

*Government Orders*

difficult to justify in the minds of Canadians who have bought and paid for this corporation over history by supporting Canada Post Corporation, through government funding of Canada Post Corporation and by buying postage stamps and postage services. Yes, this corporation has been purchased by Canadians with Canadian dollars.

Now a small group of people are selling it off, the management of Canada Post and the Conservative government. Bill C-73 is vague and provides no detailed proposal on those questions that I raised.

What does Bill C-73 mean for service to Canadians? Does Bill C-73 offer equal service to communities of equal size? Does Bill C-73 advance communication mechanisms to take into account new technology and technological changes? Will the passage of Bill C-73 reopen the over 1,400 post offices closed or converted in the last six years? Will this bill stop the further closures scheduled for this month, next month, this year and so on?

• (1045)

This bill does absolutely nothing to address the single biggest issue in Canada as far as the postal corporation goes, and that is good delivery service to Canadians.

Some six years ago there were over 5,200 post offices in Canada. Today there are less than 3,800. In over 1,400 Canadian communities the institution has been removed. The flag has been taken down. The symbol of Canada has been destroyed. This has not been an act of terrorism, not terrorism as we know it, but rather it has been a systematic dismantling of a great Canadian institution executed by a corporate plan authorized by our government, a Conservative government.

Does this bill say: Stop, enough is enough? No, it does not. Despite the efforts of thousands and thousands of Canadians who, even through countless petitions, have requested that the government stop this closure policy the government continues its course. This bill does nothing to reverse that trend. This bill does not help return the postal institution to communities where it has been so vital historically in this country.

What can Bill C-73 do for employer-employee relations? The minister responsible for Canada Post said that the employee plan can play a significant role in laying the

foundation for increased co-operation between employer and employees by augmenting employee interest in the well-being of the employer and its financial success.

What do the employees say about this Bill C-73? Postal workers will not be bribed by the government's employee shares scheme. Read the lead line of the response of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. The Public Service Alliance of Canada labels share-selling by Canada Post a sham. There is not much support from the rank and file workers of Canada Post. In fact there is no support, there is not one bit of support from the rank and file workers.

The only group that we have not heard from is top management. Are the top managers, the high-priced help, perhaps eager for the passage of this bill? They could be, and for a really good reason. Top managers may see this as an opportunity for some freebies, some additional perks. The reason for their excitement is that they could get shares for free. Remember how they criticized the vagueness of the bill. One thing that has been made very clear, one clause in the bill that is extremely clear, is that shares can be given away.

What are the possibilities of giving these shares to letter carriers out there? What are the possibilities of giving shares to the clerks at the counters who we see when we go into Canada Post? What are the possibilities of giving shares to the workers, to the average people in all of our communities? I would submit that the possibilities are very limited.

What are the chances of the corporate president, vice-president or the board of directors of getting some of these freebies, maybe in the form of remuneration, a stock option plan or some other scheme that may well be put in place by the cabinet? It may be in the form of some other perk. How can we rely on a postal service for equality of service when it will not even treat its employees equally? How can we trust this legislation, or indeed the cabinet or government or the board of Canada Post when we see their track record?

• (1050)

This bill does nothing for employee-employer relationships. It does not solve any of the estimated 100,000 grievances. If anything, this bill will create even greater division between the privileged and the non-privileged workers in the postal system.