

Submission to the Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review
April 21 to September 2, 2008

Panel Members: Dr. Robert Campbell
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True Stake holders: the Canadian Public

Issues being reviewed: Market and Competition; Public Policy objectives and responsibilities; commercial activities; financial and performance target

How did Canada Post get from the 1959 mission statement of "To serve the People" to "In Business to Serve" to "To anywhere from anyone"?

How did the Canadian Postal Service get from twice a day mail delivery six days a week with same day in city or in Town mail delivery to a 3 to 4 day acceptable mail delivery standard?

The answer is progress for profit, but not for universal service.

Canada Post Corporation

We all know that Canada Post Corporation came into existence on October 16th, 1981. Previously it was the Canada Postal Service.

Prior to becoming a Federal Crown Corporation the Postal Service was experiencing great financial deficits and much labour strife. Anyone who has ever had any dealings with the National Treasury Board will attest to the frustrations of dealing with this department of our Federal Government.

Until the creation of the Canada Post Crown Corporation, all bargaining was done with the Treasury Board. Since October 16th, 1981, bargaining has been with Canada Post Corporation directly.

Canada Post has experienced growth, many years of profits, and labour peace with its unionized workers. This has been considered as progress.

What has been done with these profits generated?

Canada Post Corporation has turned over many millions of dollars to the Federal Government as dividends, with some profits going into increased mechanization.

Advocates of mechanization would say this is progress. Today's mechanization requires fewer workers and ensures predictable future costs.

Mass mechanization requiring the barest minimum of workers does little to advance Canadians.

In my opinion what advances Canada and Canada Post is solid investment in the Universal Service Canada Post Corporation provides to Canadians in every community.

Canada was founded on people taking a chance on remote parts of this great country. Taking risks that the land would feed and house them and their families for now, for their future and for future generations.

Canadians live and work in every corner of this vast country because weather and economics doesn't stop their faith in those same beliefs. Canadians still chase dream of fortune and wealth across this Country.

The dream of fortune and wealth almost always centers on the promise of jobs.

Universal Service Obligations

Canada Post has been a long established source of solid steady community jobs. These jobs are considered by some to be "jobs for life". Not long ago, jobs in manufacturing were considered the same way. Being a stable and reliable employer was always a proud statement. Companies still take out full page ads advertising the anniversary dates of their length of service as a company in their community. They announce with great pride the workers and their years of service and employment in that company.

Canada Post Corporation enjoys the exclusive privilege of being the most trusted Government agency by Canadians; one that is not taken lightly by any working at Canada Post.

It is the commitment to smaller communities that has grown this wonderful country. It was the commitment to ensure that rural communities were serviced in the same timely manner as urban communities that grew this loyal following.

With any commitment to community comes responsibility. Canadians have consistently pushed for more commitment to their communities and more expansion of services, not less. Canadians are the true stakeholders of Canada Post Corporation.

The Review of Canada Post Corporation is more than a review of a business. This is a review of a Federal Government "face" in all communities across

Canada. A link between the people of Canada, and the Federal Government that are elected to serve the Canadian people.

This review can not be just about profit and efficiency but also about responsibilities, the connection of people with their government and universal easily affordable reliable access to a means of communication between people and their government.

The Government including Canada Post Corporation can not just decide to serve the population masses. They have an obligation to serve everyone equally.

Canada Post Corporation has been granted an exclusive privilege for letter mail to ensure there are equal affordable and universal services to all Canadians no matter what part of Canada they reside or work in, no matter what income level they enjoy, no matter what age they are, no matter what their mobility is or isn't, no matter what level of technological advances they enjoy.

In its simplest terms, Universal Service is about equality for all. It is about knowing that for an affordable cost Canadians can communicate with each other.

There has always been faith and trust by Canadians in Canada Post that if there are mistakes made in applying correct postage amounts or mistakes made in the address, Canada Post will work hard to ensure safe arrival of that mail to it's intended destination. Canadians have shown that their understanding and expectation of Universal Service means they can continue to trust that no matter what happens; Canada Post will ensure they get their mail and that items they mail will get to their destination. So when we talk about Universal service the interpretation by the audience changes depending on the perception of the person. That being said, the trust remains, the trust that Canada Post will always serve their home and community without fail. Taking away this faith would do irreparable harm.

I have to stress strongly that the Universal Service obligation for Canada Post Corporation be maintained for generations to come.

Affordable Postage Rates

Canada Post has applied for a postage rate increase to keep up with the rate of inflation in Canada. This postage rate increase is to come into effect on January 12, 2009 raising the present domestic first class letter mail rate from \$ 0.52 to \$ 0.53 up to 50 grams.

History has shown that the postage rates in Canada have always remained reasonable and except for the huge jump in postage rates from \$ 0.17 to \$ 0.30 in 1982. When this huge jump in rates occurred there was a great deal of negative public outcry. For the most part postage rates have increased by a penny a year and the public accepts that as reasonable.

Canada still has the 4th lowest letter mail rates in the world. Considering the size and density challenges without factoring the climate, this is something to be proud of. United Kingdom, United States, and New Zealand have lower letter mail rates. We must also keep in mind these countries are smaller in size, more accessible and don't face the challenge the Canadian Postal service faces in terms of distance, weather or population density.

Exclusive Privilege

Canadians have become complacent in their acceptance that Canada Post will always be there to deliver their mail. We have become reliant on the fact that the Canadian Government will always remain committed to ensuring the Post Office delivers to every part of Canada. We take for granted that the exclusive privilege will always be in place. We don't ask for it to be changed and we don't expect that it will be changed. So when a review such as this one occurs in relative secrecy and with the future of Canada Post at stake, we take for granted that the exclusive privilege will still be there at the end of the day.

The exclusive privilege to deliver all letter mail under 50 grams is as necessary today as in 1981 when the Crown Corporation instilled it. It provides the financial security and protections needed to continue to provide universal service to every Canadian in every community, hamlet, town and city in Canada.

Canadians expect no changes to the exclusive privilege Canada Post presently enjoys. We expect that all letter mail will be securely delivered in Canada by Canada Post by Canada Post employees that are trained to deliver mail, and who make their living delivering mail.

Outside Competition

Canadians complain at times that the mail can be slow, that their phone bill didn't arrive on the day they were going to the bank or that their socio-economic cheques didn't get delivered before their hydro bill, or they received their neighbours gas bill. But these are not valid reasons to open up mail delivery to competitors. In fact Canada Post studies show a very high percentage, above 97%, of on time delivery and accuracy for domestic letter mail. Canada Post is continually striving to better this percentage.

Canadians are proud of their Public Post Office. Help them maintain their pride for generations to come.

Use your report to grow this proud Canadian Crown Corporation into something our children and grand children can also be proud of.

Sincerely,



Brenda Laslo

Ontario

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Cc: Canadian Union of Postal Workers
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