

Government Orders

pursuing changes to legislation and instead chose to rely on Canada Post to say it has to deliver this stuff.

This is one of the indications that the government is increasingly absolving itself of any responsibility for postal service when in fact legally it is still responsible.

I wanted to speak about the privatization of postal outlets. This has created ridiculous situations in my riding. Some members will know that Ottawa West happens to be the riding in Canada with the second highest proportion of seniors. One-third of the adults in Ottawa West are over 65. How and where services are delivered means whether or not seniors can live comfortably and conveniently in their communities as they age.

When post offices are moved from very close to a seniors' residence where 200 or 300 people may be housed to a good 20-minute walk away for a population that by large measure does not have cars is the kind of thing that happened under the privatization moves already made by Canada Post. The only concern was accommodating the private sector and providing services through the private sector. The emphasis on service disappears.

The other area in which privatization has seriously affected services in my riding is with respect to French language services. Canada Post is not ensuring that private postal outlets provide services in Canada's two official languages. It means that in Ottawa West, which has a population of close to 10,000 people who identify French as their first language, those people are not able to get the services they are legally guaranteed in their first language.

I am really not quite sure what this bill means and I do not think the government is really quite sure what it means. Let the employees buy shares in the company but do not give them a vote, do not give them any say about it, and do not consult with them ahead of time as to whether this is something they have any interest in whatsoever. It is also set up so shares can be given away. This is a standard part of any privatization package I have ever seen, whether it is in Canada or elsewhere in the world. It is the ability for the senior managers of a corporation, a Crown corporation, becoming privatized

to be able to set up their own future and that often involves the issuing of shares and stocks to themselves.

I have to question whether this bill is really about allowing employees to be co-owners of Canada Post. How employees can be the co-owners of something that is not privatized, which the minister denies he is trying to do, is not quite clear. However they are going to be co-owners. In that case the government has an obligation to lay out what this corporation is going to be worth of which the employees are theoretically going to be able to be co-owners.

I serve notice as has already been done by the union representing many of these employees, that this government has an \$80 million pay equity debt to women employees of the post office and that it had better not talk about privatizing or valuing the corporation without including that debt in the evaluation.

• (1610)

I am going to speak briefly about something else that has been of great concern to me. A number of complaints and inquiries have come to my office about the treatment of people working for the post office. Those have not diminished with the privatization efforts that have gone on. They have increased. Women who have worked for the post office for many years have suddenly been put on late night shift work. Women who have child care well in place have suddenly been told they have to work on a shift and they cannot get child care. People who have been with the post office for many years have suddenly found it is becoming impossible for them to stay because of the way employees are treated.

We do not have a good situation at the post office now. We have a decline in service to the public, not an increase, notwithstanding what the post office says. We have an increasingly market driven approach to delivering a public service that is crucial to the unity of Canada.

It is not much wonder when we on this side of the House and Canadians in general receive any kind of bill like this there is great cynicism and great scepticism about the minister's comments and great mistrust of those comments about what the real intention is. That is because consistently over close to nine years we have seen this government not being honest and open about