

*Private Members' Business*

I am sorry to say it but I do not accept the reasons invoked by the member for Cambridge earlier tonight that we cannot afford this, or that it is undesirable, or that this is a Crown corporation. If it is a Crown corporation the least it could do is to live within the act that exists now, but it does not even do that.

No, Mr. Speaker, I do not accept those arguments and neither do my colleagues. Canada Post can bloody well learn to live within the law and behave like a Crown corporation, a corporation of the Government of Canada. This is not Purolator, this is not a company that manufactures hockey pucks. This is a corporation of the government. This is Canada Post. That is how I want it, that is how my colleagues want it and, more important, that is what Canadians expect us to do.

[Translation]

I congratulate my colleague.

**Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, since other members wish to speak as well, I will be brief and I simply want to say that the bill introduced this evening by the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur is undoubtedly well-intentioned. I heard the hon. member's presentation on his bill to the Sub-committee on Private Members' Business, and I must say his argument was very convincing.

However the hon. member must realize that Canada Post offers its services through a network of more than 19,000 sales outlets, of which only 3,600 belong to the Canada Post Corporation. The corporation has always given our national flag pride of place in its establishments.

It is the corporation's policy to ensure that its employees know the proper way to display the Canadian flag. The Canada Post Corporation ensures the flag is displayed proudly and with respect.

However the vast majority of postal counters in this country are located in retail sales outlets owned by private interests. Most of them are in drugstores, retail stores, variety stores, service stations and shopping malls.

Since private sector entrepreneurs make up the majority of sales outlets of Canada Post, I think it is up to them to decide what they wish to display in their own establishments.

First of all, I want to point out that in corporate sales outlets where it is possible to do so the Canadian flag is prominently displayed by the corporation.

Second, this bill totally ignores Canada Post's commitment to promote the Canadian flag. The corporation is already involved in promoting the image of the Canadian flag in its philatelic program. Every year Canada Post produces 250 million stamps showing the Canadian flag—more than 10 stamps for every man, woman and child in this country—and the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur will admit that as far as promoting the Canadian flag is concerned this is a tremendous program.

Incidentally, in philatelic language these stamps are commonly referred to as definitives, in other words, stamps that are reprinted year after year. This government is proud of the fact that year after year the Canada Post Corporation promotes the Canadian flag through its philatelic program.

Despite their differences, Canadians are proud of their country and thanks to Canada Post they can express that pride by using these stamps that bear the image of our flag. I hope that all members will encourage Canadians to use these splendid stamps on their correspondence.

Eleven years ago, when Canada Post was established as a Crown corporation with the support of all political parties, the postal system was going through a very difficult period. Service was deteriorating, labour relations were in disarray and the deficit was nearing \$1 billion.

• (1950)

Changes had to be made to provide the postal service to which Canadians were entitled. In particular, it was necessary to eliminate political interference in postal affairs. It was time to let the experts on mail delivery work without worrying about the political meddling that was customary before 1984.

I believe that Canada Post is doing a very good job and that it has considerably improved the postal service, thanks to the cooperation of local businesses and establishments which provide Canadians with increased access to postal products and services. Today stamps and other postal products and services are sold wherever the demand exists, especially in food stores and shops and various other types of business.