deficit. When challenged on it he says that he would do this through better management, better services, by somehow being more efficient and so on. As my colleague, the Member for Winnipeg—Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie), pointed out, that is precisely what is happening. In fact, if the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) had done a little homework he would be aware of it. I suggest he might have started by reading the report of the review committee on the mandate and productivity of the Canada Post Corporation, the Marchment Committee, which is a very simple, very terse, very complete description of the problems of the Post Office and the solutions to those problems. If he examines what the Post Office has been doing *vis-a-vis* this committee report he will see that that is precisely what the current executive of the Post Office has been doing.

The situation in the Post Office really started during the time that the first Government of which he was a member was in power, in 1970 and 1971. As a result of innovations brought in by his colleague, the Hon. Erik Kierans, presumably with the blessing of the Cabinet of which he was a member, the staff of the Post Office increased from 40,000 to 60,000. That was a 50 per cent increase with no equivalent increase in the amount of mail. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition knows that full well. He knows that until then, the Post Office had a good delivery record and was well respected as an organization. It only deteriorated as a result of the innovations brought in by the Government of which he was a member. It is only in the last two years that we are beginning to get the operations back on track.

• (1150)

The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition also said that everyone must have the same service. Again, he knows that since the Post Office was created almost a century ago there has never been one uniform service for everyone in the country. There has been general delivery, rental boxes, green boxes, delivery door-to-door and rural routes. The Hon. Member is advocating a change from what has been in place for almost a century, by calling for uniformity.

Finally, let me respond to his comments that the handicapped, elderly, shut-ins and others do not get door-to-door delivery. If he were to check with the Post Office he would discover that everyone of those persons receive door-to-door delivery in their area, even those areas of expansion where supermailboxes are being put in place as a result of the policy began by the Liberal Government in 1983. The fact is that those people in the category described by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition receive door-to-door delivery. Those who are physically incapable of getting to the box will receive door-to-door delivery.

The motion put forward by the Opposition today represents a flagrant disregard and lack of understanding of the challenge that Canada Post Corporation faced after years of Liberal mismanagement. The Opposition let the postal service deteriorate to the point where it was abominable. The labour relations environment has been poisoned, and the management of the Corporation has not been given the freedom to act on its mandate. It is a postal service that was driven into the ground by political interference, more of which the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition is proposing. The most blatant example of this was the absence of a clear delivery policy.

The Opposition talks about fairness. Is it fair that the Liberal Government froze the extension of door-to-door delivery some 24 years ago, then refused to direct the then Post Office Department to implement a permanent alternate delivery system for Canadians? In fact, green groupboxes were installed all over the country as a temporary measure. While those temporary measures began rusting away, and postal customers grew more and more frustrated, the Liberal Government refused to direct the Post Office to develop a delivery policy. Instead, it applied band-aid solutions.

Through the 1970s, the Post Office Department knew well in advance when an election was about to be called because the Liberal Government would thaw its freeze on letter carrier delivery just before the election or by-election. That was its policy. This is but one area of the Liberal Government's abuse of the Post Office that left Canadians frustrated and postal employees equally frustrated.

Delivery was not the only area where the Liberal Government failed the Post Office Department. There was no clear rate policy, except that there should be no talk of a rate increase at any time that could impact on an election. Rate increases came after the election, never before. Rates lagged to the point where there was no increase in revenue while the Treasury Board marched on, buying peace and making outrageous settlements with the postal union that included restrictive clauses that effectively tied the hands of the postal management. The House will recall Joe Davidson of CUPW who said in the 1970s: "The public be damned". That is the legacy that the Liberal Government gave to Canadian postal users.

The fact that the Leader of that Party can stand in the House and say that this Government allowed the postal corporation to deteriorate is evidence of how the Liberal Party thinks. Now they believe it is perfectly acceptable to ask their children to pay for postal service to make up for their mismanagement. There was a $500 million deficit in 1982-83 as a result of mismanagement for which future generations will have to pay. In essence, the position of the Liberal Government, and now apparently the position of the Liberal Party, is that future generations will pay for the cost of delivering the mail today. That is not responsible.

I could go on to talk about the travesties of the Liberal Government, but that is not constructive. Constructive is the approach of this Government to the woes of the postal service.

Let me deal with some of the progress Canada Post has made. After that 42-day strike in 1981, there was a consensus in the House among all Parties that it would be preferable to have the Post Office become a Crown corporation, to remove it