

mittee. My colleagues and I would like to take the time in this House to pass this kind of bill, but it is impossible to make the Conservatives opposite listen to reason.

[English]

We could be talking about other issues involving Canada Post. For example, there is ample evidence of cross-subsidization of rates. Let me explain briefly what it all means.

Approximately one year ago, someone leaked to me a letter Canada Post was sending to some of its corporate customers. It went roughly as follows: "Fill up your postal machine today". You know those machines that issue printed postage stamps. I guess it is usual to call them Pitney Bowes machines although I am sure other companies make them too. "Fill your postage machines and get a rebate on priority post courier".

I said that there is something wrong with that. The postage machine is first class mail regulated mail and the price is regulated. The government adopts regulations once a year. It is a monopoly. There is no competition. At the present time Canada Post is offering a discount for people who use priority courier, and priority courier is a competitive business. It competes with Purolator, UPS and everybody else. The post office operates it using subsidized money after filling the postage machines which is first class mail. Surely there is something wrong with taking money gained through a monopoly to subsidize that part of the business that works in a competitive environment.

How much of the money we pay for postage stamps as Canadian consumers goes to cross-subsidize those endeavours of Canada Post which have nothing to do with the monopoly that Canada Post enjoys? Am I paying one cent too much for stamps, two cents, five cents? I do not know. Canada Post will not even let us have a look at the books.

Once a year Canada Post publishes an annual report and that report at best is questionable. It does not refer to many things, such as the unfunded liabilities of the corporation. Canada Post produces the report and tells us what it is doing. It is tabled in the House of Commons. The opposition criticizes it for a day or two and the government says it will weather the storm and it will disappear.

Government Orders

Maybe that works for the government but it does not make for good postal service for Canadians. We need the kind of agency that I am advocating to review applications by Canada Post just as the CRTC reviews increases applied for by the cable operators because they operate a monopoly, or Bell telephone or whoever else applies because they too operate a monopoly on some of the products and services that they sell but not in others. It is a constant battle for companies like Bell to sort out those things which are a monopoly and those things which are not.

That is one thing we could be doing with the time of this House in terms of improving postal services. There are several others. I will give just a flavour of some of these.

Some years ago, Canada Post applied for what has been commonly referred to as the revocation of regulations. It works something like this. Canada Post was previously subjected to regulatory approval from the government through gazetting each year of a new rate for a number of the services it provides. Once a year, apart from approving the first class mail rate, cabinet would approve a number of other things.

• (1130)

A few years ago Canada Post applied for and convinced the government, I do not know how, to exempt Canada Post from future approval of those regulations. What happens? Now such things as certified mail, electronic mail, Envoypost, Telepost, Intelpost, money orders, aerograms, mail to and from the Canadian Armed Forces outside Canada, domestic counter parcels and other items including Christmas greeting cards are no longer subject to those regulations. Why? Because Canada Post did not want the heat of once a year having them included in the *Canada Gazette*. Now it just increases the rate when nobody is looking and no one can criticize it. The only forum we have is to raise these matters in the House of Commons when we do find out that it is doing something which we do not like or that our constituents do not like.

That is not the right way of doing it. Canada Post should apply, get the process approved, get the rates approved and then live with whatever is approved or whatever is refused. After all, if Canada Post says it can operate in a quasi-private sector type of environment, surely it can be subjected to a regulatory system similar to that which is imposed on Bell, which is imposed on the