The nebulous circumstances surrounding the appointment of the vice-presidents is also cause for some concern. The naming of these people and the ability to set their salaries provides a distinct opportunity for the government of the day to play the role of the tooth fairy. A defeated politician may wake up one morning to discover that the remuneration for his loss is a vice-presidency with the Canada Post Corporation. It sure