

Government Orders

The petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the Prime Minister to request the Government of Brazil to expel Christine Lamont and David Spencer and return them to Canada in accordance with Brazilian law.

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT**MEASURE TO AMEND**

The House resumed from Tuesday, March 9, consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak to Bill C-73, an act amending the Canada Post Corporation Act.

I have followed this issue for some time, having been the postal critic for the New Democratic Party for the first two years of my sitting as a member of Parliament in this House of Commons.

I represent a constituency with approximately 50 postal operations, 50 rural post offices and an urban post office in the city of North Battleford. I have always considered the postal operation to be a very significant part of the rural economy that allows services and people to work in our communities. Of course agriculture is the key that drives the constituency I represent but the post office is a representation of federal services in rural and agricultural Saskatchewan.

This bill before us is a significant change in the way Canada Post operates. It is a significant change in the way in which the public can perceive the operations of Canada Post. Members of Parliament in this Chamber today, the people of Canada, including those watching on their TV screens, should understand what the government is doing with Canada Post through an amendment to this act. It is providing us with a corporation that is moving toward a private sector operation and away from the service-oriented corporation that Parliament created on behalf of the people of Canada back in 1981.

It will be remembered quite clearly that the original mandate that was set up and that this Parliament established to govern Canada Post was one that put service first. The mandate said very clearly that postal service was the number one priority of the people of Canada in having a communication network at Canada Post.

The minister was quick to tell us on many occasions that the mandate also said that this Parliament gave Canada Post the mandate to be self-sufficient. I cannot disagree with that. I agree that the post office was working toward and should operate on a self-sufficient basis.

• (1015)

In rural communities there are times when the taxpayers' only visible return from the federal government is the operation of the post office in their community.

This government has allowed Canada Post to operate beyond self-sufficiency. Nowhere in this mandate is Canada Post required to turn a profit. There is nothing in this mandate that says Canada Post is supposed to return 16, 17, 18 per cent on investment which is one of the goals that Canada Post Corporation management has placed for itself. Certainly a return on investment of 16, 17, 18 per cent above a break-even point is creating an additional tax on Canadians to run a service that in a sense they are already paying for.

I am quite concerned about some of the directions Canada Post has been taking.

This amendment today moves us clearly into the area of privatization of Canada Post. Specifically this bill will make 10 per cent of Canada Post's non-voting shares available for purchase by Canada Post employees on a voluntary basis.