

them because they do not have a car, because they are poor, because they are seniors and cannot move around and are stranded.

They get family members to do it. It is fine for these ministers. One is from Toronto and one is from Montreal. They probably have never been in rural Canada long enough to realize that there is a difference in the way we live. We have to understand that they have now cut service. We used to have postal service four or five days a week; five days a week in most cases and six days a week when we had post offices. We are now getting postal service twice a week, that is if it shows up at all. Service has been cut and that is what the issue is all about.

Let me just use one particular suggestion made by the union during this whole negotiation. The union suggested that they should take some of the profit that Canada Post is now making by getting rid of all these post offices—and the dollars they are talking about are \$42 million a year—to expand door-to-door delivery. Does it sound unreasonable to you as the Speaker and to people out there who are listening that now that Canada Post is making money it should put it back into service so that we get better service? That is really what Canada Post is supposed to be.

The reason we put Canada Post into this kind of monopoly system that we have was because we as Canadians realized that Canada Post was not just a business, that it was an essential service needed by Canadians because of the large geography we are dealing with in this country. There are only four or five locations in this country where Canada Post can make money. In the rest of the places that it deals with there is no money involved. It is all subsidized, and it is subsidized to a certain extent by the taxpayers of Canada which we accept as taxpayers and have always accepted.

We said to Canada Post: “You can be more like a business, be more efficient and look at ways of cutting down the amount of subsidy we are paying you. That is perfectly acceptable”. We did not say through that whole process that it was to cut service to the point where there is a difference between a Canadian living in a riding like Kenora—Rainy River and a Canadian living in Montreal who gets better service because they live in a city than I get in rural northwestern Ontario because I happen to be a rural Canadian.

### *Government Orders*

That was not the intent of giving Canada Post the mandate to become more efficient. We just thought it was a good idea to be more efficient.

There seems to be a significant difference between what the President of Canada Post, Mr. Lander, is doing and what the President of CUPW, Mr. Parrot, is doing. Mr. Parrot is suggesting that they will be more efficient, that they will get into technological change and improvements. They also want to make sure that we understand that they still believe this is an essential service. They still believe that they can improve the services and that as a postal union they can make suggestions to the corporate board of Canada Post on how that will work simply because they believe—and I firmly believe it as a member—that the union has a role to play in making sure the service that they supply to Canadians as far as letter carrier service and delivery of packages is the best in the world. They will maintain that.

The government is quick to say that it is the best in the world, but it is quickly becoming the worst in the world the way they are going at it. If it continues to suggest that the supermailboxes are the way to go, it will not be long before most Canadians look to some other form of getting their letters delivered because of the unreliability of the postal service.

I want the minister opposite to know that in my area I have so many grievances about the post office that I write the minister and the president of Canada Post regularly. We have created our own internal system, as a member of Parliament's office, just to deal with Canada Post because of the grievances and the people complaining on a regular basis about letters that do not show up for months on end and delivery that is unreliable. It is not because the employee is not trying. It is the fact that this particular service has been cut so thin that there is no possible way these people can do their job. I think the government should reflect on the mandate it has given Canada Post and why we are into the debate we are in today.

• (1250)

I want to talk a bit about contracting out, the ideology and the philosophy of this government. Contracting out sounds pretty good in theory. Simply put, what contracting out means is that one does not have to pay somebody benefits. That is very simply put but that is what it means. There is a big saving to the particular company that contracts out certain work.