

Government Orders

completely up to Canada Post employees whether they join this plan or not.

We know what Canada Post represents for the Liberal Party. For years when the Liberals were in power, Canada Post was one of the things which helped build up the national debt and deficit that they left us.

• (1330)

Canada Post, this great symbol of Canadian unity. The opposition uses Canadian symbols and national unity to justify almost anything, especially spending or managing with no consideration for those who pay, namely Canadian taxpayers. For years under the Liberals, we saw Canada Post management run up huge deficits which contributed to our national debt.

We must remember how the opposition, the Liberal Party, ran Canada Post. For them, it was a wonderful opportunity for patronage. At that time, Liberal members of Parliament could give people jobs in Canada Post. We know how the Liberals really see Canada Post. What is Canada Post? It is a mail delivery service for all Canadians. The basic purpose of such a service is to be able to deliver Canadian mail safely, efficiently and at a reasonable cost throughout the country.

In the latest opinion surveys conducted a few months ago on Canadians' satisfaction with Canada Post's service, more than 90 per cent of the users of Canada Post said that they were satisfied with the management and the service provided. It was not the members opposite, who systematically oppose all bills, who spoke in that survey or study but rather the Canadian people. Canadians are not asking for a post office in every municipality in Canada. They are just asking us to set up a system to deliver the mail safely and efficiently, at the lowest possible cost. This is what the management of Canada Post is trying to do. To reach this goal, it is quite essential to have in place measures for a better partnership between the management of Canada Post and its employees.

Since Canada Post was given the mandate to be profitable and well run, it has even found a way to turn a profit in recent years. I think that we must be for this bill because, despite what the opposition still says, it will not privatize Canada Post. I repeat, it will only give Canada Post employees an opportunity to increase their income

by sharing more in the corporation's profits. I think that the opposition cannot help but be for the good of Canada Post employees and Canadian workers.

This is a good bill and I sincerely recommend that all members of this House support it for the good of the workers at Canada Post, as well as for all Canadians. Let us not forget that good labour relations and good service can only benefit all Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on Bill C-73. I do not think this bill is being presented in the proper light. I think what we really have here is privatization of Canada Post. I do not see how it can possibly be looked at any other way. It is a privatization, with the government owning 90 per cent of the shares and the employees owning 10 per cent of the shares.

It is really just the first step by a government that does not have the courage to say what it is doing. It says it is a restructuring of Canada Post and it is merely giving the employees some equity in the corporation. That is not the case. It is a Crown corporation now. It will not be essentially a Crown corporation in the normal sense after this bill goes through, if it does go through.

• (1335)

I want to draw the attention of the House to section 27(2)(1). It says: "The corporation is authorized to issue to the minister and the minister is authorized to acquire shares of the corporation in substitution for the equity of the corporation held by and on behalf of Her Majesty in right of Canada".

The government is giving up its equity in the traditional sense of a Crown corporation and is being issued shares the same way anyone would be issued shares. The only difference is that the government is being assured it will get 90 per cent of the shares.

This is only a first step. There is really nothing that is going to lock the government into maintaining 90 per cent of the shares. Those shares will invariably, over a period of time in the not too distant future, go to the private sector. I cannot stress that too much.