

*Time Allocation*

It is not a freeze in her salary, it is not a cut, but a complete slashing of her salary. She was offered one-fifth of what she was offered before. This is what the government is doing when it treats the post office as a business, trying to create a great image when the reality is a horror story.

There is another way to do it. We want the Government to wake up. Rather than introducing motions in this House to cut off debate because it does not want to hear about alternatives, it ought to listen to what people on this side of the House are saying. The Government ought to listen to what rural Canadians and women are saying and should learn from it so it can develop a policy for the Post Office that makes sense.

Over the last 20 years the Post Office has been going downhill because it has been bounced from one Minister's desk to another. It has been ignored for 20 years. Twenty years ago Canadians were satisfied with their postal service. They had confidence in it, and the people who worked for the Post Office had pride in their work. But the Post Office has gone downhill through neglect. It is time for the Government to rethink the Post Office and it is time for Canadians to rethink the Post Office and time to have a real national debate. Why do we have a Post Office? The debate should not just be a process of grandstanding by a Government that is sinking in the quicksand of its own unpopularity. Why do we not have a real debate on the Post Office? How can it be run efficiently? What is its purpose? We can then design a Post Office that can work and function and pay decent wages so that people do not have to live in poverty in order to work there. People should have the option to work in an environment that is healthy, and the Post Office should be able to support rural Canadian life so we do not contribute to the abandonment of rural communities.

I am very disappointed in what the Government is doing in moving this motion to limit debate. What it is in fact doing is seeking to sell a pig in a poke to the Canadian public. It is trying to say it is tough. It is saying: "We have taken on Jean-Claude Parrot and we have made him say "uncle". Why is it trying to do that? Because its own public image is in the garbage pail, and the Government has earned the right to be there. Its image is like junk mail. It has given junk mail to the Canadian people and the Canadian people have said that this is a junk Government.

It is time for the Government to wake up and realize that grandstanding is not enough. When push comes to shove, when it comes to the bottom line, the question is whether the Government is governing in a way that is competent, not whether it is doing well with its public relations efforts.

How well is the Government actually governing the country? If it were to think about what the Post Office is for and to establish a decent plan to achieve the objectives of Canadians, which is to get their mail on time—in a couple of days rather than a couple of weeks—Canadians would like that. Canadians also want the workers to have pride in working at the Post Office. The vast majority want to know

that their Public Service is paying liveable wages. They do not necessarily demand that someone be able to eat caviar on their wages, but certainly that they be able to have three good meals on their table rather than being forced to live in poverty.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism):** Madam Speaker, I wish to join in this debate on time allocation regarding the dispute in the Post Office. This time, I shall address the Chair and I hope that I will not be interrupted by some Hon. Members who appear to take this issue much less seriously than they claim, before TV cameras, for all Canadians to see.

Madam Speaker, I think that this dispute has lasted longer than opposition Members seem to realize. They just need to watch TV. But they forget that there has been 15 months of negotiations that were getting us nowhere. The parties have been playing at musical chairs for 15 months. And after all that time the negotiators had to admit that they could not even see the light at the end of the tunnel and could not find one single point that could be settled.

I hope that all Canadians and particularly those in my riding who phoned to tell me that it was about time to resolve this dispute will realize that, in the past, we never have negotiated a settlement. We used to yield to every demand, to buy peace and to settle disputes at any cost.

If you look at the report of the Conciliation Commissioner, Mr. Claude Foisy—We were told, time and time again, that there was no progress in the last 15 months of negotiations and that the major point of contention, franchising, would trigger an all-out war. Madam Speaker, we are in the midst of that war which has already taken its toll. While workers put their life in danger on picket lines, our colleagues opposite keep saying: There is no hurry, let us continue the debate!

The situation is much more serious. Instead of continuing the debate we must solve the problem. As Government Members, we cannot act irresponsibly as the Members opposite who would like us to give everything to the unions. I think that our primary responsibility is to ensure that the negotiations will be meaningful and to solve that problem at a reasonable cost.

As you are aware, a large number of our constituents complain about the lack of motivation in our Post Offices. There is an incredible lack of motivation—

● (1650)

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** Order, please. The Hon. Member for Duvernay (Mr. Della Noce) has the floor. The normal courtesy should be extended to him by Members opposite. Even the Chair cannot hear his remarks. I would say that the conversation between Hon. Members is a bit too loud. The Hon. Member for Duvernay.