

*Government Orders*

I conclude by saying that I absolutely cannot support such a bill, because I do not believe that we are giving priority to the Canadians who receive services from that corporation.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C-73 today, a bill to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

I have heard many speakers today talk about the act itself and make reference and comment on Canada Post. The one thing I have not heard either from the minister or from the government is really the basic tenet of the Canada Post Corporation Act.

The act clearly states that what we should be doing is providing service to Canadians. This service is really paramount in this country. Each time I hear a comment it concerns how we can save money, generate profits and make this an efficient business.

I find that in each move that has been made by the government over the last several years, we see the price of postage stamps rising dramatically and we see the loss on the Canada Post side rising dramatically. As a matter of fact, this year there is rumour of a projected loss of \$130 million. There seems to be a loss of efficiency and yet the price of those stamps keeps soaring up by hundreds of millions of dollars to Canadian consumers.

Now today we face a change in the act which would bring in a change in the legislation which would provide or allow Canada Post to sell 10 per cent of its ownership to employees through a sharing proposition.

The minister in charge of Canada Post stated that the plan is a common sense next step to ensure that improvement continues. I fail to see where there has been any improvement at all. There is an increased cost in postage, much dissension about loss of service and an increase in losses in that company. Where are those improvements that the minister suggests are continuing?

Canada Post claims it would improve customer service. In my mind it is making a proposition to employees who are saying they do not want to buy those shares. How does that improve customer service and reliability? How will it improve the financial sufficiency of Canada Post?

I have some real problems with why the government has stated that there will be improvements. As a matter of fact, I wonder why the government put this on the table at all because I cannot see how any group is satisfied. This is outside of the fact that it seems to be the

first step toward the privatization of Canada Post. This is certainly taking it in a direction that the act would not allow it to go. I guess this is a major concern that is being stated by all of my colleagues.

The government claims are quite difficult to follow through as we talk about it, but despite the claims noted, a closer review of the legislation reveals there are some major problems. The shares are to be offered to employees yet there is no definition of an employee in this. Is it full-time employees who are being laid off by the thousands? Is it part-time employees who are losing their jobs? Is it casual employees? Can this be used as a bonus to supervisors? I am not certain but I have my concerns.

The government wants employees to feel that they are more a part of the corporation and yet shares for employees are to be non-voting shares. The only shares retained by the government are going to be the voting shares. Any shares that are turned over to the employees will give the employees no say. Therefore you are not involving the employees in the operation of the corporation. You are asking them to take money out of their pockets to buy something for which they have no power to use with any votes in the future.

The bill suggests the selling of 10 per cent of Canada Post Corporation. What exactly is 10 per cent made up of? There is no value or indication of the make-up of the corporation, no description of what the corporate assets are and therefore there is no idea of what that 10 per cent represents.

Canada Post continues to claim there are improved services and financial self-sufficiency. However, I continually receive letters and complaints from Canadians across Canada about Canada Post closures, conversions or rationalization plans. These Canadians do not see the so-called improvements as better, but rather they see it as a dismantling of a national institution.

The government, referring to the share offering, maintains that a price for these shares will be established in the future. However, the bill itself indicates that shares may be offered for consideration or for no consideration. Therefore, shares could be given away. The bill permits the giving away of shares. Could this then be a move to corporate bonuses in Canada Post? We see the huge, huge salaries that are being paid at the present time. Are we then starting to look at giving some of the corporation to those executives within Canada Post?