

*Government Orders*

list is finished. It is gone. We can go through all the procedures we want; it is gone. The post office is closed. The building is gone. The flag is gone. The job is gone, in many cases several jobs. In some cases it is more than one job; it is several jobs that are gone from a rural area. One other thing that is gone is service. The service is gone.

I do not care how many surveys they come up with, the government and Canada Post Corporation, which say that it takes  $x$  number of days for a letter to get from point  $a$  to point  $b$ . I can assure the House that is not the case.

I do not know how those figures are compiled. We had better service in Newfoundland when we had the mail on the Newfie bullet. When the Newfie bullet was operating and stopped at every little settlement, we could put our mail on the Newfie bullet one day in St. John's and have it taken off the same day in Gander, Newfoundland. In fact I believe the service was better even before the Newfie bullet when we had the dog team. I can remember when we had a dog team service in the community that I was living in. There was better service for Newfoundlanders at that time. I imagine we could go back to the pony express.

**An hon. member:** The government has gone to the dogs.

**Mr. Baker:** The service has gone to the dogs, I can tell you that.

It does not make any difference how we send a letter. I have had cases recently of students who have run out of time to register at university because the money they sent in the mail, the mail order, was lost or the letter of registration was lost. We have had countless numbers of cases of this.

People have come to the conclusion that it is just not safe to put a letter in the mail any more and count on it getting to the place it is being sent to on time. Instead of two days between provinces in actual fact it is over a week.

In answer to the hon. member's question, our service has deteriorated, and what does Canada Post do? It gets the Government of Canada to come up with this bill that

talks about giving shares in the corporation to employees as a good PR gesture and saying: "Boys and girls, look, we are going to allow you to get 10 per cent of this corporation, but we won't make it voting shares because you might have a say in the corporation. We won't give you a contract. You haven't had a contract for three years. We are going to give you 10 per cent of the shares. Actually we are not going to give it to you. We are going to sell it to you and we are going to come up with the amount of money you are going to have to pay later".

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a great pleasure to follow the member from Gander—Grand Falls, one of the more expressive and dramatic members of the House. However I did not know the Liberal Party wanted the postal service to go back to the dogs. He was saying it was much more efficient when the dogs did it back in Newfoundland many years ago. I also did not realize that the member was that old, unless I am mistaken about when dogs were used in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In any event I support the motion before the House to give this a six-month hoist. It is not a good bill. I am sure my rural colleagues in the Conservative Party agree as well. Even my friend from Etobicoke—Lakeshore probably agrees it is not a great bill. Therefore let us give it a hoist. Let us give it a study.

The government wants to sell off up to 10 per cent of the shares in the post office to the employees. I think that would be the first step toward privatization of the post office. I do not really want to set up a modern-day version of the pony express in this country.

The post office is in place to act as a service to all Canadians regardless of where we live. I know you, Mr. Speaker, as a very distinguished Chair of this House would agree, coming from rural Alberta, that we cannot privatize the post office in this country. It must remain a Crown corporation. It has been a Crown corporation ever since it began, supported by a number of Conservative governments over the years.

To open the door, to start to privatize the post office of this country, is a mistake. We have seen it happen with Air Canada. We have seen it happen with other Crown corporations. The government now is trying to do the same thing in Bill C-73, the bill that is before the House today.