

Canada Post Corporation Act

There are other equally serious deficiencies in the proposed plans to create the Canada postal corporation. I would suggest to the House that before the bill is passed we might give Canadians an opportunity for further input.

It has been my privilege to serve on a committee of our party, for the Post Office, for some six or seven years, and I have been very interested in it. I have received letters not only from my own riding, but from all over the country because people have known I have served on that committee. I can tell you there have been letters which would really curl your hair, letters which show absolute outrage because, as have been mentioned by other speakers, there is no department of government which involves more Canadians. Everyone, young, old, rich and poor, has something to do with the Post Office, even if it is only getting a birthday card or a Christmas card.

It was my privilege, along with the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale), who was the critic for our party for some years, to travel to other countries and look into how the Post Office was working there and how the delivery was.

We were in Great Britain and we were informed of the fast mail service there compared to Canada. I am well aware that there is a slight difference in geography. Despite taking that into consideration, I was amazed that mail in Great Britain is delivered a great deal faster. In fact, there is a different grade of mail there. There is a first-class mail for letters, and also a second grade, which does not get delivered so quickly. We were told that quite often these letters at the cheaper rate are delivered faster. We were talking to some of the people in the union, and this one fellow, whatever his title was, I am not sure whether it was a delayor or not, but it was his job to see that not too many of these second-class letters got delivered too quickly, or it would cut down on the revenue from the first-class mail.

We were also in West Germany and were amazed. That is a fair-sized country of some 60 million people. The mail there—I forget, but high in the 90 per cent—was delivered within 24 hours. Germany has mail cars. They use the trains, and I believe this is one of the reasons for its success. When we were there, the people told us they were holding meetings continually to try to improve upon the delivery. I said to the officials in charge, "How can you improve on 24-hour delivery?" Again, they stated that this was a thing which they were going to do.

We are well aware that before too many years down the way the electronic processing will be in. The government itself may be one of the organizations or one of the institutions which will greatly cut down on mail service, and I presume the day is not too far away when cheques for old age security or veterans' pensions, and so on, cheques will just automatically go into everyone's bank account and this will cut down a great deal. I am not too sure, at the present time. I believe there are some six billion pieces of mail which are handled by the Post Office. I am well aware that some—well up in the 90 per cent is delivered within reasonable time. However, even that small percentage, four 4 or 5 per cent, is an astronomical number of pieces of mail which are not delivered in time. That is the reason that Canadian people are so unhappy with their Post

Office. That is the reason that they are hoping and we are hoping that this new postal Crown corporation will be a success and will be a step towards an improved Post Office. Again, let me repeat that it will depend on the relations between managers and the employees, because they are all human beings and the idea of simply treating each other—and there is certainly fault on both sides. Employees, time and again, will probably not give the managers a break. We hear about the tens of thousands of grievances which are piling up. I happen to be well aware that three or four thousand of those grievances which are piled up and charged against the Post Office are probably one or two grievances multiplied ten thousand times. Of course, the unions will not explain that too fully, but the public on hearing this say, "Well, what is wrong with the management?" Again, let me commend the Postmaster General. Certainly, with some of its shortcomings, I will be supporting this Crown corporation bill. I will be hoping that the bill will go through, and that under the new system we can look forward to a faster and better mail delivery service.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Gimaiel (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, once again it is a pleasure and an honour for me to speak in this House this evening. That does require some effort on my part however because I do have a sore throat. Nevertheless, it is important, I think, that certain things be said. I will only take a few minutes but it is with true equanimity and seriousness that I do.

We are now debating an amendment which seeks to refer again to committee this bill to establish a Crown corporation. Why refer it to committee? For the simple reason that the hon. member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) would, instead of having the Corporation established now once and for all, prefer coming back again five years from now for another try at establishing the Corporation or to confirm its mandate. I cannot respond in any positive way to such an amendment or request. To begin with, for many years now everybody in this country, the government of Canada, or rather the various governments we have had, the postal workers, and Post Office management have been in agreement over the fact that we need a Crown corporation to manage the postal service in Canada, and that we should take action as quickly as possible. So why bring in this type of amendment? What could be the actual reason? Should we be back here in five years and question whether things are or are not going well, whether the Crown Corporation should revert to the status of a department or remain a Crown corporation? Any responsible politician know that you do not invest five years in an organisation, that you do not promote it for years only to tear it down right after you get it going.

Hence I am asking myself some very serious questions, and the more I think about it, the more I have the impression that this is another trick of the Progressive Conservative Party to