

Crown corporation status will not remedy all our ills or difficulties. Every organization, be it government or industry, faces normal operational problems. However, with the streamlining of many of the facets of our operations and the support and good will of the employees, the Canada Post Corporation will be able to provide all Canadians with the postal service to which they are entitled and which they deserve.

● (1420)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to explain the legislation in great detail here this afternoon. However, I wish to mention a few points. First, I should like to speak about the mandate of the new corporation as described in clause 5 of the act, and I quote:

5. (1) The objects of the corporation—

—the Canada Post corporation—they are objects of a general nature—

—are to establish and operate a postal service—within Canada—

—and there is a list of the powers and general purposes of the operation of such a service as they existed in the former Post Office Act. However, in creating this Canada Post corporation, we have tried to add something of the utmost importance in clause 5(2) which says, I quote:

(2) While maintaining basic customary postal service, the corporation, in carrying out its objects, shall have a regard to:

—four other factors. And this sentence, Mr. Speaker, is essential to make hon. members of the House and particularly the Canadian public understand that the creation of a Crown corporation does not mean a reduction of services usually assured to the public. We wanted to write down this guarantee in the act so that Canadians, particularly in remote areas of the country and rural sectors which are often affected by decisions made by large Canadian corporations, would not be penalized by the creation of a Canada Post corporation which would operate in the Canadian capital and that would become insensitive to the aspirations of those Canadians, particularly in the rural and remote areas of the country. So I say that clause 5 guarantees that the same level of essential services will be maintained and this is one of the objectives of the legislation for which the new corporation will be responsible.

We know of course that we live in a world where technology is in full swing and that is exactly why we wanted to enable the corporation to benefit developments in the area of communications and why we say in that clause of the Post Office legislation that the corporation shall be at the forefront of technology and new developments in the area of communications in order to serve the Canadian people better. I have often been told, Mr. Speaker, that in many places in the country the Post Office Department was the only representative of the Canadian government. In many small villages, the Canadian flag floats at the end of the pole in front of the post office and may be the only sign of the federal presence. So I can tell hon.

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members and the Canadian public that in the bill we urge the Crown corporation to maintain and respect a corporate identity as an institution of the Government of Canada.

I think that this provision of the bill clearly demonstrates that while we are going to convert the Post Office Department into a Crown corporation, the corporation will not be allowed to show a corporate symbol or a personal signalization which might obliterate the federal and Canadian symbolization. Consequently that Canadian presence throughout the country will continue to be seen through the new Canada Post corporation instead of the old Post Office Department.

I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that the daily management of that postal service will be assured by a board of directors which will be empowered to establish a general policy and to make decisions concerning finance, personnel management, as independently as possible from departments and without the restrictions now inherent in the public service. That board of Directors will be very important and will consist of the chairman, the president and seven other directors. The chairman and the president will be appointed by the governor in council to hold office during pleasure. Each other director will be appointed by the governor in council for a term of three years.

I want now to reiterate what I have said publicly and privately to union representatives, that is, I intend to have union representatives on the board of directors in order that they can get directly involved and participate fully in the good administration of the corporation.

Moreover, we will try to have various regions of the country represented on the board, from both urban and rural regions. The board will direct and manage the business of the corporation and will be made up of people well aware of the needs and desires of all areas in this country. We will try to appoint to that board very highly qualified people.

The corporation will, of course, be responsible to Parliament and through a designated minister this time. The minister and the governor in council will have the power to set guidelines for the new corporation in the interest of people and to protect the interest and priorities of the Canadian government. Just as the Post Office Department, the Canada Post corporation will have the monopoly to transport letters, so as to have a guaranteed source of revenue allowing it to ensure the universality of services. All postal services in industrialized countries have such a monopoly. It must be a true monopoly and the bill must be very specific about that. I am sure this aspect will be discussed in detail when the bill is taken into consideration, clause by clause, at the committee stage. The postal rates is established by regulations. They will be fair and reasonable and will as much as possible be aimed at self financing.

As the corporation will have the monopoly on the transportation of letters, the rates for this class of mail will be, at the request of any interested person, submitted to the Canadian