

## Thoughts on a Filibuster

by Sallie Caufield - Sunday, July 10, 2011

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Can I get a "WOW"? Just look at all those women! I couldn't stop grinning as woman after woman after woman rose and spoke. What happened to all the arrogant white dudes? Oh, they're posturing and questioning. I guess someone noticed as the past few questions have been lobbed by female CPC MPs.

Aside from the feeling that I might watch CPAC more often now, and that it was rotten to schedule this vote on St. Jean Baptiste Day, here are some random thoughts:

1. The Conservatives keep stating they represent the majority of Canadians and they have the right to send postal workers back to work, so they will. However, just because you have the right to do something doesn't mean it is the right thing to do.
2. MP Hoepfner stated 70 percent of Canadians want their mail. Well, 100 percent of Canadians would like to retire with dignity. One of the many things CUPW is fighting for is a fair pension for its current and future members. Whether the majority of Canadians know it or not, they want exactly what CUPW is fighting for.
3. PM Harper prorogued parliament twice, shutting down the entire federal government for months and forcing dozen of bills before the House to start from scratch. On purpose. Not once, but twice. The first was from December 4, 2008 to January 26, 2009. The second from December 30, 2009 to March 3, 2010. This is considerably longer than the Canada Post lock-out, which is on Day 22 and has prompted Bill C-6 to force the postal workers back to the work they didn't walk away from voluntarily. I would have to conclude Harper believes Canada Post is more vital to our country than the federal government. Considering the priorities of the majority Conservatives, I'd have to agree with him.
4. A number of Conservative MPs have read emails from small business people saying how much they needed Canada Post services. One even said she didn't want to pay Fed Ex rates. Will that convince the Conservatives not to privatise Canada Post services? Don't be silly.
5. The NDP Official Opposition was accused of holding Parliament hostage with the filibuster. They were called "Pirates." Well, whatever you want to call it, I look forward to the Hansard transcriptions which will be on the public record. Forever. For future generations of workers, it will be clear who was responsible for eroding their rights.
6. A number of NDP MPs shared valuable stories of the dedication of CUPW members. Did you know many volunteered to ensure the delivery of CPP, Old Age Security, Veterans' Affairs and Canada Tax Benefit cheques, Quebec's Child Assistance, Pension and Income Security cheques as well as Alberta Pension cheques? If it didn't affect you, you may have missed this display of CUPW's desire to go above and beyond in the service of the people of Canada. Remember this the next time someone tells you unions are concerned only with their bottom line. Plus, CUPW workers left the line to find a variety of

live shipments -- including queen bees which, apparently, private delivery services will not handle; another reason NOT to privatise Canada Post!

7. Harper's Conservatives toe the line. His line. It isn't a surprise, of course, but I am always disappointed when people elected to serve the best interests of their constituents choose to serve their Party instead. I'm naive that way. CUPW had engaged in rotating strikes which disrupted, but did not halt, mail service. Canada Post responded by locking them out. Harper responded by forcing them back to work at a lower rate than the last wage offer from Canada Post at the Bargaining Table. Shame.

If Harper's goal was simply to return our Posties to work and get the mail moving again, he could have introduced a bill that forced Canada Post to unlock the doors and get back to the Table. He didn't because it wasn't. His goal was to make it clear he is in charge and, by golly, things are gonna get ugly every time someone forgets it.

As the clock counts down to the C-6 vote call, I know how it's going to end. We all do.

But I have to send my appreciation to the federal NDP MPs who spoke so long and so well for working people. I am grateful for their strong presence in the House of Commons. Do do that voodoo that you do so well!

I also send my appreciation to my brothers and sisters in CUPW for your brave efforts to stand firm for all Canadian workers.

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