

member reminded me of that. I had almost forgotten about yet another obscenity on the part of Canada Post.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before resuming debate, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Halifax—Port of Halifax; the hon. member for Timmins—Chapleau—Mining; the hon. member for Comox—Alberni—Land Claims; the hon. member for Winnipeg North—Health; the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception—Fisheries.

Resuming debate.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I would like to first comment on the last comment of the member from Laval East because he made reference in his questions to the previous speaker about delivery of the mail being the most important thing with Canada Post.

I would just like to refer him to an article in the *Globe and Mail* recently that said “Canada Post, Canada’s largest Crown corporation, should be a dream operation. It has no competitors on its most lucrative product, first-class mail, renamed letter mail a couple of years ago when it was decided first class could no longer accurately describe the service. The price of a stamp is raised through an Order in Council, a cabinet decree that by-passes public scrutiny, and the government requires that private couriers charge three times as much as Canada Post to deliver a letter within the country”.

Is this the same government that is now standing in this House and speaking in great glowing terms of how it believes that Canada Post is operating as a private corporation? Let us at least stay close to the truth when we are discussing Canada Post in terms of what Canada Post is.

I rise feeling again saddened in this House. This is the ninth piece of back-to-work legislation that we have seen from the government since the Conservatives have been in power. It is the fourth piece in the past year. It is the fourth while the current Minister of Labour has been in his position.

Parliament is becoming a labour court. Collective bargaining in the public sector has been reduced to being

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dependent on back-to-work legislation, not on collective bargaining. It is symptomatic that there are problems with how government and Crown corporations operate when dealing with their workers.

It is the policies of this government with regard to Canada Post that have precipitated this dispute. The zeal for privatization has meant a reduced level of service, a worsening of labour-management relations and closures of both rural and urban post offices.

We have heard hon. members from the other side of the House standing up and saying: “We must order these workers back to work”. Let there be no mistake, CUPW did not issue its 24-hour notice until after the Minister of Labour rose in this House and introduced legislation for continuation of service in Canada Post.

We are not talking here at this moment of back-to-work legislation, we are talking about pre-emptive legislation that puts into place before a labour dispute, before a walk-out, legislation that requires those workers to stay on the job. It seems more to me to be about the removal of the right to strike than back-to-work legislation.

Closures of rural post offices and of urban post offices have meant a loss of 14,000 full time jobs. Those were well paying jobs and only a fraction of those closures from which private postal outlets were created have gone to unionized workers making a decent salary. Most of them have gone to corner groceries and convenience stores, drug stores and those workers are low-paid and often have very few if any fringe benefits.

We have had hon. members get up on the other side of the House and talk about overpaid postal workers. I would reiterate there is nothing in this country that should make one worker ashamed of drawing a decent salary for a decent day’s pay. Of the people I have been in contact with at Canada Post, I do not know anyone who does not deliver a good day’s work for a good day’s pay.

Canada Post is firing workers at three times the rate of the federal Public Service and of most private sector work places. Privatization is firmly rooted in this government’s strategy of fulfilling the wish of corporate Canada. In fact the BCNI and the Fraser Institute have been referred to by the other side of the House in setting the agenda for Canada Post with little if any consideration