

[*Translation*]

The Canada Post Corporation is now a profitable business because it was able to acquire the tools it needed to carry out its mandate. The proposed legislation will make it even better able to meet this challenge.

[*English*]

Over the past 10 years, Canada Post employees have not only had to make major adjustments in their thinking about the objectives of the corporation, but they have been the ones who have done the work of rebuilding it into a customer-oriented, modern and productive company.

We think they deserve to have a share of the profits that will be earned as a result of their efforts. This plan gives Canada Post, as an employer, the opportunity to offer its employees the same thing that many businesses, particularly its competitors, offer to theirs, a piece of the action.

It will also help to put Canada Post on an even footing with its competitors and will help put its employees on an even footing with employees of other major communications and distribution companies. It will allow Canada Post to offer current and potential employees a more competitive compensation package.

A more competitive compensation package means that you are able to hold on to the expertise you had and also attract people with the new skills which are necessary to operate a complex, highly mechanized communications business. Let us make no mistake about it, today's Canada Post is a business. It is in competition, not only with other couriers and delivery services, but also with new information transfer technologies like fax machines and direct data transfers.

In that competitive climate, the successful company will be the one whose delivery is the fastest, the cheapest and the most consistently reliable. As I said, Canada Post has been proving to Canadians, particularly to Canadian businesses which make up over 80 per cent of its volume, that it can do the job. This legislation will help it do it better.

It will have another positive effect. It will inspire confidence in the reliability of the postal service. Now when you drop a letter in a mail box in Ottawa for Vancouver, you will know that the driver who collects it

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is a part owner with a vested interest in getting it to the depot safely at the proper time.

You will know that the individual sorting it is another part owner with a vested interest in getting your letter into the right bag and the handler who puts it on to an airplane at the Ottawa airport has a vested interest in getting on the right plane. The inside worker in Vancouver has a vested interest in getting it to the right delivery person, and that delivery person who drops it through the front door slot at the address in Vancouver has a vested interest in doing so without unnecessary delays.

Employees with a direct financial stake in the way their company performs will themselves perform better. We believe this plan will instil in the men and women of Canada Post a new sense of pride in the jobs they are doing and a new sense of commitment to the new customers and Canadians the postal system was created to serve.

[*Translation*]

This decision was made for the sole purpose of enhancing the existing partnership between Canada Post and its employees, so that together they can continue to be able to respond to the changing needs of Canadians. Under the legislation, share ownership will be limited to employees of the Canada Post Corporation.

[*English*]

No member of this House, no member of the general public and no other business will be entitled to participate in Canada Post shares under the legislation tabled here today. This is not privatization. It is the enabling of employee participation. The government believes that this is a simple yet common sense step of which Canadians will approve as a means to improve morale and service in our postal system.

I urge members of this House to join with me today on behalf of Canadians in enthusiastically supporting this initiative.

• (1530)

As I have indicated to the House, we have reason to be pleased with the progress made at Canada Post. It is common sense. Twenty-five per cent of companies on the Toronto Stock Exchange have employee stock savings plans like this. It is not new territory we are treading on. It is a well-proven technique that works.