

*Public Works Act*

**Mr. Kelly:** We waste time in this chamber.

**Mr. Nystrom:** Hon. members opposite have forgotten that they are responsible to the people. They think they govern by divine right, and perhaps it is time the party across the way was booted out of this House and booted out of Canadian politics forever. I think it is a sign of arrogance, but no matter what signals hon. members opposite get, they go on appointing jumping Jack Horners and appointing Arthur Ericksons to build embassies in Washington against the recommendations—

**Mr. Pepin:** How do they do it in Saskatchewan?

**Mr. Nystrom:** The Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) will have an opportunity very soon to rise and make a speech.

**Mr. Kelly:** Answer his question.

**Mr. Nystrom:** Of all ministers across the way the Minister of Transport knows of what I speak. A few years ago the Minister of Transport and John Robarts produced an excellent report about the future of our country and the unity of Canadians. They made many recommendations about bringing this country closer together and making sure that politicians and institutions are more accountable to the people of the country. That minister's ideas have been slammed down time and again by the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau). He is losing many battles in the cabinet and in the country. I wish him very well in trying to get the Prime Minister to come to his senses with respect to making this place a truly democratic parliamentary institution.

Our main concern is that we have more accountability and a strengthening of parliamentary committees so that we as the people's representatives can make sure that billions of taxpayers' dollars are spent properly. We as parliamentarians should not be here just as a bunch of people screaming, hollering and bellowing; we should have some input and legislative power over the direction of the government.

I know these ideas are really radical to hon. members opposite and to my right, radical because they are democratic ideas, but I think those are the ideas which will keep our country together. I noted yesterday a Gallup poll result, reported in the *Toronto Star*, which showed that confidence in Canada in terms of keeping our great nation together and in terms of Canadian unity is at a 37-year low. Gallup asked the question: "Do you believe Canada will stay together or break up?" Some 27 per cent of Canadians said our country will break up. That signals a warning politicians should take seriously. We must do whatever we can to try to bring the government to the people. The government must reflect the wishes of ordinary people. I believe that the Canadians values of equality, sharing, democracy and liberty exist. I believe those values are felt by the overwhelming majority, and I believe it is time the Government of Canada recognized that and governed for the people. In its contracting and leasing of government buildings the government should be more democratic and allow us as Members of Parliament to have an input so that the institutions of Canada, including the Government

of Canada, could be a mirror and reflect the great people of this country.

**Mr. John Evans (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in favour of this bill on three grounds. First, I will touch briefly on the need, in general terms, for assuring that the Department of Public Works can enter into and continue to carry out the types of activities described in the bill. These activities are a general requirement in order to execute its mandate, and I think it is prudent to set out its powers to do these things on a clear and explicit basis.

[Translation]

I shall then discuss more specifically the major role played by one of these activities, namely the lease-purchase arrangements, in the National Capital Region in establishing four major federal complexes on a solid economic basis.

[English]

Third, I will refer to certain of the authorities set out in the bill in so far as they relate to the Rideau Centre project—of which all of us in the Ottawa region are certainly very proud—by way of example, as another demonstration of why the bill should be favourably considered in this chamber.

I think the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Cosgrove) has provided a good outline of the technical aspects of the bill, the legislative need for casting these departmental authorities in a statutory form and the background of Madam Speaker's ruling on vote word changes. Some of my colleagues will set out the desirability of making explicit the statutory authority of Public Works Canada to assist the new postal corporation in the administration of its property and premises. I will just add that I think the logic is clear for Public Works Canada to continue the real property services which it formerly provided to Canada's postal service when that agency was a department. Surely it is advantageous for Public Works Canada to continue these services rather than impose on the new Crown corporation the responsibility of immediately forming a large real estate management unit within the corporation. This is particularly true at a time when it has only just been formed and is more than fully occupied with upgrading postal delivery and with its labour-management relations concerns. If Canada Post were required immediately to assume management of its 2,000 buildings and 800 leases, this could obviously be an unnecessary diversion from its main task, unnecessary in the sense that Public Works Canada, as the long-time manager of these properties, already has in place this realty management capability and organization.

Certainly we have to say that Canada Post's prime objective at this point in time has to be the improvement of postal service, and it is well on the way to achieving that goal.

[Translation]

I would now like to come back very briefly to the first subject I mentioned, namely the general need for the department of Public Works to obtain, through a clear, explicit and unequivocal mandate, the power to undertake and carry out