

[CUPW Translation]

Christiane Gagnon
Quebec Member of Parliament

August 12, 2005

The Honourable John McCallum
Minister of National Revenue
Minister responsible for Canada Post Corporation
House of Commons
Suite 110, Justice Building
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Re: Closure of the Canada Post Mail Processing Plant in Quebec City

Sir:

Last week's announcement regarding the closure of the Quebec City Mail Processing Plant has caused a public outcry in the area. Many political, social and economic stakeholders have denounced this decision, and rightfully so, and have asked that sortation operations be maintained in Quebec City.

As a result of the transfer of these operations to Montreal by September 2007, the area will lose 300 well-paid jobs, with the full economic impact that entails, i.e. an annual loss of some \$12 million in total payroll.

Among the arguments used in support of its decision, Canada Post said that the building at 300 St. Paul St. is outdated and difficult to access, that its mail processing plant in Montreal is underused and that this move would improve service.

Granted, the building at 300 St. Paul St. may be outdated, but does that warrant the transfer of operations to Montreal? Instead, why not move the 300 St. Paul St. operations to another building in the area, one that is more functional and easier to access? Why not take advantage of the refitting of the Parcel Pick-Up and Distribution Centre in Métrobec's industrial park, in 2006, to integrate mail processing operations in that facility, as was considered earlier?

The issue of the current under-use of the Montreal processing plant, which was recently refitted, also raises some questions. Is it underused because Canada Post over-assessed its needs or because the transfer of Quebec operations had already been planned?

Moreover, it is hard to believe that this transfer will not have any negative impact on service. I hope Canada Post doesn't expect us to believe that the elimination of 300 jobs will result in better service.

While it is true that Canada Post must be managed soundly and provide citizens with quality service at the best possible cost, profitability should not be the only consideration – although with a consolidated net income of \$147 million in 2004, Canada Post is not exactly experiencing financial hardship. While in the private sector, the economic aspect rules, the same cannot be said of crown corporations, which must have a presence in all regions and, in doing so, contribute to regional development by maintaining decent jobs. What message is Canada Post sending? If a crown corporation can get away with such a move in the name of streamlining its operations, how can we criticize a private company for doing the same?

For all these reasons, the caucus of Bloc Québécois MPs from the Quebec area is asking you to review Canada Post's decision and keep mail processing operations and the related jobs in Quebec City.

I trust you will act swiftly on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Christiane Gagnon

Quebec Member of Parliament

President, caucus of Bloc Québécois MPs from the Quebec area

c.c.: Jean-Paul L'Allier, Mayor of Quebec City
Michel Durand, 1st Vice-President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers,
Quebec Local
Pierre Dolbec, President, Quebec Chamber of Commerce
Robert Bouchard, Chicoutimi-Le Fjord MP and Bloc Québécois Postal Critic

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