

member with respect to his position on this bill and who, quite frankly, have taken great pains to keep this bill from ever getting through the House. The hon. member for Vancouver South was able to keep these men in line most of the time. He was able to balance his activities on both committees, and he was able to develop strong friendships that cross party lines. He deserves a great deal of tribute from all sides of this House.

I want now to turn very briefly to just a few aspects of this bill in which we are particularly interested. I would like to talk about three amendments which we were able to push through the committee, and about one amendment which we were not able to. The amendments we are particularly proud of we feel will make a big difference to the operation of the corporation. Our amendment to Section 5(2) provides for a guarantee that the corporation will provide similar service to communities of a comparable size, wherever they may be located.

I cannot stress highly enough the importance of this amendment to my own region of western Canada. Over the past five years the post office has been under the hiring freeze of Treasury Board. In that period the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia have suffered tremendous growth rates, yet they have received no additional postal workers.

This has meant that cities like Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver have postal service which is leaps and bounds worse than comparable service in eastern Canada. The minister points out that service in eastern Canada is bad too, and he is right. But he cannot seriously stand up in this House and suggest to us that the city of Calgary has comparable postal service with the city of Hamilton, a city approximately the same size, if not a little smaller.

Our amendment to Section 5 will guarantee the same level of postal service across Canada. No longer will the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia have to suffer second class postal service. I only hope that those residents of Calgary who are going without postal service take note of the fact that while their own Tory MPs were taking pains to destroy the entire system, to stall this bill, and to replace Canadian letter carriers with American couriers, it was us, the NDP, who were fighting to get this clause into the bill.

The hon. member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) talked about courier service. He stated they do not use the postal system. When a representative of the courier service appeared before the committee, I asked whether it was correct that courier services in Toronto were gathering bundles, taking them to the Post Office, mailing them and having their courier service trucks in Montreal meet the Post Office truck and then make the deliveries. Do the people of Canada know that is going on in the Post Office? The hon. member said they were not using the Post Office. I say to him that they are using the postal services. It was admitted in committee.

There are other NDP amendments which I would like to dwell on just briefly. First, I would like to mention that we persuaded the minister to include a section in the bill which provides for the gazetting of any closure of a postal facility and any closure of a postal route. This amendment will give rural residents across the country some protection in the event

that their postal service is threatened by cutbacks. Before these cutbacks go into effect the residents will have the option of appealing to government, and hopefully these pleas will not fall on deaf ears.

Finally, we are proud that the government accepted our strong amendment regarding mail opening. We are frankly concerned, however, that the government may reverse itself on this commitment once the McDonald commission tables its report. As the minister knows, such a change will require an amendment to this bill, and I can assure him that such an amendment will not come easily.

We do have two concerns with this bill and I would like to quickly enumerate them. We are very concerned that the government rejected our amendment respecting the rights of contract employees. We felt that small contract employees who wanted to become part of a trade union should have the right to join. The minister rejected that. This bill takes away the right of these employees to bargain collectively. We find that unfortunate, to say the least. As the minister knows, the Canada Labour Code provides for collective bargaining rights for contract employees in the private sector. For the government to provide such rights to other workers and deny them to their own workers is hypocritical and unfair.

● (2200)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

FISHERIES—WEST COAST CHINOOK SALMON STOCKS—
RESPONSE BY UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES TO REQUEST
SEEKING REDUCED CATCHES—MINISTER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Mr. Speaker, I rose in the House this afternoon to ask the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. LeBlanc) some questions that are important to the fishermen along the Fraser River and the coast of British Columbia. I had just heard the hon. member for Richmond-South Delta (Mr. Siddon) try to get some kind of answer from the minister about his disposition toward the negotiations with the U.S. and the Chinook salmon run in the Fraser River. All the minister could say was that he had had a very positive answer from the U.S. officials. That is really not good enough. We have heard that from the minister and his officials for the past ten years. It did not matter what was being negotiated in terms of the fisheries agreement on the west coast, it always sounded good before it happened.

The fishermen have long memories of the negotiations that have been going on, of the promises that were made during those negotiations and what they got at the end. I asked the minister if he had that kind of positive agreement in writing