

Government Orders

I remember vividly last summer how we went through a period of tension and frustration between management and the letter carriers. I remember the day when I had hundreds of senior citizens lined up on the Danforth waiting for their pension cheques and a couple of single mothers waiting for their baby bonus cheques. Somehow those cheques did not get delivered before the strike happened, even though the letter carriers had agreed to deliver them.

I remember the tension that existed because the letter carriers wanted to deliver all those cheques to the senior citizens and to those people who needed their baby bonus cheques, et cetera. But there was this block in communications and somehow the message was not being transmitted to management that the letter carriers wanted to do that.

It was only by a fluke that I happened to be around that day. I talked to a lot of the letter carriers. We faxed a letter to Mr. Lander at head office. I will give him full marks. He reacted quite quickly. He was sympathetic to the frustration we were going through, but it was the communication breakdown that caused a lot of that pain.

• (1650)

If I were to try to come at the post office from the point of view of building morale and improving productivity, I would make sure the communication skills on both sides, management and employees, were worked on and improved upon on a constant basis. As management I would rethink the idea of a federal presence.

I would ask the government that still has control of this post office to rethink the words of the Prime Minister when a few months ago he called on all of us to be patriotic. There he is sitting with an instrument. He can pick up the phone and call Mr. Lander, president of the Canadian postal service, and say to him: "Put that Canada word mark back on every post office in this country".

Let us never forget that this is a public service for each and every Canadian. It is important that we remind everyone of that. Until we get those basics in order, let us forget about these undefined, not well thought out, not worked out attempts at gimmickry. To suggest that

post office employees can buy shares of something where values are not defined, criteria are not defined and rights are not defined is not the way to manage a company.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to the member's discussion of this bill. He may have a certain amount more financial business experience than I have, but I have been involved in management.

There are a couple of things I would like him to expand on. I am puzzled like he is. I thought I had a fairly good grasp of the idea of shares and how to purchase shares in corporations. They can give certain rights, rights of resale, rights to influence the direction of the corporation, rights to influence the policy, the administration and the management, and rights to make a profit. The formula is based on the profits the company made during the year divided by the number of outstanding shares and the kind of shares. I am bewildered. I look at the bill and I see none of the elements I would have thought were involved in a normal share purchase.

Certainly my understanding of gaining control of a company is in terms of directing the management of it and influencing the policy decisions. You either have a fairly small company in which you get 51 per cent control or a fairly large company in which the shares are so diversified that effective control can be obtained by maybe 25 or 30 per cent or even less of the shares.

The government is still going to own 90 per cent of Canada Post. It will still be the one directing the administration and the policy. I do not see how this is going to influence in any way the working relationships, the policy direction or the ability of workers to have input into that corporation.

Maybe I am missing something. Maybe the member, with his much more vast experience in the marketplace, sees something in this bill that I do not see.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, I do not really see anything positive in this bill. I see the thought of trying to improve morale and the thought of improving productivity. The concept of equity participation is a good one and I support it.