

Government Orders

The opposition is complaining and bellyaching because not everything can be run exactly like a business when you have a country like Canada. You cannot run everything exactly like a business. You cannot run the country exactly like a business. You have to run it as a nation. To run it as a nation means that there are costs incurred. To run it as a nation also means that you have to understand the requirements, the desires and the aspirations of those people whom you govern. This gang opposite has lost all sense of sensibility on that score. We all know that. It was jumping for joy last week because it was at 16 per cent in the polls. Can you imagine? Just think how it is going to jump if it ever hits 18 per cent.

We had the president of Canada Post at the consumer and corporate affairs committee. It was an experience. I have never heard so many words say so little in all my life.

We wanted to find out whether Canada Post was in the business of providing service or if it was in the business of improving its profit line so that it could ostensibly sell itself in the public sector, in the private sector.

• (1230)

One of the things that we looked at was the courier service. Maybe I am a little dense but I thought Canada Post's responsibility, since it had a monopoly on first-class mail, was to deliver first-class mail. I did not think that the responsibility of a Crown corporation, which has the weight of the public purse behind it, was to go and compete with private sector corporations. That is exactly what this corporation has done.

This corporation is cross-subsidizing a courier service, Priority Courier Service. It has now been able, through cross-subsidization from the profits on its first-class mail service, to go in and capture 25 per cent of the courier market in Canada.

Everybody here and out there probably watched something dealing with the Olympics. I asked the president why he would be getting into private sector areas which are well served, in private sector areas where people are losing jobs now because the market has softened because of this government's induced recession. Why would he be getting in as a Crown corporation and competing with those individuals? It is a business decision, he said.

"Are you taking money", I asked, "from the monopoly that you get on first-class mail and all the profits that ensue and pumping it over into your courier service, basically undercutting predatory pricing and undercutting your competition?" "Never would we do that", the president said.

I asked if Canada Post did any advertising in the Olympics. He said it did. When I asked him how much, he said that was confidential information. I watched the Olympics and I cannot remember once seeing an ad from Canada Post, but I remember seeing all kinds of ads from the courier service which is competing with private sector courier services and putting many of them out of business in small towns in Canada.

Now the president of Canada Post knows what his mandate is. It is to make the company as profitable as he can. If that means a loss of service in rural Canada, so be it. If it means higher prices, so be it. If it means dismantling the corporation, so be it. If it means predatory pricing practices on the private sector, so be it. The ultimate goal of this government is to privatize Canada Post.

I can foresee the day, if we ever gave these guys opposite another chance, that UPS would be delivering mail to my door by a fellow with an American flag on his lapel or on his shoulder. I can see that day if these guys opposite have their way.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): Get serious.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): The hon. member opposite said to get serious. I am very, very serious. The hon. member opposite knows full well what the government's intent is. If he were honest with himself and his constituents he would tell them. If the intent of the government in this bill is try to motivate the employees of Canada Post to be more productive and to feel that they have a better say in what goes on, treat them with a little bit of respect. Do not be forcing them through the grievance procedure every time something happens on the floor of the post office. You do not have to bring a bill into Parliament, you just have to have some respect in the way that you treat the people of Canada Post.

The hon. member opposite knows this because he was the chairman of the consumer and corporate affairs committee. When the Liberal task force on Canada Post was conducting hearings, he came and sat in on some of the hearings and he expressed to me his concern about