

We have all experienced this problem throughout Canada, the injustices of the closing down of these rural post offices.

She goes on to say:

When we were first notified of the 'structural change-over' (as they like to refer to it), every letter said that the rural route would not be affected in any way. Then less than five days before I was to start, I received a letter from Canada Post Rural Services informing me that my route would emanate 16 kilometres from my home. I was told that I would be responsible for servicing the rural post office, prime sorting all of the other town's mail as well as my route, carry all parcels, flyers, registered items, Priority Post items, of both routes. Canada Post's offer for performing this service is based on 30 minutes to separate the town mail from my rural mail plus a few cents mileage for the additional kilometres driven. The length of my route is 34.6 kilometres. I service 85 rural customers and deliver no less than 15 different kinds of flyers weekly. However since I have been moved to the rural outlets in another town to sort the mail, the number of kilometres travelled per day is 67.8. I am carrying mail now for 153 townspeople plus my own 85.

Needless to say, the volume of flyers alone for this many customers fills my car on Mondays and Tuesdays, and I am afraid to think of what will happen when the Christmas mail gets into full swing.

This is something they just threw on to this lady. You do understand the seriousness of this.

When I phoned Canada Post to try to get their co-operation to explain to them that the job of sorting the mail takes at least two hours, and that some days I have to make extra trips to town as my car will not hold the town's mail plus my rural mail, I was told that I could hand in my notice of 60 days if I was not satisfied.

This really shows the exploitive nature of this corporation and how it is now running with this new mandate set out by the government. She says:

I have answered their offer in writing with a counter-offer for additional payment and I am still waiting for a reply. I cannot quit as this is my only source of income. My husband's employment was terminated so we are forced to accept Canada Post's abuse and extra workload without fair payment.

I apologize for rambling on so long and I am sure there are others in worse circumstances. But I am becoming so weary and so depressed that I wanted you to be aware of what Canada Post is capable of doing.

That really says it all. If Canada Post was fair, if it really wanted to provide the service to Canadians in rural Canada as they do in urban Canada—and make no mistake, this should be a basic right of all Canadians, to

have the proper mail service—they would address injustices such as this.

I want to go on to another letter, which is equally disturbing.

I am the only contractor out of our post office. I am up to about 268 mail boxes and 57 kilometres. I have been doing the mail for about 13 years, but as soon as my contract is up I am packing it in. Unfortunately, that is not more than three more years. I deliver an average of 13 flyers per week, and as you know without compensation. My friend who is a letter carrier gets paid per flyer when he delivers them. Canada Post can make me deliver as many as they want and I cannot do anything about it. A contractor in the next village to us is quitting in June when her contract is up. We have all had enough. The only reason I don't quit now is because Canada Post is hanging on to about \$2,000 of my money. I had to give them that instead of a letter of credit because my bank wouldn't do a letter of credit for such a small amount. I had to give Canada Post 10 per cent of a year's contract price or they would not let me have my contract renewed, which I had to tender for after all these years of service. That is gratitude for you.

What these examples illustrate is that in many of the economically depressed rural areas across Canada, people desperate for jobs enter into unfair and exploitive contracts with Canada Post in an attempt to secure some kind of livelihood.

You know the problem is out there. In effect, many rural carriers are exploited by Canada Post's formal tender evaluation process. In an attempt to win a contract, the experienced courier is forced to submit a bid that does not reflect the work, expenses and costs involved in the job. In most instances, the contract is awarded to the lowest bidder and the carrier with the experience, who wants only to make a fair living, loses. He is not the only one to lose. All rural Canadians lose when these letter carriers do. What is more problematic is that many of the problems faced by rural carriers are due to the vulnerability of living in rural Canada.

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To a greater extent the rural carrier must contend with a persisting attitude on the part of Canada Post that it is dealing with a rural, unsophisticated, pseudo-entrepreneur. Obviously I find this very disturbing, mainly because the nature of the job dictates that people and service rather than money must be a priority.

I believe that rural route carriers face discrimination and injustice because of their contractual relationship