

preparation, negotiations and compromise. I urge Parliament to pass this bill in order to allow this Crown corporation to begin its mandate and provide Canadians with the revitalized postal service they need.

When the Prime Minister handed me the Postmaster General portfolio for the first time, back in 1972, I took over these responsibilities with a great deal of enthusiasm. So it was, I must say, with a certain regret that I left this post upon my transfer to another department. I was therefore particularly pleased last year when the Prime Minister entrusted me again with this department because it seldom happens in politics that you can bring a job to a successful end. I am very pleased to now be able to say, "Mission accomplished".

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my special appreciation to the DM of the Post Office Department, Mr. Jim Corkery, who helped me and supported me throughout the last few months in this process of converting this department into a Crown corporation. I am the last Postmaster-General ever to address this House. I am grateful to the Prime Minister for allowing me to experience this historic moment: with the coming into being of this corporation there will no longer be a Postmaster-General. I think one can say that this is the end of an era. The end of an era, but also the beginning of a new one. The establishment of this corporation I am absolutely convinced, Mr. Speaker, will enable its employees to function in an environment and a climate they have looked forward to for a long time. The Canadian public will be getting a better service and, above all, management will have a chance to give the full measure of their ability knowing that they are in complete control of the situation and that they do not depend on decisions made in other departments in order to provide an efficient management of the Canadian postal service. To conclude my remarks, let me say, "Long live the new Canada Post Corporation!"

● (2030)

[English]

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear the remarks of the Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet). I hesitate to say that while a minister of the Crown may not be called Postmaster General in the future, there certainly will be a minister of the Crown responsible for the post office. I do not know whether the fact that he will not be called Postmaster General but minister responsible for the post office will make him feel any happier, because the way this bill is organized, it makes the government continually responsible for every single thing in the post office, including postal rates.

As the minister pointed out in his remarks, the cumbersome procedure set out in Bill C-42, as it was presented to this House, was significantly changed in committee in many ways. I appreciate the minister congratulating the Conservative Party for its efforts in committee. The minister appreciates, as do other members, that we spent a great deal of time on this bill, although perhaps not as much as we should have. I will come to that later in my remarks. Unfortunately, there was an

effort to push the bill through committee quickly. I have a motion to present at the end of my remarks respecting that problem.

The Post Office as we know it is probably the most visible activity of government in our country. As I said on second reading, almost every day a member of the Post Office walks down my street representing the Government of Canada. When he delivers mail, he represents the Government of Canada. When that mail is slow, damaged or destroyed, he represents the Government of Canada. Unfortunately, the representation of the Government of Canada on the streets and byways of this country has not been too good in the past. That representation has soiled the name of Canada.

We have great hopes for this postal corporation, but I do not believe any member of this House really believes in his heart of hearts that all the problems of the post office will be solved by this Crown corporation bill creating the post office corporation. Just to be sure that some of these concerns are brought to the attention of the minister and whoever will be running the new corporation, should this bill pass this House and the Senate, I want to put on record some of the concerns which members have received from their constituents with regard to how the post office has acted and is acting today. I quote from a letter from J. V. Gordon:

Over the past months I, like many other Canadians I'm sure, have become increasingly frustrated and angered at the deterioration in the mail delivery service—

The letter was posted on the evening of January 17, postmarked January 18 and received January 27—10 days to travel 16 miles! I flew to England, did a week's work and was home on January 24, 3 days before the letter was delivered.

The minister replied:

Normally, Canada Post moves its mail with a high degree of efficiency in the 95 per cent range or better . . . However, if one per cent of these items are late, this represents 250,000 delays per day.

When we talk about late and talk about average delivery, most of us are brought to the realization that seven days' delay between posting and delivering is average. I mentioned in report stage that I had approached the Postmaster General to bring to his attention a letter I received from Bill Kennett, Inspector General of Banks on March 26. I quote:

As requested in your letter of March 12, 1981, which we received on Friday, March 20, please find enclosed a copy of the Proposed Regulations published on December 20, 1980.

This is the kind of service we are getting. Bill Kennett's address is Place Bell Canada here in Ottawa. I quote from my letter to the minister:

Do you deem it necessary for members of various government departments communicating with Parliament and vice versa to use parliamentary messengers to make sure that mail is delivered so that it is received the next day, or will that be an abuse of the courier provisions contained in the bill.

It has not been good, it has not been satisfactory, it does not stand up. It is not as good today as it was 20, 50 or 75 years ago. That is the state of the Post Office. As I said, I intend to move a motion later tonight. That will be one of my prime reasons for doing it.

While the minister may say it is 95 per cent satisfactory, his definition of satisfactory and my definition and that of my