

Canada Post Corporation Act

constituents is not. My constituents expect the same kind of mail service their parents and grandparents received. They do not expect a mail delivery system which does not work, is not on time and is not efficient and dependable. The service which has been available to this country is neither on time nor dependable.

An hon. Member: Get rid of the machines.

Mr. Blenkarn: My friend says get rid of the machines. I intend to talk about that tonight.

When this bill was first presented, a number of people said to the members that a post office corporation will not work. They said it was a method by which the minister was going to try to bury the problems behind the idea of a Crown corporation. In committee we were able to insist that amendments be made. Indeed, amendments were made at report stage to make a ministry or the government more responsible for the corporation, probably as responsible as the present Postmaster General. I do not know whether that will help service because, with the Postmaster General responsible, it has not been very good.

I want to assure the Canadian public that we on this side have ensured that the Postmaster General has accepted the responsibility and that the governor in council, the cabinet, will continue to be responsible for the appointment of the people to the executive, the directors and vice-presidents of the post office. All directives, even those that are now secret, will be made public so that the post office will be above board. That is good. We expect this corporation to work. We expect an improvement in postal service so that Canadians receive the same service our parents received, the service we were receiving 10, 15 and 20 years ago.

People expect better postal service every year. Instead, it has been getting worse and worse each year. In fact, I do not believe it can get worse. It has to go back to the kind of service that people expected when statutes were passed which said you were deemed to receive something three days or seven days after it was mailed. That was a reasonable assumption and registered mail delivery was almost a certainty. Today no one can claim that if something was mailed to you that you must have received it. Indeed, a favourite excuse of anyone who has not paid a bill today is that the cheque is in the mail. How can you not accept that explanation if someone claims they put it in the mail, because in all probability it got lost? There is at least as much probability of that as there is that they were just spinning you a line about the payment.

● (2040)

The Post Office has been beset with a number of problems. Some of my constituents refer to these as labour problems. But I say to you, sir, they are management problems. I do not know of a single business which has strikes, lockouts, and labour disputes that are not reflective of the people who manage the organization. Most of the people who work in the Post Office in our country are good, solid, hard-working men and women. They want to do a day's work and they expect to

be directed, organized and motivated by the people who are put in management positions.

Management is leadership, Mr. Speaker. The leadership in the Post Office is abominable. The corporation must hire effective leadership and good, new, management people. I mean good people right down to the lower levels of management. Some of the incumbents must be replaced with others who can get the system organized. If that is not done, then this corporation has as much chance of success as a snowball has of surviving on a hot July day in the middle of Rideau Street.

Some people have spoken about grievances. Tonight the Postmaster General, in speaking to Clause 68 of the bill, spoke of grievance procedures that are available. We should not be talking about grievances. The fact that there are 65,000 labour grievances is an indictment of incompetent, inept, incapable management. He should not be worrying about grievances, he should be worrying about motivating people to provide a service with the skills and competence that at one time distinguished the Post Office. Instead, today we have problems.

Someone mentioned machinery a moment ago. I live in Mississauga where the great white elephant called a machine that sorts parcels, is located. That machine manages to destroy almost as many parcels as it sorts. My secretary calls it an elephant. When I send stationery from my office here on Parliament Hill to my constituency office it invariably arrives crunched and destroyed. It does not matter how well it is wrapped, they manage to break it up. Indeed, we take it to the Post Office in this building and ask them to package it carefully for us. They do, and they ship it through their machine. It does a fine job—it crunches it.

Mr. Beatty: They bought the machine from Air Canada.

Mr. Blenkarn: My friend says they bought it from Air Canada. They probably did. In any event, they make sure it goes off the rollers or gets stomped on. An employee at the Gateway post office says that apparently it drops straight down nine feet and if it is marked fragile, they jump on it again.

There have also been complaints about theft in the Post Office. Again, an employee at the Gateway post office told me there is not as much theft as one would think. He says there is the odd person who is a bit of a thief. He says that most of the missing mail is not stolen but that the Post Office says it is because it cannot apologize any other way to the people whose packages are destroyed. The fact is that those Christmas presents, wedding presents or birthday presents, go through the machine and get all crunched up. They cannot tell people that they have been destroyed, so they say they must have been stolen or lost in the mail. That is what happens and they have a special crew to sweep up the mess! The machine and the system at the Gateway post office continues to operate despite complaints because the management is so inept, incompetent and incapable, and because the leadership from the government has been incompetent and incapable. It has not got down to brass tacks and dealt with the situation to make sure it is changed.