

Government Orders

The idea is worth considering, given the chronic malaise at the post office where labour-management feuding at times has been likened to class warfare.

The Progressive Conservatives have come up with an infinitely more complex incentive scheme that looks suspiciously like a back door route to privatization.

This is not an opposition member saying this. This is a neutral party, *The Toronto Star*.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Boudria: There you go. I knew it would get a reaction from the members across the way. Perhaps now they will pay attention.

I read further from the editorial in question:

And why to share in the profits, the government says.

The slim bill now before Parliament is only five pages and extremely fuzzy on a few crucial details.

It gives no hint as to how the non-voting share would be priced, or what the rules would be for redeeming or transferring them if a worker wanted to dump them.

It provides for dividends to be set by Canada Post "in accordance with the rights, privileges, restrictions and conditions attaching it to the shares".

And what might they be? The government isn't saying.

Until it fills in some blanks, why would MPs bother to debate such a sketchy proposal?

Unfortunately on that count we have no choice. The government proposes the legislation and the House disposes.

I read further:

But there's an even bigger question here.

If the government allows postal employees to buy stock in the enterprise, how long would it take Ottawa to conclude that everybody else should have the same right?

In other words it is one small step to one giant privatization.

Andre insists that the employee stock scheme is not the first toward privatization of what is a fundamental public service. But then, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney once assured Canadians that the then crown-owned Air Canada was "not for sale" either.

It goes back to what I said initially. Just because the government says that it will not sell any more of the shares is no reason at all. It is no comfort for me. I simply do not believe it.

[*Translation*]

Today we have the first step in privatizing Canada Post. I feel that the government should think much longer, even for several months, before going ahead with such a plan. Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that in a few months,

Canadians may be free, that is, the government opposite will be defeated. Canadians will be liberated, of course, and you will have guessed, Mr. Speaker, that this government will be replaced by a Liberal government, which we will have in six months, I hope.

Meanwhile, to give the government six months to think it over—

[*English*]

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly pleased to have the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

I must say the opposition is very much united in opposing this particular legislation which amounts to nothing more than being another step along the inevitable process for the privatization and piecemeal sell-off of Canada Post as we know it today.

My riding is in the interior—

• (1600)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like to interject here. I find the amendment in order and I think we should carry on from there.

Mr. MacWilliam: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, my riding is in the interior of the province of British Columbia. I represent the Okanagan—Shuswap area.

Like many of the rural areas throughout not only my province but throughout this country, there are a number of small communities where the central post office has become very much a way of life of that community, people meeting each morning to pick up their mail and to pick up parcels. They use the opportunity on a daily basis and utilize the post office as a kind of community meeting place.

In that respect, the post offices in our rural communities are very much a part of the heartbeat of those communities. That is why it has been so damaging to see the impact of the government's strategy to close those post offices and to privatize the services. It has done irreparable harm to the lifestyle in many of our communities.