

of "letter" in the bill was neither necessary nor desirable. I repeat that it was unanimously accepted in the committee.

Mr. Blenkarn: No, no.

Mr. Ouellet: I invite my colleagues to refer to the minutes of the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, Issue No. 41 at page 70.

It therefore follows that by also including in the bill a definition of "letter" at this time there would be two solutions to the same problem, a situation which, I submit, would cast serious doubt on both ideas.

I believe the work of the committee in expanding the exceptions to the exclusive privilege and in building in the mechanism of pre-Gazetting of any regulation dealing with this aspect is the right way to move. The committee accepted the proposal when we dealt with it quite extensively in the committee, and I see no reason at this time to undo what we did so well there.

I appreciate that the hon. member who moved this motion had particularly in mind what would happen to private organizations' using their own people to deliver some messages. I believe we said in the committee, and I repeat this in the House, that any private organization which wants to use its own people to deliver its own messages or its own documentation is free to do so. That has never been forbidden. It is not forbidden by Bill C-42, and we do not contemplate forbidding it in the future.

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would permit a question or two with respect to his statement concerning the amendment.

The minister indicated that in Clause 15 of the bill the exemption for permitting people to use their own forces to deliver memos or messages would allow utility companies to use their own forces to deliver invoices and, presumably, allow organizations to use their own members to deliver notices to their members. Is it the minister's suggestion that Clause 15(1)(g) gives that absolute permission?

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, if I understand the question of the hon. member correctly, he wants to know if, rather than doing municipal work, employees of municipalities are asked by such municipalities to deliver letters, messages, or—

Mr. Ellis: Hydro bills.

Mr. Ouellet: —bills on their time. I see nothing in this legislation which prevents a private organization from using its own employees to make whatever deliveries it wants. What is at issue is using a private courier or an outside organization to deliver mail instead of using the Post Office.

We say that if a sender believes there is an urgency in the message he wants delivered, he has the option, quite legally, to use a messenger or a private courier to do it, as long as he pays an appropriate fee which we have defined as being a fee for an urgent delivery.

Canada Post Corporation Act

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, I gather from what the minister says there would be nothing to prevent a hydroelectric power commission in a municipality from having designated people whose total job would be to deliver the invoices of the hydroelectric power commission to consumers. In committee I asked the minister whether a lawyer could deliver his bills, and I do not think I received quite that answer, but can the minister confirm right now that a public utility commission could have people employed to deliver its invoices, that being their job, and that that would not be considered an infringement of the monopoly of the Post Office?

Mr. Ouellet: I recall very well that in the committee we answered the question of the hon. member with respect to a lawyer using his own secretary to deliver his documents. We said if he wants to pay that price, that is his privilege, and he could do it. If a private utility wants to have its employees deliver messages rather than do other work, I think it would be paying a much higher price than the Post Office would be charging.

• (2050)

What I am concerned about is, as I have stated many times, that we are, in one way or another, trying to cream off the good business of the Post Office. If we are consistent in giving this new Crown corporation a chance to perform well, do a good job and provide Canadians with a good service, we should not find ways of depriving this corporation of its normal and natural clientele.

To answer the hon. member's question specifically, let me say that I believe we do not want to see municipalities, gas companies or electrical companies using courier services rather than the Post Office. As regards their use of their own employees, we have stated repeatedly that in carrying out its own business an organization may use its own employees.

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, I wish to rise on a point of order—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I should caution the hon. member that there is a limit to the number of questions which can be accepted in this way.

Mr. Blenkarn: I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker, but I think we should try to straighten out this particular issue. Is it the intention of the minister to allow a utility company to employ its own employees to deliver its invoices?

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I am not here to tell the utility companies what to do, nor am I in a position to tell them how to deliver their invoices. They could follow a number of routes. We have allowed them three specific routes under this legislation. The simplest route for them to take is to use the Post Office, and it is the cheapest and best way. If they want to use private couriers to do their deliveries they will have to pay a price for doing it this way. If they want to use their own employees, that is another way of doing it. I am not here to tell them which way they should take. I am just here to say that the easiest way is obviously to use the Post Office.