

Government Orders

What of the equity of Canada Post land, its buildings and equipment? Most of the total \$2.9 billion in land, buildings and equipment are in prime downtown locations. Privatization would result in a bonanza of prime space for the buyer at fire sale prices.

What about competition? Will the monopoly of our mail delivery be transferred to a private company? Who will regulate the activities of this company?

No other post office in the world has been privatized, so we have no precedent which might provide answers to some of these questions. Therefore, the Liberal Party recommended in the minority report and still holds firm today that Canada Post should not be privatized.

The government also let the cat out of the bag about privatization at that time when it said in recommendation No. 37 that the privatization plan be carried out by means of public share issue and should incorporate an employee share ownership plan. The Liberal Party recommended that this recommendation be eliminated and we say the same thing today.

On April 30 of this year we asked the minister responsible to admit to Canadians that this bill signifies the first step of the privatization of Canada Post and he flatly denied it.

Let us face it, Canada Post is being fattened up for slaughter. In other words, it is being prepared for sale to the highest bidder.

Much of the corporation's recent business success has been earned on the backs of average Canadians: higher postal rates, cuts in home delivery and the burgeoning use of supermailboxes in new suburbs. Vital postal subsidies in support of the fragile Canadian magazine and publishing industries have been cut. So have payments to Canada Post that subsidize air freight in the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and areas of Canada that really need it.

Labour relations have not improved and have grown worse in recent years. Who is winning? Obviously it is not rural Canadians who have already lost the majority of their post offices. It is not urban Canadians, many of whom now have to go to supermailboxes a way from their

homes. Certainly all Canadians are paying more money for less service.

Canada Post workers are not the winners. They still have no contract, no job security. They are living with the looming threat of privatization which will put many of them out of their jobs. All they have is an offer of bogus shares in a company which because it is a Crown corporation they already own. The quality of their relations with management has declined steadily during the time of this government's mandate.

Will the only winners be the future owners of Canada Post, I ask? There is no doubt that eventually this essential service will be in the hands of the one of the Tory government's big business friends.

This bill, lacking though it is, is yet another step by this government in the selling out of Canada Post and in the selling out of Canadians in terms of having a secure and competent delivery of mail service in this country.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite quoted at some length in her speech from the House of Commons the consumer and corporate affairs committee report entitled *Moving the Mail*. I was quite involved in the preparation and the writing of that report so her remarks naturally interested me.

She noted correctly that one of the recommendations of the report was that Canada Post ultimately be privatized, that shares be offered to individual Canadians, and that shares also be offered to employees of Canada Post. She is quite right in saying that.

Where the member is not being fully fair to those listening to this debate is that she did not mention that was one recommendation which was intended to go hand in glove with another. The other recommendation was that an independent third party, regulatory, decision-making body, a watch-dog body, be created to oversee the operations of a privatized Canada Post.

When she conveniently forgot to include that part of the recommendation, it enabled her then to make the fabulous leap of faith that she did in her speech by then saying that a privatized Canada Post would have to have a fire sale of its assets, would have to cut service to individual Canadians, would particularly cut service to