

Input from the public should form a significant part of the operations and decision-making of the commission.

Madam Speaker, you will remember the Marchment commission. The government recognized that the public had something to say about Canada Post and a few years ago established the Marchment commission to look at its operations. The Marchment commission came back and told the government that there were significant deficiencies in the operation of Canada Post, that the service mandate was being ignored and, more important, that rural post offices were being closed when they did not have to be closed. The response of this government was not to listen to the report of the commission but rather to shut the commission down, fire the people who worked for it and then carry on with its operations, having said: "We listened to the Canadian people," and that was the end of it.

Finally, the Canada Post commission, as I see it, should have the authority to receive from Canada Post whatever information the commission deems necessary for its deliberations. I say that because we found Canada Post to be one of the most secretive of the Crown corporations. When you need something from Canada Post, likely what you get is not what you want, not what you have asked for and not what you have needed but something else, something that completely alters the way in which you want to respond to some of the information that is available.

I am appalled with the way in which Canada Post has been treating some of the people in Canada. This goes back to the closing of rural post offices, the increasing of postal rates and the working with Communications Canada to eliminate the postal rate subsidy for community newspapers.

• (1030)

We continue to see Canada Post tramping on the needs of Canadians. We found this horrible situation a month ago where Canada Post now says that if it delivers a letter to the wrong address, then the person who gets that letter has to pay to have that letter sent to the right address. Of all the crazy things to have to do.

When a letter is supposed to be going to one person and it goes to someone else, it may end up getting thrown in the garbage because that person is not going to go out and buy 43 cents worth of stamps, or whatever it

costs now plus GST, to send that letter to the right addressee. It is a crazy situation. Why is Canada Post doing this? It says to save money within the corporation.

As my colleague from Chambly just said, it is a move to punish Canadians. I agree entirely. Canadians right across the country have been punished by Canada Post enough and it is time it was stopped.

I also want to take a few minutes to put on the record a couple of other conclusions I reached in looking at the operations of Canada Post. These relate to the operations of rural post offices because they make up the bulk of service to the large rural and remote areas in this country.

After having talked to Canadians from coast to coast, there is no question; Canada Post has to halt the closure of rural post offices, the divestment of its property and, as a result, the withdrawal of the presence of Canada Post in rural Canada. There is no way that a post office sign on the side of a convenience store or a gas bar or even an elevator in rural Saskatchewan is a presence in rural Canada.

All too often we have seen a situation where on one street you have the building which used to be the post office standing with windows boarded up and a "for sale" sign on the front door and right next door you have a drugstore with a little wee sign in the corner that says "stamps for sale here". That is not the presence the federal government or Canada Post should have in rural Canada.

These matters can be addressed in many ways by this government. Bill C-73 is taking us in completely the opposite direction that Canadians would have us go. Find a way to return by contract, good wages and job security to the people who work for Canada Post and provide a service to Canadians from coast to coast to coast and we will have a country where we have good postal service and a public that will respond appropriately. The government that is held accountable for that action would be held in a lot better repute than it is today.

Ms. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Western Arctic): Madam Speaker, this Canada Post bill is very important for all Canadians. My hon. colleague has raised issues which I think are pertinent and important for all Canadians. Canada Post touches everyone. Every person in Canada who writes a letter, for instance, is going to be affected by the move to pay for redirected mail.