

at the same time as he is quite prepared to destroy it by franchising-out.

I found out the other day that mail coming to me as a Member of Parliament cannot be picked up at a Post Office. We have to go down to the middle of a shopping mall to pick it up. The other day my assistant was complaining that she could not pick up two very large bags of mail at the back door of the Post Office anymore. She has to drag these things through a mall with no security or anything else. That must change. Many citizens are complaining about the fact they cannot use the Post Office and that the facilities in the back of some store or laundry are completely unacceptable.

The key point is that the Government is prepared to deliver postal service on the backs of workers who are paid a minimum rather than a decent wage. Every member of the Conservative caucus ought to be disgusted by this. Imagine the situation of a single parent. I have confronted this situation on the picket line. They are trying to raise a couple of kids on \$12 to \$14 an hour and if this thing goes through their jobs are gone. They will be lucky to get the job in the local Shoppers Drug Mart and they will be paid \$5 an hour. Trying to raise their family on that means they are better off on welfare. That is what the Minister wants. That is what the Conservative Government wants. That is not what we in the NDP want and we will fight it to the end. It is a disgusting situation for most Canadians and I think they despise it.

**An Hon. Member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Skelly:** The true test of that is 24 per cent in the popularity polls. It is hard to conceive of a political Party being able to drop even further, but when the postal carrier strike was over it dropped like a rock. After this strike, given the Draconian legislation we have in front of us, the Government is finished. Its popularity will drop even further.

It is of critical importance that this legislation be withdrawn. The Minister asked what the Opposition would do. He said we would totally cave in to CUPW, give them everything they want, send them all to Bermuda for 12 months. Absolute nonsense. I recognize there has to be a philosophical difference in order to have opposition. Yet what the Conservatives believe is that workers do not have rights.

**Mr. McDermid:** What a crock.

**Mr. Skelly:** The right to bargain collectively with your employer, when it interferes with the Government's goals, results in the trashing of the Post Office. The workers are going to lose.

**Mr. McDermid:** What nonsense.

**Mr. Skelly:** My friend says "nonsense". Postmasters in many communities who talk to the employees say they will be lucky if they have a job a year from now. They should start looking for other employment because the Post Office is gone with the wind.

*Postal Services Continuation Act, 1987*

**Mr. McDermid:** Talk about scare tactics.

**Mr. Skelly:** I am simply repeating what postmasters have told employees.

**Mr. McDermid:** They are using scare tactics.

**Mr. Skelly:** They are simply quoting from the management plan which was put in place by the Conservative Government. A beautiful example is the Post Office in Comox, British Columbia.

**Mr. McDermid:** Try my riding.

**Mr. Skelly:** If the Hon. Member is not responsible enough to look after the concerns of his constituents and protect the postal service, that does not surprise me one iota. I am concerned about that post office in Comox. It is very clear that the actions of the Canada Post Corporation will put that post office away. The staff has been reduced. The contract entitles it to two positions but Canada Post refuses to fill the other. That means that while preparing for the day the individual worker often cannot open until late in the morning. That post office serves thousands of people in the community of Comox and the surrounding area. The individual worker must close for coffee breaks and lunch. By 3.45 in the afternoon the individual worker must close the post office in order to get the day-end accounting done.

• (1230)

Senior citizens in the community of Comox do not have the benefit of coherent postal service because that post office is closed for a good portion of the day with one individual trying to provide service. The Post Office says that it will fix the problem of inconvenience by franchising out. On either side of that post office, within walking distance for senior citizens, two stores now provide franchise service. They are paying their workers the minimum wage rather than the postal contract rate.

**Mr. Shields:** Not true.

**Mr. Skelly:** One of my Conservative colleagues has accused me of lying to the House. He says that is not true. That is absolutely true and there will be a community meeting very soon to deal with that issue in the town of Comox.

If this were the only case of this kind there might be some strange justification for it, but it is not the only case. The Conservative Government has a determined plan to privatize the functions of the Post Office and get rid of its budget and its responsibility for it. Transportation in the Post Office has been contracted out to private companies, as have rural mail service and wicket functions. I have no doubt that if the Government and its agent, the Canada Post Corporation, is allowed to continue, the sorting function will also be franchised out in the future. That will, of course, destroy the union and will put an enormous number of people out of work. They will lose a decent union contract with fair wages and working