

I met with senior people in the post office, including the vice-president for mail operations. About that time they found out that the Vancouver post office was structurally unsound. They realized that they could not consolidate safely into the city of Vancouver. I was informed that was off and they were now going to look for property in the Fraser Valley, probably in Surrey, to consolidate a postal sorting service. As recently as the last two or three months I have been informed that this was continuing and was even told about potential sites.

About a week ago a letter was delivered to my office by fax, addressed to me, not to the post office workers or to the unions. It was addressed to me. It was announced that the government was going to close the Surrey postal service as of May 31.

I would like to read one paragraph from this letter because I think it shows what is happening with this corporation. It says: "Any potential impact on employees will be dealt with in accordance with their respective collective agreement. Canada Post Corporation will consult fully with affected unions. No employees will lose employment as a result of the new network processing system although some will be accommodated in other locations".

The three-paragraph press release that went with it contained other interesting points, saying: "Canada Post is consulting with all affected bargaining unions to fully discuss this change. Canada Post will continue to update employees on a regular basis as more information becomes available".

This letter was faxed to my office at seven o'clock in the morning. At ten o'clock I phoned the local union to get its reaction and found out that Canada Post had not informed the employees and had not informed the union. I was put on the speaker phone and that is how 100 workers in Surrey found out that their jobs were gone.

Then it came back and said it wanted to work co-operatively with the union and the workers. It did not even have the courtesy to inform them. It sent a letter, not addressed to the union and a copy, but it sent a letter to the MP because the MP had been on its backside for a year and a half insisting that it treat employees fairly and

keep the services in Surrey. It felt it had to pacify me but it did not have any regard for its employees.

Later that morning I talked to the local manager who told me that the letter was inaccurate, that 20 people would lose their jobs. Out of the 100 employees, 20 of them would actually lose their jobs in spite of the fact that the letter to me said this was not so.

Here the corporation went ahead in spite of local governments, the GDRD, the city of Vancouver, all pointing out to it that downtown Vancouver was not the place to locate the service. The transportation corridors were more appropriate to airport, rail and road in Surrey.

Then it had the audacity to go in and say it wanted the co-operation of the employees and it did not even follow common courtesy, let alone personnel practices and it ended up with the member.

This is repeated over and over again and I am sure my colleague from Vancouver East will have other comments along the same line.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, I oppose Bill C-73 because it is the first step in selling off Canada Post. This post office, which has been so undermined by this government and by the Canada Post Crown Corporation has been an essential public service since the beginning of Confederation. As other speakers have said, post offices were the heart of most communities.

Privatization is deeply resented by most Canadians. The bill is misleading to employees. It is an attempt to undermine collective bargaining. It will not give real power to workers who purchase shares. It will not promote labour-management peace but will increase hostilities.

It does nothing to improve or maintain effective postal services in Canadian communities, communities that have been decimated by this government's inhumane privatization policies and action.

In my constituency of Vancouver East, a multicultural multi-ethnic riding, Canada Post has closed every post office. I have received frequent complaints about the services in the small franchised units which they have been attempting to develop in small stores. The importance of skilled and informed postal workers providing services to the community rather than having untrained,