

Government Orders

• (1240)

In 1982 the postal corporation was given a very clear mandate to give better service, have better labour relations and balance the books in a due and gradual period so that the corporation could organize and reach its objective. Instead, what have we had as a result of that business plan of 1985? We have had two violent strikes that cost the taxpayers millions of dollars. We had to pay through postal stamp increases.

There is no more because of that business plan. Any members of the board of directors of Canada Post Corporation who refused to go along with the government were forced to resign. Therefore the government did what it wanted to do and forgot the original mandate of that corporation. Today, with this bill it is a joke because it wants to recreate the good labour relations that it had in 1982 and which stopped in 1985. Now it wants to give the employees the chance to own part of the corporation. They do not know what they are buying and they have no vote, so this is a joke and an insult.

[*Translation*]

So far, I was discussing the problems at Canada Post and relations between the corporation and the government, but I want to take this last minute to give another example from my riding.

In Saint-Léonard, there is only one post office, which may soon be closed and just look at the way these things are done. Canada Post did not ask the neighbourhoods around the post office what the town of Saint-Léonard thought about it. So what is it doing? It is looking around for a corner store that can buy the equipment needed to operate a post office. This means there will be no more counter service on Jean Talon Street. Of course there will be fewer problems with the union, because a number of employees will no longer be there.

Did it consider the service aspect? Will people get better service? There you have the whole philosophy of the Canada Post Corporation, reflected in the corporate plan imposed by this government in 1985: Listen, we have to make a profit and the rest does not matter.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, you have no doubt heard people say, "There is nothing there". Well, that is a good way to describe Bill C-73:

There is nothing there. There is nothing in it for workers and nothing in it for the people.

[*English*]

This is, no doubt, the first step toward privatization. I think we all acknowledge that. We recognize that the workers can buy up to 10 per cent of the shares, but there are no prices, there is no precision, and there are no voting or decision-making powers incorporated within that 10 per cent. That is, if they decide to proceed. That is really very unfortunate. This is a first step.

[*Translation*]

I am convinced that it is the first step to privatization. My colleagues in all parties indicate that they agree with me. I believe that is unfortunate, because the government has a wonderful opportunity to address a basic issue, namely the services which Canada Post provides to Canadians.

[*English*]

This was a wonderful opportunity. It could have looked at what Canadians are saying and it could have addressed those concerns. Then perhaps it would have been a laudable, appropriate and meaningful bill. I see it as a first step toward privatization. One could read into that perhaps some potential positive elements, but the way it is now written it is vague, imprecise and does not give any sense of what is going to be accomplished and what a golden and wonderful opportunity lost. It could have addressed the whole question of service.

I want to dwell a moment or so upon the question of service. This is a terribly arrogant corporation. As a member of Parliament, I asked a very simple question: Tell me which facilities in my constituency have been affected by your decision. First it resisted. Second, when I persisted, it gave me a list of all those that were still in operation with the services being offered. I guess the official languages are not understood very well. I asked very clearly about which facilities had been affected. I would like to know so I can in fact study this with my constituents, but the choice was not to tell me.

• (1245)

I am hoping, as I know you probably are deep down, Mr. Speaker, that there is a Liberal government, because the first call I will be making will be to the Canada Post