

If Canada Post does not make a profit it cannot employ as many people, it cannot continue to expand into new areas, and sadly, it cannot provide the high level of service which Canadians have the right to expect. It becomes a vicious circle.

We believe this legislation will put an end to that vicious circle from the start. Our ultimate goal is to get away from the outdated notion that Canada Post exists only as a battleground for the classic labour-management struggle for philosophical and operational control. Unfortunately some people are still locked into that mindset and that is not particularly constructive for society.

Most of our major competitors around the world are getting away from that kind of a mindset. Canada Post is in the business to deliver the mail and to do so on a profitable basis. Labour disruptions jeopardize that business both nationally and in world-wide markets. Unlike manufacturers, service industries like Canada Post cannot build up big inventories and continue selling during a labour dispute.

Let me hasten to add that employee share ownership does not mean doing away with unions or that people are going to work for half their wages. Far from it. We are going to continue to have strong unions at Canada Post. Canada Post will continue to offer competitive wages to all of its employees. The corporation successfully negotiated fair and generous settlements with five of its unions in the year preceding the strike and had difficulty with only one, CUPE, which resulted in disruptions in postal service.

• (1250)

I move:

That the House continue to sit through lunch for the purpose of continuing consideration of Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation.

I know there are many members very interested in speaking on this motion.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, in the 10 minutes I have under the rules I am happy to speak on Bill C-73. I must say one could use a lot more than 10 minutes when you start talking about the postal corporation and especially from my perspective. I have been a member of this august Chamber while we still had a postal service in a department of government. It has gone from a department of government in

which members did have a little input, to say the least, in postal service to their constituents.

Then the great panacea came and we took it out of a department and made it a postal corporation, a Crown corporation. That was going to be a new day for labour relations, a new day for service to Canadians and a new day for postal service in Canada.

I was here in the Chamber when those bills by the then Liberal government were debated and I was in the opposition. I can even remember who the critic was for the Official Opposition of the day who sometimes sits in the chair in which Your Honour sits. There was a general agreement, because there had been dissatisfaction with postal service as a department of government, that perhaps a postal corporation, a Crown corporation, would remedy many of the complaints people had.

We now have the postal corporation and Bill C-73, following the remarks of a lot of members who have spoken before me, seems to be another extension of a Crown corporation to now giving shares to employees and perhaps beginning and will complete the road to privatization of a post office.

Having not seen the improvement in postal service from a department to a postal corporation, I have very real apprehension if we are going down the slippery slope, as we say in the jargon, of the privatization of a postal service in this country. This country will not be able to provide the service to Canadians from coast to coast if we get in that line.

Before I continue I want to thank my colleague from Nova Scotia, the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, for having the courtesy of letting me take the floor before he took the floor because we all know we have a certain rotation here. I had been here a little earlier and I was getting a little hungry for lunch but he is younger than I am and he can wait for lunch if he has not already eaten. I do appreciate that courtesy to say these few remarks.

I am sorry the member for Halton—Peel has left. He was the chairman of the committee for consumer and corporate affairs. He was a very active chairman. He was a very active columnist before he came to Parliament on many issues Parliament has spoken about. I say philosophically, in a general way at this stage in the debate, the question he put to the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville had some merit in that perhaps factually there were more points of service.