

Government Orders

With this government anything is possible. It has such a large majority it can jam anything through. Is privatization out of the question for this government? Absolutely not. Is this the way we want to go in this country? Is this what this government wants? It wants to privatize and put all these people out of work.

We cannot take the approach of cleaning up the problems that exist in Canada Post because if we get into this kind of a mess with employee share savings plan it really does not do anything other than loan the government money to put their employees out of work.

Perhaps it would work if these were at least voting shares and if they would actually produce a dividend. In 1991 the corporation lost \$128 million. How much dividend would the employees get? How much return would they get?

The government will retain 90 per cent of the shares. We have to assume that it is going to do that at this point simply because it is issuing 10 per cent. Obviously this must mean that there are 90 per cent left. What is the government going to do with them? Will these be sold to the private sector? We do not know. The government has complete control. It does not need legislation to sell those shares. It is not necessary. These are voting shares and it can do with them whatever it wants. If they vote and decide to sell them, they can do it.

• (1420)

This whole bill is a disaster. It does nothing to address the problems that exist at Canada Post. It does nothing to enhance the lives of the employees at Canada Post. It does nothing to enhance service. It only creates more problems and it is certainly something that Canada Post does not need.

Bill C-73 is as much a disaster as some of the conditions that exist at Canada Post Corporation and this bill has got to fail.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-73 which proposes to make amendments to the Canada Post Corporation Act.

The operation of Canada Post and mail delivery service in general is a very large issue across this country. Since I have been an elected member I have heard nothing but complaints about what Canada Post is doing.

Certainly long before I was elected I heard similar complaints. In my own riding we have had the closure of several post offices which have been very controversial. My local constituents have had a lot of difficulty in accepting some of the changes which have been made.

As has been raised by others of my colleagues here, it is of more than passing interest how the Canada Post Corporation, which the government says operates at arm's length from the government, happens to go across ridings, such as mine of Northumberland, closing small rural post offices which have in the past, and those that remain today, provided a very important and valuable service to the rural constituents. I do not want to belittle the important service that has been provided by our postal service over the years in this country.

A country as large as ours has to put a very special emphasis on maintaining very high standards in all of its communications and certainly our post office services are very important.

It is puzzling how Canada Post Corporation, operating at arm's length from the government, closes post offices and reduces postal services in a constituency such as mine, yet the constituency of the Prime Minister just happens to be able to maintain its usual services. We do not have constituents complaining in his riding as they might in mine.

I have tried my best to defend the interests of the constituents in my riding. The staff at Canada Post have done their best from time to time, but we know they have orders as to what they are to do and what they are not to do. It seems very obvious that this corporation is becoming more and more a private enterprise with profit as its main motive, not service to constituents across this country.

Yesterday a few members of our caucus had the pleasure of speaking to the National Pensioners and Senior Citizen's Federation. We had a chance to discuss with them many of the issues that are of great concern to them across the country and certainly postal service was one of their major concerns.

Their position is as follows. I would like to excerpt and have on record what they have to say about our Canadian postal service. I think it is relevant to the bill that is before us today.