

Therefore, if Canadians will not benefit, if services will not improve, if closures continue and the majority of employees oppose such a plan, who is the winner? What does Bill C-73 do or potentially do for Canadians or for Canada Post? The answer is simple. It is extremely simple. The answer is money. How much money? Nobody knows. What to do with the money? Nobody is saying.

At the legislative committee hearings financial returns from the share sale were said to be in the multimillions. But there is certainly a question here. Nobody knows. What is certain is that the top brass would love to get their hands on a lot more money. Who would not? But the issue is more than that; the employees' stock plan provides no voting rights. Some employees will have to buy stocks at a price yet to be determined. Some employees will get them for free and cash them in the future. However, Canada Post wants money. The corporation is profit driven at this point, not service driven.

The attaining of profits at the expense of service, employee security and good labour relations seems to be okay with the current Canada Post administration. No one will argue that Canada Post should be self-sufficient, but there is a difference between self-sufficiency and profitability when it is done at the expense of the Canadian taxpayer.

Remember, Canadians support the postal system by their patronage and through their taxes. Tax dollars put the postal system in place, expanded it and still subsidize it. Every Canadian who ever paid taxes, every Canadian who ever bought a stamp has contributed to the establishment of the Canadian postal system. Now what right does the current management have to start selling off Canadians' assets?

When the postal Crown corporation was established it was not intended to be sold. It was intended to be improved upon. Contrary to the government's claim that this bill is not the first major step for privatization, the indication is clear that it is. It is a move toward privatization.

At a time when most Canadians anxiously try to have their postal services improved, we continue to dismantle ours and give the current administrators leeway to go in any direction they wish. The corporation would benefit from a share sale in the short term. More money would permit corporate lenders to meet its financial obligations

to the government. More money in the till may make Canada Post look a little sweeter to possible investors for privatization. Only a dreamer would think that turning our backs on the problems at Canada Post will make them go away.

• (1055)

Bill C-73 is not a bill for Canadians. It is not a bill to help the average person. It is not a bill to open corporate post offices. As far as I can see, it is a bill based on a money-driven economy which over the long run will reduce services across this land. These include the services of newspapers, the services of small communities and the new expanding areas where more supermailboxes will not be accessible in much of our winter climate. In fact, there are many, many cuts in service.

There are many irritants for all Canadians in this bill. Bill C-73 creates many more questions than it answers. It causes more concerns than it addresses and it does not even come close to tackling the important issues at Canada Post.

Labour relations are very important. Effective postal services to Canadians, equality of postal services, security of the mail, good corporate identity, these five principles of the Canada Post mandate are unaddressed in this amendment. This amendment is a contradiction of the policies and premises outlined in the Canada Post Corporation Act.

We in the Liberal Party, in the opposition, feel it is an ill-founded and very detrimental piece of legislation to the communication system across this country. We could liken it to the removal of telecommunications from many communities. There was the removal of CBC in my local area. Removing what joins this country together will not improve Canada; it will pull us down further.

This government should reconsider this bill. Stop this insane action of putting Canadians second.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to say a few words today regarding Bill C-73, an act amending the Canada Post Corporation Act.

If ever there was a case to be made that spending time in the House of Commons was not always a useful exercise, this probably has to be the best example. Bill C-73 is taking up time in the House of Commons and will do absolutely no good as far as the people of Canada