

Atlantic Vice President's Report
April 7-11, 2008
Ottawa, Ontario

Negotiations and Bargaining Demands

The UPCE and PSAC have started to meet regarding our negotiations with the Post Office and Purolator.

The UPCE is planning, mobilizing, and having meetings for Local Bargaining demands and the election of delegates and Alternates from Locals that attended the National Bargaining Conference held in Ottawa in Mid-March. This is a new format of having one National Conference "rather" than 4 Regional Bargaining Conferences representing each Region to elect team members and prioritize demands nationally with the members and not just the team. The past practice, we felt, caused an inordinate amount of time for preparation, duplication, and the presence of the National President on four separate two to three day Conferences, as well as PSAC and UPCE Staff to duplicate and travel.

The Atlantic Local executives, the National UPCE and PSAC worked very closely on this, and although we had a very tight time line, we are confident that we were successful in having all Local meetings held, demands sent to UPCE to have translated and distributed to PSAC Negotiations, and names of participants sent to PSAC by February 29th. There was one day after the National Conference when the National UPCE Negotiating team that was elected from their respective Regions, time for team and PSAC to strategize, prioritize, and gather the demands that will be going forward to the Post Office when we give our demands to them. The members needed to tell our Team and PSAC what it is that is a priority within their Locals.

Attendance Management

We are still experiencing difficulty in how this is managed by Local management representatives of Canada Post. Again, the employer is not addressing this issue with the "input" of those who know the employees better than most. This would be the Bargaining Agents. The Post Office is developing, and has developed a Plan that is not only intrusive, but is invasive. Each region and Local(s) are experiencing inconsistent procedures from the Employer.

Staff negotiations

We also have an up coming round of negotiations with our Office Staff-the AEU- this year. So as all can well appreciate, we have a very busy schedule ahead of us, with our National Convention "also" being held in the fall in Montreal.

Finances

2007 has been another year where the UPCE National Office and current National Executive have been able to manage the members' money so that there will not be a deficit. This is a great accomplishment, as it will be the second consecutive year that we do not run a deficit. We saw deficits for several years before this new Executive were given strict mandates and instructions at the 2005 UPCE Convention. We have been close to our budget of members for this year to date and last year in 2006, however we need to ensure that CPC does not continue to just download work from those retiring, to those UPCE members that are staying employed, and use attrition to eliminate UPCE positions.

UPCE STAFF

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the National Office, including the Committees for their tireless work representing members.

Pay Equity

There had been Hearings in the Appeal Court case, and we were handed a devastating decision from the presiding Judge. The PSA/UPCE will continue to fight, and the PSAC has found enough grounds to appeal the decision that supported the employer. However, after 25 years, we expect that Canada Post will spend millions more in legal fees and attempt to have the Supreme Court included and appeal if we are successful again. This came as a total surprise to all, and it shows what the employer will spend to avoid to pay us what is rightfully ours.

Contribution Holiday and Pension Monies "Recovery" by Employer

We feel that this decision by CPC to take monies that they are responsible for, and to use it for "new infrastructure" is wrong for a National Service. This money is ours, and we contend that it is part of Revenues. This also reveals a lot about the "importance" that is not shared by the employer about withdrawing or "not contributing" monies to our Pension Plan. The Markets are and have been very volatile and Canada Post should have waited to do so, IF they chose to do so. We could have used the money to actually "improve" the Plan, rather than give the Post Office money from the Plan. We also see this money as being a part of the Profit that the Post Office was able to achieve to pay their bonuses to their Senior Management, and CTI and IPI to employees, especially in the wake of the largest Post Office Bargaining Unit becoming a part of the CTI in their last round of negotiations. Canada Post would not "want egg on their face in the first year"

The employer says that this was not a contributing factor, however we know that money not being spent in one place and used for something else directly attributes to the profit and revenues of Canada Post in the "bottom line".

The Plan is in good financial shape financially. UPCE has filed a National grievance regarding both the Contribution Holiday, and the Recovery (recouping) of monies by the

Post Office from the CPC Pension Plan. For reasons, we cannot seem to emphasize enough to the Post Office, being the Trustee's, that this is OUR money, not CPC's. UPCE is always cautious about the plans of this employer, as many private employers are changing Defined Benefits to Defined Contribution Plans, which give up our health and other benefits that we have paid for into this plan, and it is OUR money. Not Canada Post's. The Post Office has recouped 148 million in 2007, and has every intention of recovering over 700 MILLION dollars in the next two or three years.

2008 Convention

This is another huge undertaking to "organize" when we are possibly in the "middle" of two or three negotiations. However, I feel that we will be successful in achieving all situations placed before this National Executive.

Locals and Executives

If not for the great work of our Local executives, the UPCE would certainly not be functioning and representing members like we have been. The UPCE faces very large obstacles with the "belt-tightening" excuses that our employer continues to enforce. There has to more positions filled, and proper training provided.

Disability and Termination of UPCE Members

Employees within the Post Office are still receiving very troubling and disturbing letters from Canada Post on their status after two years of disability. When the supplier Sunlife Insurance, determines that members are "totally" disabled, they forward this information to CPC, and instead of allowing our members and employees to remain on Long Term Disability, which we all pay for, the Employer demands that these employees apply for Canada Pension Medical Retirement, which in turn admonishes CPC from "keeping the employee on the 'books'". This keeps the employees from contributing to their Pension Plan at CPC, as well as placing them in financial hardship especially once they reach 65 and Sun Life cuts them off, and then they depend on CPP and OAS.

Other Conferences

Richard and I will be attending the UNI Conference in Panama at the end of April, and this could not be held at a more important time. The Post offices around the Globe are being Privatized and deregulated, and it is our responsibility as Union Representatives and members to fight this to the end. We cannot allow our Post Office to be turned into a Company that only services those where it will make a profit, and leave communities to fend for themselves in Rural Canada. Rural Canada does not mean "out in the boonies. It means outside the Urban and City limits. The intent of Canada Post is to be profitable, and if it means less or NO service to those who depend on rural delivery, then the Company will certainly support changes, including Bill C-14 to deregulate our Post Office.

Bill C-14-Changes proposed to the Canada Post Corporation Act

This is very similar to the 1996 Mandate review.

Re-mailers collect and ship this mail, even though Canada Post currently has the exclusive privilege to collect, transmit and deliver letters in our country. This is the basic problem facing re-mailers. After a number of years of trying to find a solution to this problem, legal action was taken and Canada Post won (all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada). Now the government, instead of "prosecuting these companies" for doing our work, has catered to their lobbying efforts, and is willing to pass Legislation that will make this legal by International Companies. Canada Post should be ashamed at not helping the Unions in this fight, as it also constitutes approximately 60 to 80 million dollars of direct revenue that CPC will lose.

Re-mailers are currently violating the law. Bill C-14 would change the law by removing most international letters from Canada Post's exclusive privilege to transmit, deliver, and receive these letters.

Most postal unions oppose deregulation of postal services because they believe it will have a negative impact on employees, the public, the post office, and most importantly, the culture and structure of our Country.

The Post offices in Sweden and New Zealand have been "gutted" of their previous unionized workers, and these privatizations' have led to rural areas being serviced badly.

Grievances

The complaints, the Local resolutions, the mediation, and the filing of the grievances remain with the Locals and the National Executive. So the actual workload of the Vice President's will not decrease substantially, as we will continue to work with CPC, LR, the National Office, and the members to resolve the complaints and grievances before they get to Arbitration.

Education

There may be Regional Education available this year; however there will not be a National Education Course. I think all can appreciate this decision, as we have Negotiations, Political Action for Deregulation of the Post Office, Convention of UPCE, Regional PSAC Conventions, etc. There will likely be a National Course in 2009, all things permitting.

Staffing

The Corporational Knowledge is impossible to replace, but CPC is not even attempting the transition of "passing" some of this knowledge on before people leave the Post Office by ensuring that "new" people have the opportunity to obtain the "tacit" knowledge that our members possess. This cannot be just taught through a training session, or a training

Manual. It must be passed on through the succession teaching from experience to those without the knowledge. There are some managers that are starting to be extremely worried and concerned that there will not be the proper training to retain customers, as well as employees.

CTI-Evaluations and Procedures for Rating UPCE members

Several months ago on November 27th, CPC proposed without consultation of arbitrarily and drastically changing the conditions that had to be met by UPCE members in order to be eligible for the Corporate Team Incentive, and the Personal Individual Team Incentive. They proposed the following:

“Employees must be actively at work for a minimum of three (3) consecutive months during the fiscal year to receive a performance rating”

The UPCE objected immediately, and was successful in arguing that this was not only baseless, it would cause an avoidable amount of stress to members, as the number of employees who would become ineligible because of the wording “Actively working for three CONSECUTIVE months” would be the only people to qualify.

On February 13th 2008 Canada Post sent a revised letter to UPCE and our National Office and it now states:

This is further to the letter of November 27, 2007 regarding changes made to the Performance Rating Scale for Unable to Rate

In this letter the Corporation advised you that the description for the Unable to Rate scale would be changed to reflect a requirement for three (3) "consecutive" months. Please note that this word has now been taken out.

The new description reads as follows: "Employees must be actively at work for a minimum of three (3) month during the fiscal year to receive a performance rating" This was a very big victory by and for the Union, as many members would NOT have been eligible if we had not objected and demanded that they return to the three months of active work in the fiscal year as was past practice.

In Solidarity,

Mike Moeller
Atlantic Vice President
Union of Postal Communications Employees