

Government Orders

• (1330)

How are issues such as the value and the number of shares and assets to be determined? Should these important matters be dealt with by the Governor in Council or cabinet? No, they should not be dealt with there. They should be dealt with here in the House of Commons. The Canadian people have the right to know how the government will decide what the value of the shares are, what the corporate value is and if people are being treated in some reasonable way. Do not give it to the minister and Treasury Board to make those decisions.

In addition, Bill C-73 would permit bylaws of Canada Post Corporation to be inconsistent with any provision of the bill. The government would have Canadians believe that it intends to improve situations at Canada Post because of Bill C-73, yet the bill does not adequately address the issues. Authority would be vested with the board and cabinet to be inconsistent with the act itself.

The government realizes that there are very serious and complicated issues in dispute at Canada Post Corporation. CUPW management has been unable to achieve a contract for the last three years. For three years there has been negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and back to work legislation. There is still no settlement.

Now the government wants to do something to make the employees feel more a part of the corporation itself and less a part of working together. The answer they have is Bill C-73. This bill will not solve the problem. It does nothing to improve employee-employer relations. In fact, the bill is opposed by the postal workers.

How can the government state that there will be improved co-operation when there is no co-operation of any kind put forward in this bill? How does Bill C-73 address the concerns of Canadians on Canada Post? Will Bill C-73 reopen the post office that was closed in the village of Erieau in my riding? Will it reopen post offices in many small communities in P.E.I., Nova Scotia, Quebec, in the west and across this country? We have seen some 1,200 post offices axed in the last six years. This bill will do nothing to help that situation.

Will Bill C-73 compel retail postal outlets to provide the same service for the price that Canada Post offices provide? Certainly not. Will Bill C-73 save the postal identities of Winona, Fruitland, Vineland, which they will wipe out according to the bill? No.

I see my time has run out and I hope I will have the opportunity to speak to this later. However, my concern is that this bill creates more animosity, more tension and more problems in Canada. It certainly does nothing to enhance or improve our service to Canadians.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):
Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the motion on the six-month hoist and to oppose Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

There is not a single subject that is more akin to waving a red flag in front of a bull than a bill that has to do with Canada Post Corporation coming before members of Parliament who have any memory of Canadian history regarding Canadian postal services. I cannot think of a greater horror story or a worse example than this institution. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, it had a terrible labour relations record, but at least it delivered the mail on time.

It was turned into a Crown corporation in the early 1980s and at that time, under the presidency of Michael Warren and under its new mandate, it managed to bring back mail services from a period in which it took over two weeks to get across this country back down to a position of only two or three days. It improved some services. It reduced the labour relation grievances within the post office from over 100,000 down to virtually nil. It gave postal workers who for years had been out on strike, one after another because of terrible labour relations in the old Canada Post system, some feeling of pride.

In 1984, with the election of this government, the whole clock was turned back again. The only thing worse than having a service which is in disarray is having a service that having been in disarray is drastically improved and then turned back and thrown on the scrap heap again.