

*Postal Services Continuation Act, 1987*

Patterson of the *Globe and Mail*. It is called *Post Mortem* and I recommend it to the Hon. Member.

One of the things outlined in the book is that over the last 15 years there have been several Ministers responsible for Canada Post, Postmaster Generals before the creation of the Crown corporation and Ministers responsible after that. There have been three complete changes in the upper management of the Post Office in that period of time; Jim Corkery, being the first of this group of three, came from the Ontario division of the Post Office. At that time it was a department of Government. When it became a Crown corporation there was Michael Warren, who brought in a whole new management team. We now have Don Landers who is running the Crown corporation with another new management team.

What we have had over the last 15 years is three completely different sets of managers. We have had different approaches from governments because there have been different governments in that time. However, one consistency throughout the last 15 years is that we have had the same labour union leaders, Jean-Claude Parrot and Bob McGarry.

Is it the Hon. Member's position that in fact we have had the incredibly unlucky situation in which three complete sets of managers, with different philosophies and approaches, have all happened to be terribly wrong and totally responsible for the bad labour relations, while on the other side of the equation the consistent and same union leaders are blameless and in no way responsible for the sad state of labour relations?

The Hon. Member and I agree that labour relations in the Post Office are in a terrible state, but I really find it a little difficult to blame it all on Government and management when we have had three different approaches, three different sets of managers, while on the other side we have had the consistency of approach, a militant approach, over the last 15 years. Is there no blame to be attached whatsoever to that side of the equation, that everything rests with the incredible misfortune of coming up with three new sets of managements, all of whom are totally incompetent when it comes to managing labour? Is that the position of the Hon. Member?

**Mr. Benjamin:** I think my hon. friend has missed the point. Perhaps I did not make it well enough and I will try again. I said if we have good management we will have a good union. If we have a good employer, we will have good employees. Surely over the last 25 years the experience we have had in Canada must tell us something. When it gets to the point where the *Winnipeg Free Press* starts calling into question the competency of the Government and the management, it has to tell us something. That is not coming from union members or union leaders. I do not think that Mr. Parrot has been the leader of the CUPW for the last 15 years. I think it has been the last seven or eight years since Mr. Davidson passed away. Compared to Mr. Davidson, Mr. Parrot is a saint. In fact, he has been complimented as many times as being the most responsible yet in the postal unions.

As far as the letter carriers are concerned, last month is the first time in their entire history that they have struck. They have been more than patient. By the way, postmasters out in rural Canada belong to a union as well, although they call it an association. Ask them about the management of the Post Office over the last 15 years.

• (1250)

The Hon. Member says that they have hired three different sets.

**Ms. Mitchell:** They should hire women for a change.

**Mr. Benjamin:** I do not know what kind of sets they are into. Can they find better sets than that? They sure as hell were matching sets. They matched in terms of not being able to comprehend what the essential reason for and the purpose of their position is at the Canada Post Corporation. It is to provide service in the handling and delivery of mail in Canada; and that takes first priority over everything else.

Service has been chronically reduced. Communities and citizens have been ignored and given the run around. Do you call that good management, Mr. Speaker? They have been given double-talk.

There was a situation, for example, at one time in the Regina Post Office which had hundreds of pending grievances, some of them going back six years. Most of them were very minor and could have been settled between the union rep and the foreman on the floor of the sorting room. No, they had to go upstairs, and then to Saskatoon, and then to Winnipeg. Sometimes they even went all the way to Ottawa. No wonder the morale is bad. By the way, some of those grievances the union refused to take up because it did not figure that the member had a case. The union is not right 100 per cent of the time, and I have never suggested that for one minute. Nobody is 100 per cent right and nobody is 100 per cent wrong in almost everything.

But they have not, I submit, been unreasonable in fighting for something so fundamental, something that took all these years through collective bargaining, and all those years of struggle; that is, the rights and benefits to which they are entitled. If one pays good one will get good work. If one pays minimum wage, or something like \$5 an hour and one wants turnover in one's workforce, then one will sure get it. If one wants to get incompetents—

**Mr. Horner:** Who gets \$5 an hour?

**Mr. Benjamin:** When you franchise out post offices and they are done on tenders and the lowest bidder gets it, then that lowest bidder will not be paying \$10 or \$12 an hour. You know it and I know it, Mr. Speaker.

I am not saying that those three sets of management that have been hired in the last 15 years are bad, personally. I have no doubt that they are very smart, wise and competent gentlemen. But I want to submit that that same management