

do a good job should be paid well to do it and should have a measure of job security that is not now available.

If the hon. member for Crowfoot wants to say that this has worked for a long, long, time, yes, it worked for a long, long time when we did not have a government and a Canada Post that were dedicated to the kind of bottom line philosophy that we have now.

• (1940)

As long as you did not have that kind of Canada Post and that kind of government, this system may have worked. However, now you have a situation where these people are vulnerable to the new climate of competition. It is really another word for dog eat dog, survival of the fittest, let's have a nasty, brutish society, instead of the one we have managed to build up over the years.

What we are talking about here is, as it is with so many other things, when we get into what might seem to be simply a rural issue or a postal issue, we find that at the heart of it is a philosophical debate going on in this country between those who would sacrifice the Canadian way of life to this greater god of competitiveness. Sooner or later we will all be running around working eight days a week, 24 hours a day, to keep up with whatever country is psychotic enough to want to be even more competitive than their neighbour. Leisure and justice and all the other things we thought we were building toward will be completely eliminated from our way of life. This bill, in its own small way, will go some way toward putting the brakes on that sort of thing, at least as far as rural Canada is concerned.

It is clear from what has happened to the post office over the last few years that in this greater world of competitiveness, rural Canada is dispensable. It is not unrelated to what we saw here today when we had the farm coalition here asking for the kind of aid that would help them to get through a very difficult time. Hopefully, by the time some solution is found at GATT and prices go up a bit, or whatever the long-term solution might be, there will still be some farmers around to benefit from the solution.

One suspects that the farmers of Canada are a bit like the rural post offices. The government has decided they are dispensable. In the big rationalization, in the name of global competitiveness, many Canadians—whether they

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work in rural post offices or farm the land or work in other traditional areas—have been targeted for elimination in the name of this great new world order. I think we will find when it finally comes to fruition, that it is a very nasty world indeed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-250, tabled by my Liberal colleague across the way.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I am totally opposed to the principle of the hon. member's bill. I am opposed to it because I believe that the Canada Post Corporation is not in the business of creating jobs but should concentrate on making itself a going concern and ensuring that Canadians across this country receive their mail within a reasonable timeframe and receive the kind of service they have come to expect.

When the Progressive Conservative government came to power in 1984—the occasional history lesson is useful—hon. members will recall that the Canada Post Corporation had a deficit of close to \$600 million. Those \$600 million were paid by all Canadian taxpayers, despite the fact that we were just coming out of a recession, at a time when Canadian families had lost their jobs and at a time when taxpayers were telling us: Listen, Mr. Prime Minister, we are sick and tired of seeing Crown corporations that are running a deficit. We are sick and tired of seeing departments spending more than the government receives in revenue. We are sick and tired of agencies and even governments—at the time it was a Liberal government—that are poor managers and are mortgaging the future of our young people and the future of Canada

At the time, the Progressive Conservative government told all its departments, through the Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson, and told all its Crown corporations: You will have to pay your own way as much as possible.

The Canada Post Corporation is no exception to this rule. Starting with a deficit of around \$600 million, as I just said, it has made profits totaling nearly \$200 million in the last three years. That is efficiency. It proves that with the right decisions and good management, a deficit can be changed into a surplus.