

*Government Orders*

Anyway, I pay tribute to Mr. Knowles and we hope he is here for many, many more years to come.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** In the name of the House I am delighted to join with the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville in offering our best wishes to the hon. gentleman on his birthday.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

#### MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and the amendment of Mr. Boudria (p. 10744).

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands had three minutes left.

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands):** Madam Speaker, I was addressing my remarks concerning Bill C-73 and I hope I will get an opportunity to make another 10-minute speech after the vote on the amendment is concluded so I can go into greater detail of my criticisms of this bill.

What this bill is seeking to do, as I indicated earlier, is privatize the post office to a very limited extent. I submit this is really the thin edge of the wedge.

There is no protection whatever for the employees who purchase these shares in Canada Post Corporation. The corporation is supposed to be, according to its current mandate, a self-sustaining operation. It is supposed to conduct its operations on a self-sustaining financial basis. In other words, it is not supposed to turn a profit. It is supposed to be self-sustaining. It is to pay its own way at best.

What this government is trying to do is turn it into come kind of profit machine that I presume will be eligible to make donations to the Progressive Conservative fund of Canada or whatever, the PC Fund, their big money machine, for election campaigns.

That is not the purpose of Canada Post. Canada Post Corporation is to provide a service for the public of Canada, to deliver the mail across our country. It is to operate according to its mandate on a self-sustaining basis. So how is the purchase of shares by anybody going to be of interest? Why does anybody want to buy shares in a corporation that is supposed to break even. The purpose of buying shares is to generate some profits and share in the profitability of the corporation.

This corporation is not supposed to be a profitable operation, Madam Speaker. It is supposed to be a public service for Canadians.

What we are doing is inviting these employees to buy shares in a corporation that should not make money. Therefore, the shares should not go up in value. Why are these being offered? The shares are being offered to induce people to buy and then later the government will say: "To help these people out, having sold them this bill of goods in the first place, we now have to do something that will allow their shares to go up in value or will give them some return on their investment".

I do not know what the government is planning to do. It has not come clean with this House. It has not come clean with Canadians. In fact, this bill is some kind of deceitful exercise, designed again to hoodwink the employees of Canada Post into believing that the government is serious about doing something, but without saying what it is serious about doing.

It is an excuse for inaction. It should be rejected out of hand. The government should withdraw the bill. It should be voted down in the House.

If any of the members who support the government would read this bill and see how stupid it is, they would stand up and vote against it at the end of the day as well and get rid of it. It is not a worth-while project to proceed with. It is not a reasonable way to deal with a Crown corporation that has over the years served Canadians reasonably well. It is only in the last few years that we have had these constant cutbacks in service that I alluded to earlier.

This bill does not address those issues. Those are the ones that concern Canadians, not who owns shares in Canada Post. For that reason, I urge all members of the House to look at this bill carefully, study its provisions and say: "Really, is this in the best interests of Canada? Is this something we should be even discussing in this House?" The government has brought it forward as a