

Canada Post Corporation Act

most in the attitude of the Progressive Conservative Party is that they would have the Canadian people believe that any amendment to a bill should necessarily be introduced in this House. The standing committees of the House have precisely been set up to allow members to have more input in every bill. That is how we work in this House so as to allow the largest possible number of members to speak and to make a worthwhile contribution to the discussion on the various bills introduced by the government or by others.

No, I think that during the months devoted to this debate in which many members from both sides of the House have made useful contributions to the proceedings regarding the setting up of that new Crown corporation, we all had the opportunity to state or put forward our views and the ideas of our constituents. I agree that there is some risk involved in turning a department into a Crown corporation, but I must also admit that my constituents are fed up with the operation of the Post Office during the past 10 or 15 years due to numerous labour relations problems and also to the inertia of the superstructure of another department which was supposed to make investments, which caused many problems. The unions and our constituents told us about it. The employees, and even the official critic of the opposition agreed with this principle. When it was the government, the party opposite expressed its support for the creation of a new Crown corporation. Mr. Speaker, I think that all this input clearly justifies our going ahead and adopting this bill as soon as possible, so that the machinery for the creation of this Crown corporation may be set in motion. As you know, all we have before us are good wishes and papers. Those papers must be turned into concrete measures and develop into a Crown corporation, and it is our duty, as Canadians, to build it. This will be a difficult and long term endeavour. The sooner we begin, the better.

As to the point which the hon. member made earlier, it is a fact that it will not be perfect after five years, for nothing is in this world. Should changes be required, the hon. member is well aware that he will be here, together with me and the other members, to bring them about. I think that that is our job, and that is why we are here. I, for one, have my mind made up, and I wish opposition members would realize that Canadians need that Crown corporation, especially postal employees and the people involved in the postal service. They want it, they pressed us into taking steps to have it, again recently, everyone wants it, the sooner the better. In that context, I ask hon. members opposite to act like Canadians and do so seriously, without resorting to dilatory measures but by saying simply: Do we agree, yes or no? We have the right to vote; we shall use that right and tell Canadians whether or not we want that Crown corporation. But let us do so as quickly as possible.

● (2150)

[English]

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great sense of pride and relief that I rise to speak

on this bill. We have been waiting an awfully long time for this opportunity. We are delighted that it has finally arrived because the New Democratic Party was the first political party in Canada to support the idea of a Crown corporation for the post office. This is one NDP policy we are proud to share with the other groups in the House.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): You borrowed it from us.

Mr. Parker: We are convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is the best possible solution to the postal problems in Canada today. We are not under any illusions. We know this will not cure all the ills in the Post Office overnight. However, we know this bill will provide an atmosphere which will result in a better Post Office. It will give the Post Office management the opportunity to determine its own priorities without reference to Treasury Board policies which make no sense. The bill will provide the Post Office workers with a much better opportunity to negotiate those aspects of their working conditions which most directly affect them. If the problems in our Post Office can be solved, this is the bill that will provide the catalyst that will allow these solutions.

I want to briefly turn to a few personal comments. I congratulate and express my appreciation to the New Democratic Party and its members for allowing me to sit in on the committee stages and work on this bill. Also, I commend the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) for his efforts in the work on this bill, and also my researcher, David Gort who spent many, many hours researching and helping in the background.

Mr. Kaplan: This sounds like the Academy Awards.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): How about your official agent?

Mr. Parker: In the nine months that this bill has been before the House, a lot of nasty words have passed under the bridge from all sides. I just want to take this opportunity to say that despite all these words I have a great deal of respect for two men with whom I have worked on this bill. I want to say with respect to the Postmaster General that if all other members of cabinet were able to exhibit his qualities of patience, tolerance, and flexibility his government might not be so unpopular where I come from. The minister was willing to listen. He was willing to negotiate, and he was willing to be fair. These qualities ensure that he has quite a future ahead of him. It is only too bad he is in the wrong party.

The other member of this House to whom I would like to pay tribute is the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser), the former postmaster general. The hon. member had one of the most difficult roles to play in this debate, and I was honestly astonished at how successfully he was able to play that role. While the committee was sitting the hon. member was also a member of the constitutional committee, which also had a very heavy schedule.

Within his own caucus there exists a rump group of extremely conservative men who do not support the hon.