Conservatives attempting to gut Canada Post

A bill to remove Canada Post's exclusive right to handle international mail is just the latest attack on the service. In 1996 and 1997, the crown corporation lost its fight against privatisation when private postal outfits such as the Purolator were given the right to distribute mail.

By ALEX COREY

Removing the exclusive privilege of Canada Post to deliver international mail will reduce the amount of money that Canada makes in dividends and taxes from Canada Post, and it threatens the viability of Canada Post as a universal service to Canadians, says Denis Lemelin, the National President of the Canada Union of Postal Workers (CUPW).

But this is what the Conservatives are attempting to sneak by in budget bill C-9. C-9 is the Conservatives' third attempt to remove Canada Post's exclusive rights to handle international mail.

"By putting everything including the kitchen sink in the budget bill, the government can say in good conscience that what it knows it can't achieve in a parliamentary democracy -- the deregulation of Canada Post -- was done," said Ken Georgetti, President of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Since budget bills are confidence motions, opposition parties can only vote against the government if they believe the budget bill includes a negative change to their legislation.

Currently, Canada Post is able to provide universal access to the world and 98 per cent of rural areas. By privatizing Canadian Post's exclusive privilege to deliver international mail, the government intends to make Canada Post back out of the business. In 1997 when the Liberal government threw 9500 people out of work, the government's plan was to use price increases to make up for the loss of economy of trade, the changes that the Conservatives are attempting to force through will not benefit the working people of Canada.

This provision is a small number of changes to the Canada Post legislation which could be profitable routes, but have no interest in providing universal services or high-quality employment.

In Brief...

- Food banks should only be a temporary alternative to an inadequate social safety net," said Linda McLaughlin, Acting Director of the Canada Post for Social Justice. Last year in New Brunswick, 17,889 people accessed food from food banks, an increase of 14% compared to 2006. Thirty-four percent were children, 12% had an income and 80% were on social assistance. "The solution is not more food banks and soup kitchens but rather, in large part, an effective social assistance program and support for food banks and soup kitchens."

- Minimum wage in New Brunswick increased by twenty-six cents to $5.95 an hour. In 2007, a full-time permanent worker will now earn $34,950 per year, which is below the federal government low income cut-off for a single person without children.

- Protections continue at the site of the future site of a Costco store in Fredericton. About two dozen protesters, including University of New Brunswick biology professors, held signs in support of saving Fredericton's UBB Woodlot over the noon hour on April 26. The action, organized by the Friends of the UBB Woodlot, was designed to protest the approval of the 80-metre buffer zone of a wetland beside Costco. Similar to previous actions at the Woodlot, this year, they used flags to demonstrate the area that they say should be protected as part of the buffer zone.

- The Conservation Council of New Brunswick wants the New Brunswick government to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides.

- AIDS NB has opened a new office in Bathurst at 270 Douglas Avenue, Suite 525 of the Keystone Building. The new office has various resources on HIV/AIDS, born from pathogens and sexually transmitted infections. AIDS NB is empowering people to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and to supporting the elimination of the stigmatization of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

- The gates of the Petawawa River were permanently opened on April 4. The gates were closed due to flooding in the area.

- A 10-day rain event was opened at St. Thomas University in favour of phasing out the sale of bottled water on campus. The Canadian Federation of Students in New Brunswick has the successful national campaign for reducing the sale of bottled water on campus.

- The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives reports that 20% of the Canadian indigenous people is 30% lower than non-indigenous people.

- Twenty-nine coal miners were killed in West Virginia in an explosion with collapse of a coal mine owned by Massey Energy. Since 2005, the mine was cited 1,300 times by the Mine Safety and Health Administration and has been charged as much as $1.89 million in fines.

Community Calendar

Just a sampling of upcoming events! For a complete listing, please visit us at nbmedia.coop.

To list your event in the community calendar, or to receive the community calendar by email once a week, email community@nbmedia.coop.

Free photojournalism workshop - The nb media Group will offer a workshop for students or interested those who wish to explore photojournalism. The workshop will cover techniques, tips to help you take better photos, and how to use your digital camera for better results.

Public Library on Saturday. All the way from 15:00-15:30. To register: email info@nbmediagroup.ca or call 506-458-8155.

Call for Participation: World March of Women 2010 - To celebrate the 100th anniversary of this great event that brought together 20 million women from 130 United Nations in New York, the organizing committee of the NB World March of Women invite all women of NB to organize in their region to participate in the April 8 commemoration in Fredericton in mid-October 2010. For more information, contact Hubert Guerrieri at 382-7466 or gauhubert@nb.sympatico.ca.

Food Forest Gardening Workshop - Community Forests International will deliver a Food Forest Gardening Workshop at the UNFI Agroforestry Project in Sackville. This hands-on workshop will explore the co-benefits of food and forest products. Participants will learn how to grow food using food production herbs, vines, shrubs, and hardwoods. It is open to anyone interested in learning how to transform forested land into a food forest while maintaining diversity and providing a source of food. The workshop will take place on May 15-17, 2010. For more information and registration, please visit the website.

Milk House - Young people in Englishtown will be hosting a "Milk House" youth centre, honouring Hilary Bonni. They're looking for interested people to help with this cause. Contact 405-776-2009 or 506 255-5267.

Cinema Politica - Cinema Politica is a network of community screenings of films that support social justice and provide opportunities for discussion. Their next screening is on Saturday, May 8, at 7:00 p.m. at the Rivendell Centre, 1207 Main Street. The film is "The Peace Project," a documentary film about the Canadian military's role in Afghanistan. The screening is free, but donations are encouraged. To check film schedules or for more info, visit www.cinemapolitica.org.

Featured website: Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East www.cijme.org