

Government Orders

given us a signal of what his true intent was in terms of the Public Service in Canada, including those public servants at Canada Post.

He talked at length about how there would be pink slips issued everywhere. We all remember those quotes from the election campaign. The master of hyperbole on the other side of the House, the great Prime Minister of Canada, was going to clean out the House, he was going to teach those nasty old public servants and post office workers a lesson.

He was saying: "Torydom is in town and fear for your jobs. You are going to be the scapegoat of everything we do wrong. You are going to be vilified by this government because you are an easy mark and an easy target". That is exactly what the Tories did.

We saw the great postal service of Canada dismantled piece by piece, letter by letter, by this government opposite.

• (1220)

The government first of all announced that in urban areas there would be no more delivery to new homes. There is the unbelievable situation in places like Dartmouth, where a small piece of the community had not yet been developed residentially. Maybe it was a farmer's field, or maybe it was something else. Maybe it was just not developed. Everybody around them has been getting mail for 100 years. Now somebody puts a new street in and they do not get door-to-door delivery any more. This Conservative government with its penchant for cutting back and its absolute desire to destroy anything Canadian, anything that every Canadian could reach out and touch and say: "That is what makes me a Canadian". It put in supermailboxes. In the middle of some of the biggest cities we have supermailboxes. Is that not wonderful. I pay the same price for my postal service as the person down the road, but the person down the road gets supermailboxes.

Back when I was elected the post office was a big issue. People wanted to know how the Liberal Party would deal with Canada Post, whether the Liberal Party was committed to reinstating door-to-door delivery, or whether the Liberal Party would ensure that in rural Canada, where the post office is the most visible and perhaps the only symbol of this national government, we would not abandon them.

There have been thousands and thousands of petitions presented to this Parliament since I got elected.

An hon. member: Places like Cow Head.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): My hon. friend from Newfoundland says places like Cow Head. I was in Cow Head. Those people have been abandoned. They have been abandoned because Canada Post made a decision that came right from the mouth of the government babes opposite in the front benches that it was going to dismantle Canada Post and not run it as a service, but run it as a business.

If that means that some Canadians can expect to get less service than other Canadians then so be it. If that means breaking the backs of the unions then so be it. If it means raising the price of a stamp as high it can dare go then so be it. If it means Canada Post acquiring companies and competing with good private sector companies, such as courier services, then so be it. If it means having the president of a Crown corporation, Canada Post, who does not feel that he is responsible to anybody but God, and maybe not even to God, then so be it. That is what this government has set about to do.

We have seen an erosion in mail service right across Canada. The government can give you all kinds of statistics. Maybe in an urban area like mine it is okay. Maybe people do not mind going down to the IGA to buy their stamps or pick up their parcels, maybe they do not. However, in a rural area the post office was not just a building where you picked up your mail; it was a symbol of Canada. In many of those communities all over Canada, in the prairies, the only visible sign of the Government of Canada, of this great nation of ours, of this great institution of Parliament, was the post office. The Tories did not have any mandate from the Canadian public to shut it down, to deliver it to the hands of the private sector. However, that is exactly what it has done.

In the last few years we have seen the government develop a policy, an abominable policy, to go into areas of our Public Service and make people feel that they are no longer welcome to contribute their day's labour for the meagre pay they get. It means going into places like Canada Post and allowing the president of Canada Post and some of the people he has put around him to go in and poison the atmosphere between labour and management to such an extent that last year, a year and a half