

*Government Orders*

Privatization has been a policy tool used by this government many times in the past. We have seen the government on one hand say it would never privatize Air Canada and lo and behold what do we see happening, the privatization of Air Canada. Again it is just proof in point that the government cannot be held to its word.

I just want to read into the record a comment made by the minister responsible for Canada Post. This is an article in *The Ottawa Citizen* dated May 1, 1992. Here the minister insisted that the immediate privatization is not in the cards. But on the other hand, and I quote: "He refused to rule out future privatization except to say nothing will happen until after the next election".

That is a caveat you could drive a Mack truck through. I would suggest it is very much part of the minister's over-all plans that should this survive the next election—and that alone as we know is highly dubious indeed—but God forbid should it survive the next election, we can see very clearly in the minister's comments that are quoted in this May article in the *The Ottawa Citizen* that his strategy is to privatize Canada Post, sell it off to the retail sector, and to remove this government from yet another area of responsibility to the Canadian people.

This again is the minister responsible for Canada Post speaking and let me quote: "If I had to bet I would bet that in the next couple of decades you will see post offices being privatized all over the world and I would not mind seeing Canada first".

There it is in black and white. The minister is saying he not only wants to privatize the postal service in Canada, but he wants Canada to be a world leader in the privatization of our postal outlets.

That is not to say there are not incidents where utilizing postal services through retail outlets are in fact in many cases beneficial for the public, but that does not justify throwing the baby out with the bath water. That does not justify closing virtually every postal outlet that we now know, the rural outlets and I would submit many of the urban outlets when the time comes.

• (1610)

That does not justify cutting the heart out of the quality of service that people across Canada have come to expect and essentially, to reiterate my argument, cutting the heart out of those rural communities that

have come to rely on the post office as far more than just a post office, but as part and parcel of their community lifestyle.

The minister insists that this bill is designed only to make Canada Post employees feel proud to be a part of Canada's postal service. The problems that this corporation has had with respect to labour relations are not going to be eliminated by that. Those problems are deeply rooted in a long history of bitter labour-management distrust, a distrust that has been fostered, I submit, by years of mismanagement.

The company has rarely negotiated with its workers in good faith. Any concessions that have been gained by the workers have come as a result of hostile and often bitter negotiations. There are a litany of problems that hardly make Canada Post employees proud of their employer and proud of the situation they are in.

There are over 100,000 outstanding grievances currently registered at Canada Post. It has been over six months since the back-to-work legislation was passed regarding the operations of Canada Post. What has this government done? Absolutely nothing. It has sat back, cooled its heels and allowed the *status quo* to prevail. There is still no agreement, although the workers went back, albeit against their wishes, with the abiding faith that this government would keep its commitment to realize an agreement that would be satisfactory to both the corporation and the workers.

Is there any agreement or any movement toward that agreement? I suggest that is not the case. It demonstrates the reason for the lack of trust among the employees of Canada Post and among the employees throughout the Public Service Alliance of Canada. It demonstrates again why this government cannot be trusted and in the future will not be trusted.

The union did what it was asked to do. The employees went back to work. Canada Post did not do what it had agreed to do, namely, to come up with a reasonable contract to ensure the workers protection.

If the government and Canada Post wish to create an atmosphere of goodwill, they are not going to do it through this piece of legislation. They are going to do it if they could simply realize it by honouring their commitments and providing these workers with a collective agreement.