

Government Orders

Mr. Pickard: Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected. I was quoting an article and I carried on. I am speaking of the minister responsible for Canada Post.

An hon. member: Irresponsible in this case.

Mr. Pickard: My colleague suggests the minister is irresponsible. That may be a little bit biased and critical but Canadians are very critical of this legislation and Canadians are very concerned, so I guess I am hearing that from many Canadians.

The point is that the process has begun. We can see from the consumer and corporate affairs committee on April 19, 1990, that the process was suggested and put in place.

We can see from comments that have been made by the minister responsible for Canada Post that he believes that privatization is what should happen. Now we can see steps toward what I would consider a disastrous process.

As politicians, members of this House and legislators, we must examine legislation and decide what the acid test should be for legislation that comes forward. What is the acid test that we use as legislators to determine what type of legislation should pass? What are the things that a bill should address?

Legislation should address changing needs in Canadian society. I think we all agree on that. Bills should answer questions, resolve conflict and establish a framework for the future. Legislation can lead, but not only good legislation. Sound legislation should be accepted by the society it is put in place to serve.

That brings us to Bill C-73. Does Bill C-73, which amends the Canada Post Corporation Act, pass the acid test? Does selling shares of a Crown corporation address the needs of Canadian society? Does that really address the needs of our society today or in the future? Does this legislation answer the concerns and questions that have been raised about the postal system? Does this bill lead one of Canada's oldest and most omnipresent institutions in a direction acceptable to Canadians?

In brief, is Bill C-73 really good for Canada? In creating the Crown corporation in the early 1980s the Liberal government established five principles for the postal system. Those five principles are very clear and are spelled out in the Canada Post Corporation Act.

The first principle was to improve products and services in the changes in our communication. Improve products and services. Help communications in this country. That is a goal of Canada Post.

Two, operate in a self-sustaining financial base while meeting the needs of the people and offering similar services to all communities large and small throughout Canada.

Three, provide for a secure mail service. Four, utilize human resources to attain corporate objectives and to secure employment commitment and dedication. Those are two common goals. Five, maintain a corporate identity that reflects the corporation as an institution of the government.

• (1040)

Does Bill C-73 help to achieve these five mandates? Remember, these mandates are in the present postal act. The present Canada Post Corporation Act includes these statements. The answer to those statements, as far as Bill C-73 is concerned, is that everyone in this House can say no resoundingly. Bill C-73 does not help achieve these mandates. In fact, it fails miserably.

Bill C-73, an amendment to the Canada Post Corporation Act, does nothing to enhance the goals established by legislation for the system we have in place today. What exactly is Bill C-73?

Bill C-73 would establish an employee share savings plan. This employee share savings plan would permit employees to buy shares of the corporation. Participation in the employee share savings plan would be voluntary. It sounds simple. Right? Wrong.

How many shares? We did not get answers to that. What is the worth of the corporation? What is the share value? What is an employee? Can some shares be given away? Are others sold? How will shares be cashed in when an employee is ready to get his money out?

These are just some of the questions raised but unanswered in this bill. In fact, the bill would permit shares to be given away. The bill gives no vote and no voice to the employees who participate and put their money in. The bill is inconsistent and incomplete for everyone.

It is like buying a car and not looking at the price-tag, just handing the salesman a blank cheque and saying that is the car. It is a little ridiculous in my mind and very