

Government Orders

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, Bill C-73 which is an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, has one great fallacy. It fails to address the service of Canada Post to Canadians. Of all the things that Bill C-73 purports to do in terms of giving the shares of Canada Post, or an opportunity of those shares to employees, the government seems to be missing the biggest need and that is to address the postal service to Canadians in both rural areas and in urban centres.

We have tried to document with this government that closing stations, putting up supermailboxes, doing away with door-to-door delivery and removing the presence of the Canadian flag at postal stations across the country is not furthering or enhancing the sense of Canadianism and the important role that Canada Post has played traditionally through the many years. Not to even mention that there seems to be one rule in the ridings of regular members of Parliament and a completely different rule in the riding of the Prime Minister where the Canada Post stations are not being closed when in fact stations of greater service and of greater importance elsewhere are being closed.

The other point that I certainly want to dwell on in the few minutes accorded me in this debate is the way that Canada Post and the government approach public input. A postal station in my riding of York West was closed just a few days ago, Postal Station Downsview C in the Jane—Finch community. Canada Post officials late last year approached me because they were thinking of redesignating that postal service delivery. They had come at it from the standpoint of: "We wish to let you know this is what we are thinking of doing". I objected to that because I thought within the equation of that decision there was no thought given to what the clientele might think of redesignating or closing that particular postal station.

• (1440)

I suggested to them that it would only be legitimate and proper to delay any decision until they heard from the users, the clientele, the public, the community that had used that station for many years. Canada Post agreed with that process.

Then early in the new year I received a call saying that the building in which the postal station was located was sold and therefore they had to expedite their decision without public consultation. That decision was negative because the decision was to close Downsview Postal Station C.

When we talk about indifference, cynicism and Canadians not believing in their institutions and governments any more and use this one classic example, is there any wonder?

The users of Downsview Postal Station C had absolutely no input and not one word to say about a post office that their taxes sustained and supported. I do not believe that is the way we should conduct public business. Canada Post is a public service to Canadians. Therefore we are having a public meeting next Thursday after the decision has been made.

Obviously there is going to be unhappiness and concern. It could have been managed and should be managed differently, not only for my riding but for the entire country. They should take Canadians into their confidence and allow Canadians the partnership to build and to redesignate and compromise so that both the community and Canada Post win. They should not shut out the communities. They should not agitate communities. They should not incite community activism which obviously will be organized now because of how things were done.

It certainly left bitter feelings in the community surrounding Downsview Postal Station C. It is not only a question of the stations that have been closed in the rural communities of Canada where it has taken on additional importance, but also in urban centres like my own city of metropolitan Toronto.

A lot of Canadians are dissatisfied with the postal service they are getting. There is a great deal of dissatisfaction that the user, the public, has no say. This is what we should be addressing in legislation before the House and not missing the mark and only talking about shares to employees. Let us talk about how we can improve this service for the benefit of all Canadians.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Vancouver East.

North Surrey has the largest postal sorting service outside the city of Vancouver. About 18 months ago the postal station was informed that it would be closed and consolidated with the city of Vancouver. The local councils objected. The GVRD objected. The mayor of Vancouver objected. It is the wrong location. The services should be located in the suburbs where the people are. Surrey has a much better transportation corridor than the city of Vancouver. It is against the official community living plan of the GVRD to consolidate employment in the downtown core.