

Women's Advocate program implemented at Bell Aliant

Advocates trained to respond and intervene in cases of workplace harassment

A recent agreement between Unifor and Bell Aliant will see a Women's Advocate program implemented at the company in an effort to create safer workplaces free from harassment.

Four advocates — one in each Atlantic province — will be trained to be able to respond and intervene in cases of workplace harassment or domestic and intimate violence against women.

Unifor has negotiated 311 women's advocates in workplaces across the country, including the four most recent positions at Bell Aliant.

Speaking with CBC News, Unifor's regional director for Atlantic Canada Lana Payne said the new women's advocates will be trained to offer services ranging from education campaigns to helping women exit difficult personal situations.

"Some great women in our union suggested that if we started having workplace representatives that dealt with this issue of violence and harassment against women, it would prompt a discussion at the collective bargaining table and a deeper conversation with employers but also with our members," Payne said

Tough negotiations at Tembec Mill ; NORTHERN ONTARIO

The Sault Star
Wed Nov 12 2014
JENNIFER HAMILTON MCCHARLES, QMI AGENCY

It's a last resort, but Tembec employees may have no choice but to go on strike, says union president Roger Gauthier.

Gauthier, president of Unifor local 233 representing 650 members at the Tembec plant in Temiscaming, Quebec, said this current round of negotiations is going to be a long tough battle.

The company issued their final offer Nov. 7.

Gauthier said he's less than impressed.

"We're not being taken seriously," he said Tuesday. "Our last resort is a strike, but with a strong strike vote the company will have to bend."

Gauthier said the final offer includes a 2% annual wage increase over four years, however the major issues employees are living with haven't been addressed.

"We've had 29 employees fired over the last 20 months. Some of the reasons why people have been fired or suspended are absolutely ridiculous. A lot of people are asking what the heck is going on?"

Gauthier said one employee who left work 10 minutes early was suspended for a month and another employee who is still waiting for a written answer from the company of the reason why he was fired in May.

"We've spent a lot of money on legal fees over the last two years. We're going to court on a regular basis," he said.

"Employees are being abused by this company."

Linda Coates, vice-president of corporate affairs and human resources for Tembec said both sides have been working at the negotiating table, however refused to answer anything specific about union complaints or contract proposals.

"We will not be making any comment on what is in the final offer," she said. "We will let the union deal with its members."

The four year contract ended on Sept. 30.

Gauthier said in July 2010 union members agreed to \$5 million in concessions annually on a promise the company would invest \$310 to build a new boiler and replace the mill's 11 pressurized vessels, which were built around 1918.

He said in March 2012 the \$195 million boiler was approved.

The company hasn't reconfirmed its commitment to replace the pressurized vessels.

"The company never upheld its end of the bargain. The \$5 million in concessions we want them back," Gauthier said.

"The company wanted us to delay negotiations for a year and was willing to pay every member a \$1,000. So we went to our membership and 500 people voted no, 10 said yes and there were three spoiled ballots," he said.

"We need to have the discipline issue addressed and consequences if our contract isn't respected."

Members will vote on whether to accept the company's final offer or give the union a strike vote. Voting takes place today and Thursday and Nov. 18 and 19. The results will be announced Nov. 19 at 8 p.m.

Brockville, not London, lands work ; 3M CANADA

**The London Free Press
Wed Nov 12 2014
HANK DANISZEWSKI**

London-based 3M Canada has scored a U.S. military contract that could be worth up to \$100 million, but it appears the work won't come to London.

Instead, it will be done at the company's Brockville plant.

The federal government announced 3M Canada will produce M61 respiratory gas canisters for the U.S. Department of Defense.

A release issued Monday by London MPs Ed Holder and Susan Truppe says, "3M Canada will manufacture the canisters at its Canadian facilities, including their London plant."

But 3M's plant in Brockville handles the manufacture of health and safety products, including filters. Officials at the Brockville plant had previously announced it was expanding and hiring to handle the U.S. deal.

Jim Reid, president of Unifor Local 27, which represents workers at the London plant, said the London MPs are "out of touch."

"We haven't heard of any of that work coming to London. We still have people on layoff," he said.

The London plant specializes in adhesives and sandpaper. It has about 160 workers but at least 30 are on lay-off.

The 3M Canada head office in London supervises six manufacturing plants. 3M Canada officials referred questions to the company headquarters in Minneapolis.

A spokesperson there said the company "does not disclose the locations of specific product productions."

A 3M release said the M61 canister has a filter that can protect troops against gas weapons as well as toxic industrial chemicals during counterterrorism and natural disasters.

"The 3M M61 canister combines the latest filter technologies providing optimal troop protection without impacting tactical agility," said Glenn Long, business development manager for 3M Canada.

The contract awarded under a tender issued in 2011 is worth \$3 million, with a delivery deadline of February. But the contract is open-ended on the delivery dates and federal officials said the number of canisters supplied could be worth as much as \$100 million over seven years.

Bill Barry says he aims to reopen Harbour Breton plant

The Telegram (St. John's)

Tue Nov 11 2014

Clayton Hunt

Source: TC Media; The Advertiser

Bill Barry, the president of the Barry Group of Cos., said his company is working with the Town of Harbour Breton and the provincial government to reopen the plant in the town as a salmon processing facility.

Barry said company officials have been working behind the scenes for a period of time.

"Negotiations about the deal slowed down during the summer when different officials were on vacations. We lost all the summer and now we're into the fall. And, of course, when lawyers for different groups get involved, things can slow down to a snail's pace," he told The Advertiser last week.

"Most of these things are about having a reasonable arrangement, which usually comes about when people actually task themselves to finishing negotiations and getting the job done. This was not happening over the past few months."

Barry said his company will work with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the new provincial Department of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development to rebuild the wharf adjacent to the plant before it reopens in 2015.

He said Mayor Roy Drake has requested a meeting with company officials. That meeting will probably take place in Grand Falls-Windsor during the week of Nov. 10-14.

Barry said because public money will be involved in the wharf construction, the wharf frontage has to be passed over to the Town of Harbour Breton.

The town was expected to pay 10 per cent of the \$1.8 million towards the project. Barry said his company will pay the town's portion, but will still pass over the wharf frontage to the town upon completion.

"We have to work out a tax agreement with the town about this that will be reasonable for all parties involved," Barry said. When people spend millions on something like this they want to know they have a financial mechanism in place that is feasible and realistic."

Barry said that his company is solidly behind the plant in Harbour Breton.

"Harbour Breton has been, and will be, the most important location for the aquaculture industry on the south coast. We are committed to modernizing the plant so it will remain the heart of the industry in the area.

"I'm saying this in a time when the industry is facing some serious challenges, such as sea lice and super-chill conditions. However, this is no reason to be negative, as aquaculture industries in other parts of the world have faced similar challenges. They made better cage site management decisions such as those related to stocking densities, and the industry survived. We can do the same in Newfoundland."

Drake said the situation is frustrating given the lack of communication with the Barry Group over the past few months.

"I requested a meeting with Barry to talk about the overall issue and to find out why no work has been done on the plant or wharf up to this point in time," Drake said in an interview last week.

"We should have not have to find out things from the media; Barry should have been forthcoming to us about the situation. The uncertainty in this matter is very disappointing for council and the community."

As of Nov. 5, Drake said he hadn't heard from Barry concerning the proposed meeting for Grand Falls-Windsor.

Drake said council is meeting with Larry Ingalls of Northern Harvest on Sunday, Nov. 9, to discuss the plant situation with that company.

"Some of Northern Harvest's fish, that is now ready to be harvested, was supposed to have been processed in Harbour Breton.

"Some of the fish will be processed in St. Alban's, but a fair amount of the fish will be sent out of the region for processing. This means that jobs are not only lost in Harbour Breton, but are being taken out of the region as well."

Union, Barry met in January

Melinda Langdon, union local president for the Fish Food and Allied Workers (FFAW/Unifor) in Harbour Breton said union officials met with Barry last January to discuss the plant.

"Barry said then that renovation work would start on the plant on May 1 and production would resume in October of this year," Langdon said.

"He said that production more or less had to start in October due to an arrangement with Northern Harvest Sea Farms.

"We next heard that the plant would not be ready for processing until Feb., 2015, and now we're hearing it's going to be late in 2015 before processing will resume.

"We're wondering, why didn't Barry renew his lease with Cooke for another year if he didn't have the financing in place to reopen the plant until late 2015?"

She said while some workers have qualified for EI and another 47 have gotten work on a short-term community project, to enable them to qualify for EI, it's a worrisome situation.

"Many will be in a tough situation come the summer of 2015 as we wait for the plant to be made ready for salmon processing again."

Langdon said union officials hope to meet with Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Vaughn Granter in St. John's Nov. 16 and 17.

Unions ready for a fight, critics warn of lost jobs

The London Free Press

Tue Nov 11 2014

NEWS ANALYSIS BY NORMAN DE BONO

Braving the wet autumn chill, about 1,000 men and women from union locals across Southern Ontario filled Victoria Park recently for a raucous rally, followed by a protest march to politicians' offices.

It may be a sign of things to come.

The labour movement in London and area is bracing for a long, cold winter of discontent. It's determined to fight back against wage and benefit clawbacks still being heard at the bargaining table, even at a time when the private sector is enjoying a stronger economy. And, labour officials say, at a time when government continues to offer tax breaks and incentives to industry, despite being awash in debt.

"It's a backlash of greed," Katha Fortier, regional director for Unifor, the union, said at the Victoria Park rally.

"Corporations are demanding more and more (and) they want to pay less and less," to workers. "They are doing well.

They have recovered, but most Canadians have not."

The London and District Labour Council is readying for a fight with private and public employers, said Patti Dalton, council president.

"We are in an era of austerity. Employers want to negotiate back all kinds of gains workers have fought for over the decades and we will push back hard," she said.

But industry isn't convinced the tough economic times are over, despite recent growth numbers, and it's right to be careful with what workers are paid, said Jay Myers, chief executive of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters.

"The game has changed. There are major investments where Canada is competing with investment on a global basis and across North America," he said.

"We are not at a place where we can say, 'Everything is great, let's turn the clock back and increase wages.' We are not as competitive as other areas."

A push for higher wages may result in killing union jobs here as they move to the southern U.S. and Mexico, he added.

But Jim Reid, president of Unifor Local 27, which represents 31 workplaces in London and region, said a fair wage and better treatment at the bargaining table isn't likely to end jobs here, because workers' demands are reasonable.

"We will be doing things differently. There will be more militant, grassroots action, mobilization, a lot more community interaction," he said of what is coming.

"The message is one of restraint. Employers are coming at us aggressively."

Michael Lynk, labour law professor at Western University, agreed there's a "lopsided recovery" underway that benefits business and not workers.

But that's the new, harsh reality, he said.

Most industry has recovered from the recession and, he agreed, wage increases haven't kept pace with the recovery.

"But both the private and public sector believe there is no reason this belt-tightening (among unions) should not continue. For unions, they are drawing a line in the sand."

At the Victoria Park rally, Jerry Dias, national president for Unifor, is set to deliver his message to the crowd, amid the cold drizzle.

"There is no question austerity only relates to workers, not with owners or the business community," Dias said.

"They are all behaving as though it is 2009, but we are not buying it."

TOUGH BARGAINING, BETTER ECONOMIC TIMES: SOME EXAMPLES

HOSPITAL SUPPORT WORKERS: Personal support workers, housekeeping, dietary support, clerical and office staff.

On the table: Wage freeze for two years, London hospitals want concessions on benefits and minimal wage increases.

CARMEUSE LIME, INGERSOLL On the table: Lime manufacturer, now in bargaining, wants broad-based concessions to the benefit and pension plan.

MASCO CANADA LTD., ST. THOMAS

On the table: Makes plumbing fixtures, now in bargaining, employer wants pension cuts, restraint in other areas.

AUTONEUM IN LONDON AND AUTRANS CORP. IN INGERSOLL: Two area auto parts makers represented by Unifor Local 27. On the table: Concessionary bargaining proposals in pension, benefits and wages were rejected

* MONUMENTS: Replicas of London-made vehicles will be offered to cities across Canada by workers, with minimum gains in other areas. GENTEK BUILDING PRODUCTS, LONDON On the table: Bargaining in the new year, but already a tone of restraint despite solid economic numbers.

WHAT THEY SAID

"When you get to the bargaining table, demands are there that were there five or six years ago in the middle of a recession. . . . Wages are far behind the rate of inflation. We are still pushed to cut costs and wages."

Fergo Berto, national representative, Unifor

"(Auto) companies don't want to get into the same situation that drove Chrysler and GM into bankruptcy a few years ago. They were not cost-conscious enough and when there was a downturn, they were in rough shape. They will lose jobs if their pay scale is not in line with non-union workers." Tony Faria, auto industry analyst, business professor, University of Windsor

"While we have had a rebound, there is still a large pool of unemployed manufacturing workers. The reality is workers don't have that much bargaining power. That is keeping wages fairly low."

Unions rally ahead of looming health care battle

London Community News

November 7, 2014

Approximately 500 members, and supporters, of Unifor marched on the office of London North Centre MPP Deb Matthews on Nov. 5, protesting wage freezes in the healthcare sector.

Unifor supporters, protesting wage freezes in the health sector, did a little redecorating at the office of London North Centre MPP Deb Matthews on Nov. 5. Matthews wasn't in London at the time.

Some 500 members of Unifor, and their supporters, marched down Richmond Street on Nov. 5, protesting wage freezes sustained by healthcare workers in recent years.

Live music, fiery speeches and a couple of brisk marches in the rain served to get hundreds of health care workers pumped up for what they see as a coming battle with both Parliament and Queen's Park.

Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union with more than 305,000 members, launched rallies in several Ontario cities on Nov. 6, including Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and London. Organizers said some 15 buses brought in union members and their supporters from across the province to the London rally where about 500 people gathered in Victoria Park.

The message being delivered, according to Fred Hahn, president of CUPE Ontario, is the wage freezes endured by health care workers need to be overturned. In their place, Hahn said, must be collective agreements that speak to the contributions made by health care workers on a daily basis.

"We are here today because we know, that like all public sector workers, workers in this system have been suffering from austerity from this government," Hahn said. "Cuts, which affect our public health care system. A system we will defend."

Hahn, along with other speakers such as Unifor's National president Jerry Dias and Ontario Federation of Labour president Sid Ryan, were clearly firing up their union brothers and sisters.

Hahn said the rally on Thursday was only "the beginning of continuing to build up militancy and action."

Patti Dalton, president of the London and District Labour Council, said it's "shameful" the way union members have had their wages frozen for several years.

The expectation is, Dalton said, that the federal government is purposefully underfunding health care in an effort to advance an agenda that would weaken the "fundamental right" of Canadians to universal health care.

"As you all know, the for-profit health care company wolves are standing at the door," Dalton said. "The Harper government wants to swing that door wide open and start a feeding frenzy of privatization and preside over the destruction of our public health care system."

The group eventually marched from Victoria Park to the constituency office of Deputy Premier and London North Centre MPP Deb Matthews. Matthews, who is also president of the Treasury Board, wasn't in London at the time.

In a statement, Matthews said the provincial government "respects the collective bargaining process," as well as the value of the work provided by employees in Ontario's public service.

"We have made a commitment to balance the budget by 2017/18," Matthews said. "All public-sector partners will need to continue to work together to effectively manage compensation costs within Ontario's existing fiscal framework."

From Matthews' office the crowd marched back to Victoria Park before heading to the constituency office of London North Centre MP Susan Truppe, who was in Ottawa at the time.

However, the message was sent nonetheless, according to Nancy McMurphy, president of Unifor Local 302.

The timing of the rallies in London and elsewhere weren't arbitrary as McMurphy said there are approximately 17,000 health care workers whose collective agreements will be expiring by the end of this year.

The "purse strings are still remaining very tight," McMurphy said, but now is the time to bring relief to front-line workers.

"Many of them are part-time workers; they are working two and three jobs to try and support their families," McMurphy said. "They need to see an increase, they don't want an arbitrated collective agreement, they want to negotiate an agreement, which we think is the way to go."

McMurphy said the union always looks for a three-year collective agreement. And although there hasn't been "a pattern established yet," to reach an agreement, the expectation would be for a contract in the range of 4.8 percent over three years.

According to Unifor, the federal government has refused to "renegotiate and resign" the Canada Health Accord. The accord speaks to the federal contributions to provincial health care, something McMurphy said was once at a 50/50 split, but has slid to 86/14, placing an increasing burden on the provinces.

"The health accord puts stabilized funding across the provinces. Right now, with not having one signed, we are going to end up with a society of haves and have-nots," McMurphy said. "We know more and more services are being privatized because the provinces can't afford to have them in place. The system is broken and needs to be fixed"

Auto strategy needed

Windsor Star
Tue Nov 11 2014
Section: Letters
Byline: SoapBox

The recent announcement that the engine investment by Ford will not be coming to Windsor and Essex County, as we hoped, is devastating news for our community.

The loss of 1,000 new jobs and the spinoff jobs that go with those 1,000 jobs is massive to any community let alone our community, with some of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

Recent comments made by Jeff Watson trying to lay blame with the company and UNIFOR are not only unhelpful but inaccurate.

As business, academic and community leaders across the county have acknowledged, this is not a union problem. The problem is that we need an auto strategy that is developed with business, union and government.

It requires vision. It requires leadership. And it requires an understanding of the importance of these types of investments, short-term and long-term.

Countries across the globe understand this and countries such as Mexico have auto policies and these countries must be taken seriously.

The people of Windsor and Essex County are counting on labour leaders, business leaders and political leaders to get down to work and create an auto strategy. Our community and many others across Canada cannot afford to continue to lose these types of investment because of inaction.

Auto is an integral part of our economy in Windsor and Essex County and we need everyone to dig in and ensure we don't lose out again.

I invite Mr. Watson to sit down with members of Local 200 any time to discuss what role he and the federal government can play in protecting this essential industry and the jobs on which our families rely.

CHRIS TAYLOR, President, UNIFOR Local 200, Windsor

CBC Prince Edward Island (web site)

Prince Edward Island

November 12, 2014

Women's advocate appointed at Bell Aliant office

CBC News

Women's advocates can play a number of roles in the workplace, says Lana Payne, the Atlantic director for Unifor. (CBC)

P.E.I.'s Bell Aliant office is one of the latest workplaces in Canada to see a new position added, known as a women's advocate.

Women's advocates can play a number of roles in the workplace, says Lana Payne, the Atlantic director for Unifor. (CBC)

Bell Aliant's 200 Island workers are members of the union Unifor, which has been lobbying to see these roles added to workplaces across the country. The union says there are currently 311 of these advocates working, including one at the Irving shipyard in Halifax and in the fishing industry in Newfoundland.

Lana Payne, Unifor's regional director for Atlantic Canada, told CBC News women's advocates are trained to offer a range of services, including education campaigns and helping women exit difficult personal situations.

"Sometimes education means just kind of explaining to folks that a joke is not a joke. It can be something as small as that," said Payne.

"Or it can be advocates who have actually intervened and helped women move out of a violent situation in their homes. This has happened quite a number of times."

Payne said Unifor was invited to present information about its Women's Advocates program at the United Nations, and it was recognized internationally as a model program by the global trade union movement.

In an email to CBC News, Bell Aliant said it is pleased to support Unifor's Women's Advocate program, and looked forward to collaborating to implement this important and progressive program in our workplace."

Pension negotiations in a unionized environment

Tony Palermo | Benefits Canada | November 1, 2014

At the best of times, making changes to a DB pension plan is a task, as sponsors try to balance business constraints with funding and risk concerns. But throw a union into the mix and the process becomes even more difficult.

Difficult, yes—but not impossible. Industry experts agree that the process becomes easier when you clearly identify the changes you want to make and why, and you're willing to approach the collective bargaining process with the goal of letting both sides walk away as winners.

Andrea Boctor, a lawyer and partner with Stikeman Elliott, says there are a couple of legal considerations that come into play. It starts with the employer knowing what its obligations and entitlements are with regard to changing the pension plan.

In a unionized environment, explains Boctor, the question from the employer's perspective is, What does the collective bargaining agreement allow us to do? "Does the agreement require that all changes be bargained, or can some or all of the changes be made without bargaining? The employer needs to be clear about what it's entitled to do."

The second immediate consideration is that any change to the plan needs to comply with all of the applicable federal and provincial legislation. For example, while pension plans registered in Ontario need to adhere to the provincial *Pension Benefits Act*, and federally regulated employers must register their pension plans under the federal *Pension Benefits Standards Act*, Boctor says there are several other pieces of legislation to consider as well. For example, employers need to look at the federal Income Tax Act, which regulates what employers are allowed to provide in terms of benefits in a pension plan, as well as the provincial Labour Relations Act, which governs the collective bargaining process.

Her biggest piece of advice to plan sponsors is to take advantage of the period between collective bargaining agreements to develop a pension strategy: research and think about the issues and the proposed changes you want to make, and have a well thought-out plan before you go into bargaining.

"Bargaining is not the ideal time to be asking your actuary to produce cost estimates or your lawyer if it's possible to do X, Y or Z," says Boctor. "Some employers figure they'll wait to hear the union's demands and then react to them during bargaining. That may be fine for most employers with DC plans, but for employers with complicated DB plans, not having a strategy may result in an agreement that costs more than anticipated."

Kevin Sorhaitz, a partner with Morneau Shepell, says there typically isn't ongoing dialogue between the employer and the union on pensions during the term of an agreement: both sides tend to go full-tilt through the negotiations, and when they're done, other projects become the focus and the conversation is discontinued until the next round of bargaining. As he explains, this isn't necessarily the best approach to negotiating changes to a pension plan—any proposed changes to retirement benefits tend to cause a lot of stress for the plan members affected. "We all know that even small changes in life are tough on us as individuals," says Sorhaitz. "But when we're talking about changes to pensions and benefits, the stress can get magnified many times over."

Sorhaitz adds that another problem compounding pension negotiations is that, historically, there's been a lack of trust between both sides regarding the numbers being shared, and there always seems to be much debate over which numbers represent the real cost of the pension plan and financial position of the employer. As he says, it's not necessarily that one side is trying to mislead the other. It's likely more about the complexity of pensions and understanding what the numbers represent in a given context because the methods and actuarial approaches to determining pension costs can vary significantly.

"One method is going concern, which is the funding valuation with a long-term outlook," he explains. "There's the solvency valuation, which is your hypothetical plan windup. There's the accounting basis, where a company reports on their financial statements what their pension obligation is. And, back in the news recently, the financial economics model is being talked about, where you value the pension obligation as a corporate debt rather than the pension plan as a self-standing entity."

To complicate matters, not only are those calculations done differently, but the underlying interest rate used in the calculations can be significantly different, too. As an example, Sorhaitz says on the solvency basis today, the interest rate used to value the pension cost might be around 4%, whereas the going concern basis might be using 6%. This impacts the numbers significantly and just adds to the complexity of the negotiations.

That's why, says Sorhaitz, it's important for both sides to enter negotiations with a good understanding of each other's perspective on pension costs in addition to being aware of key objectives and constraints. It's also important to approach the negotiation without a perceived winner and loser.

"The art of negotiation is for both sides to come out winners," explains Sorhaitz. "When you become determined to beat the other side, that can create animosity for the next round. The losing side is likely to dig in even harder—and they're going to want to win the next round."

If unions and employers can continue talking during the agreement period—to better understand each other's emerging positions and asks, and to have their experts try to agree on some of the more technical aspects such as how to determine pension and benefits costs for negotiation purposes—those efforts should go a long way toward keeping the focus on the key issues instead of having an actuarial debate.

Doing It Right: A Case Example

On Sept. 2, 2014, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced it had reached an agreement with five member unions to amend the Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP) to ensure the plan's sustainability. The PSPP, a DB plan with about 27,000 contributing plan members and approximately 17,000 pensioners, was facing significant financial challenges.

In a government news release, Minister of Finance and President of the Treasury Board Charlene Johnson hailed the agreement: "This agreement will help to ensure the future health of the Public Service Pension Plan and the overall unfunded liability of all public sector pension plans, which, when combined

with other post-employment benefits, accounts for 74% of the province's projected net debt as of March 31, 2015."

Carol Furlong, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE)—the largest of the five unions with members in the PSPP—says this was a successful deal that will help to ensure the plan remains viable into the future.

"Government had talked about the unfunded liability and how it was affecting their credit rating," notes Furlong. "The last actuarial valuation indicated the PSPP had a significant unfunded liability of \$3.2 billion with a projection for it reaching \$8.1 billion in 15 years. Clearly, something needed to be done, and pension reform was inevitable."

Noting that the PSPP is a legislated plan (a pension plan typically for federal and provincial government employees, whose authority and terms are defined in law), Furlong says the government could have unilaterally made changes to the plan without consulting the member unions. But the unions demanded—and received—an opportunity to negotiate changes to the plan.

Furlong says the member unions had two main goals: to maintain the DB plan and to recognize that, although there would have to be some changes, any reform of the PSPP would affect its members as little as possible.

One of the biggest changes involved the unions agreeing to joint trusteeship, but only if the plan was fully funded. In the end, the government agreed to make a significant payment to the PSPP in the amount of \$2.685 billion—up from its initial proposal of \$1 billion.

"We were very pleased with this and didn't want to turn our backs on that offer," explains Furlong, noting that a joint trusteeship arrangement gives unions an equal say in how the PSPP is managed into the future. "In other words, never again will the PSPP be in a position where changes are left to the sole discretion of the government."

Furlong says the government wanted to start using a career average formula to determine pension payouts. However, the unions took a firm stance and refused to entertain the idea, since it had the potential to reduce some pensions by up to 40%. In the end, both sides agreed to change how benefits are calculated from the best five years of earnings to the best six years.

Another negotiated change moved the retirement age from 55 to 58. However, according to Furlong, since 1998, the average retirement age for NAPE members has been 59.2.

"The majority of our members aren't really losing out by moving the retirement age out," says Furlong. "Some members might not like it, but our numbers show a good number of them wouldn't have retired at 55 anyway, so we felt this change would have minimal impact."

Other highlights include an increase in premiums—which is matched by government and still comparable to the rate for other plans in the province and elsewhere—and a transition period of five years, which also allows for grandfathering in certain circumstances for employees who are close to retirement.

"I believe this offer is more lucrative than any other we would have received," says Furlong. "In fact, I have been told by those involved in other jurisdictions that the changes to this plan are far superior to changes elsewhere. Given the circumstances, I really see this as a positive solution to ensure pension benefits remain secure for the future."

Tony Palermo is a freelance writer based in Smiths Falls, Ont.

Lessons from Unifor

A union's perspective on how to manage collective bargaining on pensions

By Marcia McDougall

Employers that see pension discussions with union representatives as an inevitable battle should consider an attitude adjustment. Jerry Dias, national president of Unifor—Canada's largest private sector union—says that when it comes to pension issues, unions are more solutions-oriented than employers give them credit for.

"It doesn't do the company or its employees any good if a union tries to protect pension benefits that will bankrupt the organization," says Dias. "We want to maintain jobs for our members."

However, Dias emphasizes that "pensions are the most important issue" for unions, and they "will fight to preserve them." He feels some organizations that provided a DB plan "used the 2008 economic crisis as an excuse to shift the onus of liability to employees," often by switching to DC plans for all or at least new employees. While sustainability is certainly a concern, Dias is quick to object to a double standard. "We saw companies pushing employees into a DC plan while they maintained a DB plan for executives because they knew it was better," he says. "That's incredible hypocrisy."

One of the biggest misconceptions that employers might have about unions is that they think only with their hearts and not with their heads. "Companies may not realize the depth of knowledge unions have," explains Dias. "We have really excellent pension and benefits professionals on staff at Unifor. They bring an experienced set of eyes and ears to the process and are in a position to advise, recommend and add a new perspective."

For example, take the recent stand-off in Thunder Bay, Ont., between Bombardier and Unifor Local 1075. The company had demanded that the DB plan be closed to new hires and retiree benefits denied to anyone hired after 2010. The union wanted to preserve decent retirement benefits for the upcoming generation of workers. Both employer demands were defeated, and union members eventually ratified a new three-year collective agreement that maintained the DB pension plan for current and future workers. In exchange, union members were willing to delay early retirement and increase contributions.

While the outcome ultimately satisfied everyone, it didn't come without hardship on both sides: union members were on strike for eight weeks before an agreement was reached.

Dias regrets that members had to strike and encourages employers to adopt a collaborative approach to negotiations early in the process. "Listen," he advises. "There are solutions that can achieve company objectives without putting pensions at risk."

Marcia McDougall is a freelance writer and president of InteGreat Marketing

Earle McCurdy's exit is like his entrance: it comes in uncertain times

By Jamie Baker

CBC News

Nov 04, 2014

Earle McCurdy, who has been president of the FFAW since 1993, will step down within two weeks. (CBC)

The rumour had been out there as recently as this past spring that Earle McCurdy would step down as president of the FFAW this fall. And on Monday, McCurdy did just that in announcing he will finish up in two weeks.

A new president will be chosen by the union's executive board and its sector councils on Nov. 17. Any member of the union in good standing can apply for the job.

But it's a job that few people would really want given the challenges that loom over the industry.

Of course, the situation was no different in 1993 when McCurdy took over from Richard Cashin. The fishery was mired in the devastation of the cod moratorium announced less than a year before.

It looked to many like the industry might collapse completely. McCurdy was handed the reins at a time when there wasn't anything pulling the cart.

Somehow, the industry prospered

But somehow, he survived. And the industry actually prospered in the years that followed thanks to lucrative crab and shrimp fisheries.

Millionaires were made, in some cases, and the worth of the industry as a whole actually has increased in recent years.

A fellow I know always likes to say if the truth was told about the province's fishery since 1992, it would be labelled the biggest success story in Canadian history.

Love him or hate him, Earle McCurdy was part of it.

He didn't come into the job oozing charisma the way Cashin did, and he didn't command a crowd in the same way. But he made a go of it for 21 years, pretty much unchallenged.

A good scrap

He was a statesman in many ways, and easily one of the most intelligent people I've met in my career. While he may not seem to have the same "damn the torpedoes" approach Cashin sometimes did (I once

heard a fisherman say the union was no good in peacetime), McCurdy didn't mind a scrap with government types or — ahem — the media if he thought the FFAW was wronged in some way.

I didn't always agree with him. But I always respected the fact he never ducked questions, and always took calls and emails on issues of the day.

Plus there were some things nobody saw, like the late nights he punched working in his office or the hundreds of thousands of kilometres he drove out on the road.

But now, just like when he came into the job, he leaves it at a time when the industry is facing dark times.

Dark clouds on the horizon

For starters, you can be sure the federal government will again slash shrimp quotas for inshore harvesters in this province come April. That will put 3,200 jobs on the chopping block in rural communities that don't have other employment options.

It seems clear the next few years are going to be extremely dicey for the FFAW and in the fishing industry in general

The changing marine environment means those lucrative shellfish fisheries like shrimp, and crab, are going to be challenged in terms of available resource. The stocks are decreasing in many areas while groundfish like cod are showing significant rebound.

Considering that crab is worth \$2.25 a pound while top-shelf cod fetches 80 cents, it's a scary prospect for the livelihoods of a great many fishermen.

More to the point, where the hell are we going to process it? The little bit of cod we bring ashore now mostly goes to Icewater in Arnold's Cove, one of the few remaining facilities in the province that can process cod. Will all the cod be done there and on OCI's factory freezer boats? If so, that's great for them, not so good for everyone else.

Add to that issues around environmental challenges, marketing, fisheries management, labour shortages in fishing and processing, declining union membership, and a holy host of other items, and it seems clear the next few years are going to be extremely dicey for the FFAW and in the fishing industry in general.

There is a lot of anger and concern among many union members as the industry goes through what looks to be another monumental shift.

On Nov. 17, the FFAW will have its new president. He or she better get their long boots ready to go to work, because there won't be any time for honeymoons.

RETROSPECTIVE: Things Earle McCurdy said

Josh Pennell

A sample of McCurdy-isms over some 21 years

On Monday, Earle McCurdy, president of the FFAW/Unifor, announced he will step down as president. Never stuck for a colourful word over his career, The Telegram picked out a few choice McCurdy-isms from over the years that he always seemed to land easily and, for journalists, could be considered the catch of the day.

Earle McCurdy

- **“We’ve had enough of people telling us, ‘Look, it’s all over, you’ve got no hope, you’re finished.’ I don’t believe in misleading people or promoting false hope, but I also don’t believe in creating or encouraging false despair.”**

— *September 1997.*

- **“We need people like that like a hole in the head.”**

— *October 1997, in reference to people suggesting the seal hunt should end.*

- **Then auditor general Denis Desautels “should stick to bean-counting,” McCurdy says.**

“They make these sweeping statements and I’m not aware of any expertise they have in this area — there’s no scientific studies cited (in the report) or anything like that. Quite frankly, I don’t think they really know what they’re talking about.”

— *April 1999.*

- **“They are pitting the unemployed Newfoundlander against the employed Newfoundlander, and (they) hope that out of the chaos that that creates, somehow there would be the appearance for support of this proposal to government, to eventually get off the fence in favour of these people.”**

— *November 1999, referring to the botched plan to get NEOS seafoods to take over Fishery Products International.*

- **“They should instead take up the cause of the lowly codfish.”**

— *May 2002, in reference to seal hunt protesters.*

- **“If nothing else works, then we could surely use divine intervention.”**

— *June 2003, in reference to disputes over the price of crab.*

- **“Two weeks ago today, there was no such thing as a lobster harvesters’ co-op in the province and today we expect to hit the million-dollar mark in purchases.”**

— May 2012.

- **“It’s a path to oblivion they’ve put us on now.”**

— April 2014, arguing DFO favoured the offshore sector for the shrimp fishery.

- **“For the life of me, I can’t understand why he would say that. It’s not (apples and oranges), it’s snow crab.”**

— Spring 2009, commenting on Tom Hedderson saying comparing the price for crab in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland was like comparing apples and oranges.

- **“It’s just like expecting all of Newfoundland and Labrador to produce blueberries.”**

— December 2011, referring to why oil production in fish-productive waters isn’t OK.

- **“I’ve probably faced more bean balls than Jackie Robinson in that time, but you learn to foul them off as best you can.”**

— November 2014, while announcing his retirement.

PSWs call for end to two-year wage freeze Unifor members protest in downtown Sudbury Thursday

Nov 06, 2014

Sudbury Northern Life

Jonathan Migneault

Unifor/Mine Mill Local 598 members were outside the Provincial Building in downtown Sudbury Thursday to protest wage freezes to health care workers in long-term care facilities. In some cases, personal support workers and other health care workers have not seen a raise in two years. Photo by Jonathan Migneault.

Beth McIlveen, a personal support worker and union chair at Finlandia’s Finn Care assisted living facility, said she was out to support her colleagues who were still waiting for a wage increase.

While personal support workers at the nursing home have not had a pay increase in two years, those who work in assisted living are under a different contract, and received a recent increase of \$1.50 an hour.

Before the increase, a personal support worker starting at Finn Care made \$13.85 an hour, said

McIlveen.

Mine Mill Local 598 president Anne-Marie MacInnis called for an end to government austerity measures.

“The workers need a raise.”

Corey Vermey, Unifor's director of health care, was in Sudbury to take part in the protest, which was one of several in Northern Ontario.

Vermey praised the province's announcement in April that it would increase wages for personal support workers that provide home care by \$4 an hour over a two-year period.

But he said health-care workers in long-term care facilities, who typically make more than those providing home care, are also due for a pay increase.

“Our health-care workers need to be respected,” Vermey said. “They're not asking for huge raises.”

Vermey said personal support workers need to deal with increasingly demanding patients as the population ages and conditions like dementia become more commonplace.

In many cases, he said, long-term care facilities and nursing homes are understaffed, which hampers the care residents receive.

Vermey also reserved criticism for the federal government, which dismantled the Health Council of Canada in March.

The Health Council of Canada administered a national health accord that oversaw \$41 billion in federal health transfers to the provinces and territories.

Junior hockey player slams league's insurance after injury Hockey Canada policy paid only fraction of \$20,000 dental bill

By Mark Harvey, Grant Gelinis

CBC News

Nov 06, 2014

A former junior hockey player in Alberta says he feels “used” by a sport that demands physical sacrifice, but fails to provide adequate medical insurance.

Tim Nolte, 22, spent more than \$20,000 on dental surgery after getting a stick in the face.

Nolte says that throughout his four-year career, even immediately after his injury, he understood he would be “100 per cent covered” for accidental injuries.

“I was even told by my coach to get the best (treatment), make it look good. It’s all covered,” Nolte said.

However, all was not covered.

Nolte was reimbursed only \$2,500, the maximum payable per accident under Hockey Canada’s dental insurance program.

In an email, Hockey Canada’s Todd Jackson told Nolte that he understood his “frustration” but that “we are working within the policy limits with respect to your accident. I am sorry but we are tied to this amount.”

“It’s ridiculous,” Nolte said. “You go for a few dentist appointments it’s \$2,500.

“I feel like I’ve been used.”

High-stick led to a year of dental surgery

In September 2013, Nolte was captain of the Spruce Grove Saints of the Alberta Junior Hockey League.

The Saints were playing the Whitecourt Wolverines during the AJHL’s annual Showcase, a weekend series attended by college and Major Junior scouts.

Late in the game, with the Saints winning, Nolte was hit with a high stick, smashing loose three of his front teeth.

“You definitely don’t forget the taste of teeth in your mouth. Then, just the shock of blood pouring out of your mouth.”

Nolte left the ice and went to hospital, first in Stony Plain for stitches, then to University of Alberta Hospital for further assessment.

He said for the next year he visited three different dentists, often two or three times a week. He required multiple procedures including root canals, bone grafting and post and core surgery.

Throughout it all Nolte continued playing for the Saints, going to the rink six or seven times a week, while at the same time working as a welder to support himself and pay his dental bills.

“I’d get up at five, go to work, start at 6, then get off in time for hockey,” he said.

Nolte said he missed a lot of work because of dental appointments.

“My first year of welding I wasn’t making the best wage. I saved every penny I could. I had hopes of maybe buying some land for farming, starting up a welding truck, and then to see it all go to teeth,” he said, his voice trailing away.

'We tried our best,' team owner says

Saints' owner Darren Myshak told Go Public he can understand how Nolte would have thought he was fully-covered.

"I know when my boys grew up I thought the same thing."

Myshak said he was aware of the \$2,500 limit but was still surprised the Saints' policy didn't cover Nolte's expenses.

"We pay our insurance through Hockey Canada, and for him not to be covered was very disappointing for us," Myshak said.

He said the club tried to get Hockey Canada to reimburse Nolte but was unsuccessful.

"Tim was a fantastic leader for us and we tried every avenue we could to gain some funds for Tim."

Myshak said the Saints make no profit and weren't in a position to pay Nolte's bills.

"We tried our best to do what we could for Tim," Mychak said.

Insurance coverage 'outrageous,' union head says

"This is happening right across the country," said Jerry Dias, national president of Unifor.

Union president Jerry Dias is calling for a national inquiry into junior hockey players' working conditions. (CBC)

The union is calling for a national task force to examine junior hockey players' working conditions.

"For (Hockey Canada) to have \$2,500 insurance for junior hockey players is outrageous," Dias said.

"I mean \$2,500 may be applicable if you're working for the National Ballet but this is a violent sport, this is an aggressive sport. So somehow to leave this young man hanging out to dry is completely irresponsible."

Dias said players' accident expenses should be 100 per cent covered.

"A young man that is working for an employer, a for-profit company, ought to be taken care of. I mean this is just absolutely ridiculous."

Hockey Canada lips sealed on dental plan limits

Go Public made three requests to Hockey Canada for comment. The organization declined the request and referred us to its website.

On the website it describes its insurance as “an exceptional insurance program that has been built with the needs of its members in mind.”

It also shows that only eight per cent of the premiums paid into its insurance program go towards accident and dental coverage.

More than half of the premiums pay for commercial general liability coverage, including for sexual misconduct.

A dentist, contacted by Go Public for background, said \$20,000 for the procedures Nolte got is not extraordinary and that those procedures were the best option for hygiene, permanence, comfort and for least disruption to other teeth and bone.

The dentist said \$2,500 would have been adequate to cover the necessary repairs to Nolte’s mouth and a partial plate of dentures, an option chosen by many people. He said the \$2,500 coverage was in the mid-range of accident coverage.

'Wrong decision' to not quit hockey earlier, player says

Nolte says he decided to quit hockey after his first year at the junior level but then changed his mind.

“Wrong decision, that’s for sure.”

Nolte said he had been cast as an enforcer, despite being only five feet 10 inches tall and weighing 180 pounds.

“I was 17. I was fighting guys who were 20 years old. That was pretty much my only role,” he said.

He decided to go on playing after all and was rewarded with more ice-time and eventually the captaincy, though not the scholarship or semi-pro career he was hoping for.

Nolte says he did everything his team asked of him and feels he was let down.

“You’re getting told to do whatever you can to win a hockey game,” he said

“If you have to fight you have to fight. If you have to block shots, you block shots.

“And then when you do get a stick in the face because you are doing your job to stay in that league, you’re not even covered.”

The Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal

November 14, 2014

Petition calls for mill support

Kenora-Rainy River NDP MPP Sarah Campbell has launched a petition calling on the province to take action to save the idled pulp mill in Fort Frances.

Campbell has been pressing Natural Resources Minister Bill Mauro to listen to the Rainy River District and keep the mill open.

On Thursday, Campbell set up an online petition to save the mill at [Facebook.com/Sarah4NWO](https://www.facebook.com/Sarah4NWO).

A rally was held in Fort Frances on Wednesday to join the call to Mauro to save the mill, which he has the power to do, said Campbell.

"The minister needs to act now as there is little time left before the winter freeze sets in and destroys what's left of the mill," she said.

"He needs to uphold his obligations as minister to reallocate wood rights so the local forest continues to benefit the operation of this local mill (owned by Resolute Forest Products)."

Meanwhile, Mayor Roy Avis said Thursday the province has yet to respond to the town's concerns about the mill.

With temperatures dropping, the town is asking the province to pay mill heating costs this winter and to ensure that its wood supply remains intact.

Avis said the town plans to follow up with Expera "to see if they are still interested (in acquiring the mill) and how we could get them back to the table."

"My understanding (of why Expera pulled out of talks with Resolute) . . . was the cost of the wood and supply," he said.

Expera has declined comment.

Unifor is also calling on the government to act on the matter.

"The government needs to take action to not just save the mill, but to establish a fair and economical way to manage our forestry resources," Unifor president Jerry Dias said Thursday.

In the short-term, said Dias, the government must commit to heat the mill over the winter to preserve equipment.

Unifor is also calling on Mauro to immediately establish a task force to make recommendations regarding forestry licensing and resource management.

"The government's continued failure to take action is putting the future of Ontario's recovering forestry sector in jeopardy," said Dias.

Ontario is at risk of losing the Fort Frances pulp mill and 1,000 jobs in the community, he said.

"There is good potential for the forestry industry in Ontario, which is obviously based on a renewable resource, to have a strong future," said Dias.

"But that is not going to happen without leadership from the government and business, in consultation with community, labour and First Nations."

CBC Manitoba (web site)

November 13, 2014

Selinger's chief of staff out, new communications team in

CBC News

The revolt against Premier Greg Selinger may not have stopped.

5 former ministers to stay in Selinger's caucus after revolt - for now

His chief of staff, Liam Martin, is no longer in the position.

Selinger has hired a new communications spokesperson, Paul McKie, a former Winnipeg Free Press reporter and a national rep for union Unifor CEP Canada.

McKie responded to an inquiry from CBC by email saying "Mr. Martin is currently on leave. The status of Mr. Martin is a confidential matter and private. The government will not comment on a Human Resources issue."

UFCW union activist Heather Grant-Jury is Selinger's new principal secretary.

Martin, a former CUPE representative, also worked at Viewpoints Research, a Winnipeg polling company with ties to the provincial NDP.

Martin is also the son of Winnipeg Centre MP Pat Martin.

Ford wanted too much for 600 Windsor jobs, says Watson

windsorstar.com
Fri Nov 14 2014
Grace Macaluso

Governments and the union would have had to put more than \$1 billion on the table to entice Ford Motor Co. to add 600 jobs in Windsor to build a new small engine that now appears destined for Mexico, says Essex MP Jeff Watson.

It was asking too much for too little in return, he said.

Ford was seeking an unprecedented \$900 million in grants and loans from the provincial and federal governments, Watson said. On top of that, Unifor Local 200 was offering more than \$170 million over 10 years in cost savings, according to the Conservative MP.

"I think we had a compelling offer," Watson said. "And, they (Ford) didn't meet the terms to justify the expenditure."

Watson said Ford's \$900-million "ask" represented almost 60 per cent of a \$1.5 billion, next generation, small engine program for the Windsor and Essex assembly plants, which currently employ about 1,300 hourly workers. There are another 480 Ford workers on layoff.

The \$900 million would have smashed the governments' combined record of contributions for automotive investment and jobs, he added.

Talks, which began in August, broke down late last month over government complaints that Ford drastically reduced job creation, research and development and supply chain commitments as the negotiations progressed.

"They didn't have 1,000 jobs on the table," said Watson. "There was no sole-source provision, no research and development."

The only other commitment Ford was willing to make, he added, was \$50 million in new business for Canadian auto parts suppliers.

While he wouldn't confirm details of discussions between Ford and senior levels of government, Chris Taylor, president of Unifor Local 200, said the governments' investment would have paid off.

"No matter what, the government did not come out once and say there was not going to be a pay back. It wasn't a strong enough return," said Taylor. "But, I am confident there was clear and concise evidence showing that even if the number was \$900 million, they're going to get their money back."

Ford Canada has yet to confirm the negotiations even took place, let alone details of the proposed investment. Neither has it publicly stated that the investment is headed to Mexico.

Watson confirmed that Ontario and Queen's Park were prepared, at least in the early stages of the negotiations, to significantly boost their traditional 10-per-cent contribution toward an automaker's investment. "There were substantial offers on the table," he said.

Ottawa provides incentives in the form of low interest, long-term loans under its Automotive Innovation Fund, while Ontario offers grants under its \$2.5-billion jobs and prosperity fund. Both governments require automakers to meet terms and conditions to qualify for funding.

The union also was prepared to "put skin in the game," said Taylor although he would not confirm Watson's assertion that the local was prepared to offer more than \$170 million over 10 years in cost savings.

"We made this clear to our members, when Ford is approaching the government, we can't sit back as a union," he said. "We could have brought changes to our members for ratification."

While Taylor is accountable to his members, politicians have to answer to taxpayers, said Watson. "Governments have to determine what taxpayers are willing to tolerate and how far taxpayers, themselves, should go.

"When we enter into these discussions, we're looking not just for direct jobs, but how do we grow supply chain commitments," he added. "We also like to tie in research and development in Canada, those high-paying white collar jobs. That's what the Automotive Innovation Fund was specifically designed to do. We want a fuller package than just being in the game of retaining jobs."

But retaining jobs was good enough for Ontario when it agreed earlier this month to give Honda Canada \$87.5 million for an \$875-million retooling of its Alliston plants, said Taylor. "If you look at the Honda announcement, part of the discussion comes down to maintaining or keeping jobs."

The auto industry has long proven to be a good bet, he added. "These are long-term investments; just look at the Essex Engine Plant.

"Each government put in 10 per cent on the expectation of 500 jobs. Well, we've had 800 jobs going on there for at least three years. Typically, auto companies will understate and overachieve."

Taylor acknowledged that "asking for government money isn't favourable." But when Mexico and the U.S. are now drawing the bulk of North American auto investment, Canada has no choice but to up the ante.

"I am sure Ottawa was never concerned about Ford being able to pay back a loan, regardless of the terms," said Taylor. "The money is there. If we close our eyes and ears to what's happening in other jurisdictions, we are not going to see these types of investments in Canada again."

Recreation centre not playing games ; Union set to strike after failed talks

The Ottawa Sun
Fri Nov 14 2014
KELLY ROCHE, OTTAWA SUN

Fifty-five employees at a south-end recreation centre are in a legal strike position as their union returns to the bargaining table Friday -- following months of what it calls stagnating negotiations and dropping morale.

"Our members are responsible for ensuring the safety and enjoyment of RA members while they're at the centre," said Unifor national representative Mike Armstrong.

Unifor Local 4270 is representing staff, who have been without a collective agreement since May.

Members have voted 85% in favour of a strike, if necessary.

"Without them, the centre would cease to function. How long should our members have to work without a collective agreement though?," asked Armstrong.

The centre's director of marketing and member services, Bryan Merrett, confirmed negotiations are scheduled Friday through Sunday.

"We are not providing any public commentary on the process or progress of negotiations," said Merrett, adding it's "between us and the employees."

RA members "would like to be optimistic" heading into negotiations, however, there's "no indication from RA management that this will happen any time soon," reads a union statement, adding the delays are unnecessary and unhelpful for operations.

The union will be determining a deadline, depending on how negotiations unfold.

The Recreation Association of the Public Service of Canada operates the largest private not-for-profit recreation and leisure facility in the region, operating for more than 70 years.

With over 22,000 members, the centre offers activities such as curling, basketball, soccer, softball, tennis, and wedding and conference facilities.

La Presse (site web) - Le Quotidien
11 novembre 2014

Gagnon réélu par acclamation

C'est sans grande surprise qu'Alain Gagnon a été élu par acclamation à la présidence du Syndicat national des employés de l'Aluminium d'Arvida affilié à Unifor (SNEAA-UNIFOR).

JONQUIÈRE - C'est sans grande surprise qu'Alain Gagnon a été élu par acclamation à la présidence du Syndicat national des employés de l'Aluminium d'Arvida affilié à Unifor (SNEAA-UNIFOR). Le président sortant a été réélu sans opposition selon le bulletin des résultats publiés par la présidence des élections. Marc Deroy a quant à lui été élu à la vice-présidence, entretien et service, alors que Donat Pearson a remporté la présidence, section Latérière. Daniel Nepton a eu droit à une passe gratuite pour la vice-présidence, section chimie\UTB.

Le principal défi d'Alain Gagnon consiste à s'assurer que Québec prolongera les autorisations spéciales pour le maintien des cuves précurtes du complexe Jonquière. En vertu des ententes déjà paraphées avec Québec, Rio Tinto Alcan doit fermer d'ici la fin 2014 une première salle de cuves précurtes sur les six toujours en opération.

La fermeture d'une autre salle de cuves est également à l'ordre du jour pour 2015. Québec n'a toujours pas donné d'indication sur ce qu'il entendait faire avec les permis d'environnement de ces salles de cuves.

Le SNEAA-UNIFOR a effectué des interventions auprès du gouvernement quant à l'importance de conserver les six salles de cuves jusqu'à ce que l'entreprise réalise la phase II du complexe AP60. Selon les informations recueillies par Le Quotidien, Rio Tinto Alcan dispose de l'espace nécessaire pour réaliser la phase II de ce projet sans interrompre les opérations dans les salles de cuves précurtes.

Malgré les interventions syndicales, le gouvernement attendait des demandes de l'entreprise puisque c'est Rio Tinto Alcan qui détient les permis.

ICI Radio-Canada - Ottawa-Gatineau (site web)

8 novembre 2014

Les compagnies de taxi passent à l'offensive contre UberX

Les chauffeurs de taxi du pays ont lancé, aujourd'hui, une vaste offensive publicitaire contre l'arrivée dans les grandes villes canadiennes du système de covoiturage commercial UberX.

La riposte des compagnies de taxi du pays n'a pas tardé, après l'arrivée de la compagnie UberX dans plusieurs villes canadiennes.

Sept d'entre elles ont fait paraître une lettre ouverte sous forme de publicité dans deux grands quotidiens, à savoir le Globe and Mail et La Presse. Ces encarts mettent en garde la population contre l'utilisation de ce système de covoiturage commercial et rappellent les avantages d'avoir une industrie réglementée au Canada. De plus, un site internet a été lancé afin d'étayer ses arguments.

« Nous pouvons rouler parfois jusqu'à 300 km par jour. Imaginez une voiture non sécuritaire qui fasse 300 km sur nos routes. Ce n'est pas juste un problème pour la sécurité des clients ou du chauffeur. C'est aussi un problème pour la sécurité des citoyens. » -- Amrik Singh, représentant syndical des chauffeurs de Taxi « Leurs taxis opèrent sans licence et ils ne suivent aucune règle de sécurité. Toutes nos voitures ont des caméras, mais pas les leurs. Tous les taxis doivent suivre des inspections très poussées deux fois par an à Ottawa. Tous les chauffeurs doivent fournir un dossier qui prouve qu'ils sont de bons conducteurs. Ils doivent aussi fournir un dossier criminel pour prouver qu'ils n'ont pas de condamnation. Tous les

chauffeurs de taxi doivent payer des taxes fédérales », détaille Amrik Singh qui représente les chauffeurs de Taxi d'Ottawa au sein de la section locale 1688 d'Unifor.

Ce dernier estime que tous les Canadiens devraient apporter leur support à cette campagne. Selon lui, tolérer UberX équivaut à envoyer le message comme quoi les compagnies étrangères peuvent venir au Canada sans respecter les lois et règles en vigueur au pays.

Une concurrence perçue comme déloyale

L'entreprise controversée de covoiturage commercial UberX fait appel à des chauffeurs qui utilisent leur propre voiture et qui font payer au passager un tarif moins élevé que ce qu'un taxi demande.

L'industrie du taxi soutient qu'il s'agit d'une concurrence déloyale puisque les conducteurs de ces véhicules ne déclarent pas de taxes, l'immatriculation de leurs véhicules coûte moins cher que celle des taxis et les chauffeurs ne reçoivent pas de formation équivalente à celle des conducteurs professionnels.

D'autre part, ces entreprises ne peuvent pas s'aligner sur les prix d'UberX car elles n'ont pas le droit de mettre en place des rabais ou des incitatifs pour attirer les clients. Elles rappellent cependant que leurs tarifs sont fixes.

« [Les chauffeurs] Uber, par exemple, une journée très occupée, peuvent ajouter ce qu'ils appellent un " search pricing ". Ce qui fait que la course peut vous coûter 10 fois ce qu'elle coûte d'habitude. Nous on ne fait pas ça. Ce qui est indiqué sur le compteur est ce que vous payez, peu importe les conditions », soutient le responsable des opérations de la compagnie Coventry Connections, Marc-André Way.

L'entreprise UberX est implantée à travers 200 villes dans le monde, et depuis peu elle s'est installée à Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax et Montréal. Elle cherche à établir sa présence à Edmonton et Vancouver.

Des tarifs attractifs pour les étudiants

Pour le moment, on ne connaît pas l'impact réel de ses activités au pays sur les entreprises de taxis conventionnels. Les clients constatent néanmoins une différence de prix pouvant aller de 30 % à 40 % comparativement à un taxi classique.

« La première fois où j'en ai pris un, le tarif était moitié moins cher qu'un taxi normal », indique Cassidy Fitzpatrick qui est étudiante à Ottawa.

Une étudiante qui utilise le système Uber, à Ottawa. Photo : Radio-Canada La clientèle étudiante se dit particulièrement séduite par le fait que l'application d'UberX leur permet de savoir qui est leur chauffeur, mais aussi de connaître la plaque d'immatriculation du véhicule et l'emplacement du véhicule en temps réel.

Dans un courrier adressé à Radio-Canada, la porte-parole de UberX, Lauren Altmin, souligne que la compagnie procède à des vérifications de sécurité des chauffeurs supérieures à celles que font les compagnies de taxi.

Elle qualifie l'attaque orchestrée contre son entreprise de « campagne de relation publique désespérée ».

« Pendant des décennies, les compagnies de l'industrie canadienne du taxi s'intéressaient à tout, sauf à servir les résidents et les touristes. Au lieu de faire des efforts pour écouter et prendre en compte les attentes des clients concernant la qualité, la sécurité et la fiabilité des services de taxi, elles préfèrent mettre en place une campagne de salissage afin de protéger leur cartel », explique Mme Altmin.

Des villes comme Vancouver et Toronto ont fait appel aux tribunaux pour mettre des bâtons dans les roues d'UberX. Les responsables de la ville d'Edmonton ont dit être ouverts au service Uber dans la ville à condition que l'entreprise engage des conducteurs qui possèdent un permis de taxi. À Ottawa, deux conducteurs de la compagnie ont reçu une contravention de la Ville pour avoir enfreint la réglementation municipale.

À lire aussi :

L'entreprise de covoiturage commercial Uber recrute à Edmonton
Les taxis de Vancouver déposent une poursuite contre Uber
L'application de covoiturage UberX arrivée à Montréal
Uber tarde à s'implanter à Gatineau
La compagnie Uber goûte à l'opposition de la Ville d'Ottawa
Industrie du taxi : Ottawa s'oppose à l'arrivée d'Uber

Syndicat

Refus de sacrifier d'autres emplois chez Tembec

Par Lucie Charest

11 novembre 2014

La Frontière et Le Citoyen

Roger Gauthier, président syndicat employés Tembec à Témiscaming, le 16 mars 2012. Photo TC Media - Lucie Charest - Archives

TÉMISCAMING - Au cours des 20 derniers mois, il y aurait eu plus de mises à pied chez Tembec à Témiscaming qu'en 40 ans d'histoire. Le syndicat évalue présentement l'offre patronale finale. Un vote de grève semble imminent.

«Aujourd'hui, la compagnie congédie des employés pour une offense qui aurait justifié une suspension d'un jour il y a quelques années, a déclaré Roger Gauthier, le président du syndicat Unifor chez Tembec à Témiscaming. Nous avons demandé d'inclure des conditions précises dans le cas de suspension et cela nous a été refusé.»

D'après M. Gauthier, au cours des 20 derniers mois, 29 employés auraient été congédiés ou mis à pied pour des raisons administratives. Mais ce n'est pas la seule perte au niveau des ressources humaines. En 2010, le syndicat avait accepté de sacrifier 35 emplois lors du renouvellement de la convention collective.

Perte de 4 à 5 M\$ par année pour les employés

«Nous avons accepté de perdre ces emplois, que les nouveaux débutent avec seulement 70 % du salaire de base, notre part du partage des profits nous a été retirée, a rappelé M. Gauthier. Nous sommes très inquiets, nos

conditions de travail ne peuvent plus continuer à se détériorer. Ça représente de 4 à 5 M\$ par année que les employés ont accepté de laisser aller pour donner une chance à la compagnie de traverser la crise et de le réinvestir pour sécuriser l'avenir du site de Témiscaming. À ce jour, la compagnie n'a pas encore annoncé la phase II du projet de turboalternateur.»

De son côté, la direction de Tembec a préféré ne pas commenter. «Pendant les négociations, nous laissons les discussions à la table de négociation», a signifié Linda Coates, vice-présidente Ressources humaines et Affaires corporatives.

En mars 2012, le premier ministre Jean Charest avait annoncé un investissement de 310 M\$ à Témiscaming pour le turboalternateur. Le PDG de Tembec, James Lopez, avait profité de l'occasion pour remercier les employés des efforts consentis. «Nous avons acceptés ces concessions en comptant sur ce projet, avait alors confié le président du syndicat, Roger Gauthier. Nous nous attendons à reprendre une partie de ce qu'on a perdu lors des prochaines négociations en 2014.»

Le local 233 d'Unifor chez Tembec à Témiscaming compte 650 membres. Ils évaluent présentement l'offre finale de la partie patronale. «Nous l'analysons mardi, mercredi et jeudi, a indiqué Roger Gauthier. Le comité exécutif recommande unanimement de la rejeter, ce qui pourrait conduire à la grève. Les résultats du vote des employés sera connu mercredi le 19 novembre à 20 h 30.»

Le syndicat craint la fermeture d'Uniboard

Par Myriam Grenier

Jeudi 13 novembre 2014

Photo TC Media – Myriam Grenier | Dany Lauzon et Ghislain Lalonde, respectivement président et vice-président du syndicat, Gilles Chapadeau, conseiller régional de la FTQ et Ronald Nantel, représentant national d'Unifor.

VAL-D'OR - Si Québec n'investit pas dans la modernisation de l'usine Uniboard de Val-d'Or, les représentants syndicaux craignent sa fermeture.

L'usine de panneaux aurait besoin d'investissements de l'ordre de 46 M \$ afin de répondre aux normes environnementales et acquérir un séchoir, entre autres. «On a ouvert la convention collective il y a près d'un an et les travailleurs ont fait des concessions. Depuis, rien ne semble se concrétiser pour les investissements. Unifor a adressé une lettre au ministre de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et des Exportations Jacques Daoust le 3 novembre afin de le rencontrer, sans réponse», a mentionné Ronald Nantel, représentant national d'Unifor, lors d'un point de presse le 13 novembre.

«Il y a une urgence d'agir. On a fait une demande auprès du gouvernement du Québec pour moderniser les équipements, à défaut de quoi il y a une crainte de la part du syndicat d'une fermeture. Celle-ci toucherait 150 employés syndiqués et un total de 185 employés. Si elle survient, elle aurait un effet domino sur d'autres usines», a souligné Gilles Chapadeau, conseiller régional de la FTQ.

«Les emplois ici débutent à 40 000 \$ par année. On fait rouler l'économie locale et régionale, a estimé Ghislain Lalonde, vice-président du syndicat. Avec les Fêtes qui s'en viennent, on se sent avec une épée de Damoclès au-dessus de nos têtes. Sans investissements, on est certains que l'usine fermera.»

«Le temps presse»

«On parle d'investissements de 46 M \$. Le gouvernement fédéral a déjà accepté de financer le projet, mais on ne sait pas pour quel montant. Il reste le provincial à régler, a expliqué Danny Lauzon, président du syndicat. La fermeture aurait un coût social, avec des gens qui se retrouveraient sur le chômage ou l'aide sociale. Le gouvernement va finir par payer malgré tout.»

«Le temps presse, puisqu'il y a des délais à respecter pour se conformer. Il faut que le dossier bouge avant la date butoir du 1er décembre et le séchoir doit être commandé avant mars 2015 pour devenir fonctionnel en 2016», a-t-il ajouté.

Le Quotidien
14 novembre 2014

Précuites à Jonquière **RTA voudrait reporter la fermeture à 2021**

Louis Tremblay

La société Rio Tinto Alcan souhaite obtenir du gouvernement du Québec une prolongation de six ans des permis environnementaux pour l'exploitation des salles de cuves précuites d'Arvida, afin de faire la transition avec les deux dernières phases du projet AP60 dont le tonnage définitif varie régulièrement.

Pour la première fois, la porte-parole de la société, Claudine Gagnon, confirme officiellement que l'entreprise discute avec le gouvernement du Québec d'une modification à l'entente actuelle. Toujours selon la porte-parole, ces discussions sont justifiées par le fait que l'entreprise manque de temps pour faire cette transition. En effet, la faiblesse du prix de l'aluminium et les surplus mondiaux de métal gris ont amené la suspension du programme d'investissement.

La porte-parole de Rio Tinto Alcan a toutefois refusé de confirmer le nombre d'années de prolongation des permis environnementaux. Deux sources différentes ont confirmé au Quotidien qu'il s'agissait d'une période de cinq ou six ans.

" Selon les termes de l'entente de mai 2013, nous avons une prolongation de deux ans pour les salles de cuves précuites à partir du premier janvier 2015. Nous avons entrepris des discussions avec le gouvernement puisque nous voulons avoir le temps nécessaire pour faire la transition avec notre programme d'investissement ", s'est contenté de dire la porte-parole.

L'entente avec le gouvernement du Québec prévoyait une séquence de fermeture des six salles de cuves précuites du complexe d'électrolyse ouest. La première salle de cuves doit toujours être mise hors tension le 31 décembre. Les cinq autres salles devaient fermer une après l'autre sur une période de deux ans.

Il ne serait pas surprenant que le gouvernement du Québec confirme, d'ici quelques jours, la conclusion d'une nouvelle entente qui permettra de poursuivre l'exploitation de cette technologie. Les éléments qui militent en faveur du maintien des opérations sont la rentabilité de cette usine de plus ou moins 170 000 tonnes et l'amélioration des performances environnementales du procédé de production.

L'augmentation récente du prix de l'aluminium, combinée à la baisse des coûts de main-d'oeuvre dans ces salles de cuves, ont propulsé la profitabilité de l'usine. En ce moment, 70 % des travailleurs à l'oeuvre dans les salles de cuves précuites travaillent à des conditions inférieures à celles des membres du SNEAA-Unifor. Il

s'agit de travailleurs à l'emploi d'entreprises de sous-traitance. Les travailleurs syndiqués ne représentent plus que 30 % du personnel.

Il est difficile, pour le moment, d'évaluer l'impact de cette nouvelle demande sur le projet AP-60. Il est toutefois ressorti des conversations avec certaines personnes bien informées que plus l'entreprise attend pour reprendre son programme, plus elle bénéficiera des progrès de la robotisation. Le complexe AP-60, lorsqu'il sera complété, produira une plus grande quantité de métal que l'usine d'Alma avec moins de travailleurs. On parle ici de l'implantation de la robotisation pour pratiquement 70 à 80 % des opérations de production.

En plus des permis environnementaux, Rio Tinto Alcan aborde d'autres sujets avec le gouvernement du Québec dont celui de l'énergie puisque la société Alcoa a conclu sa propre entente avec Québec pour le prix de l'électricité.