

BUSINESS AGENT'S REPORT - OCTOBER 2006

I'd like to start off by thanking the members for allowing me the opportunity to attend our biannual National Convention, which was held from October 14th to 19th in Vancouver.

I'll speak more on the Convention in a minute, but first a couple of matters within the Local.

Last month I reported we had dates set up to go into bargaining with Iron Mountain, and I'm pleased to report we now have a ratified Collective Agreement with this group.

We have a two year agreement with no roll backs. We achieved language on a sunset clause for disciplinary matters, and other minor language items. We also achieved increased shift differential and increased mileage allowance.

Our biggest gain however, came in the area of wages. Iron Mountain had the lowest wage schedule in our Local Union and the members made it clear that this was their priority. We made some significant gains in the area of wages. We were aided by the fact that the Company was having difficulty in both attracting new employees and retaining the employees they had.

At Custom Paper we also reached an agreement with the Company on a new Collective Agreement, which was subsequently rejected by the members. We have now taken a strike vote and are waiting to get into mediation at the Labour Relations Board.

Now back to our Convention. In some ways this was a political convention, especially in the Western Region. Nationally, with the retirement of Brian Payne, Dave Coles was elected by acclamation as our new President. With the retirement of André Foucault, we also elected a new Secretary Treasurer. Elected into this position, also by acclamation, was Gaetan Menard.

In the Western Region, Don MacNeil was elected as our Western Region Vice President and Don Boucher was elected as one of our Administrative Vice Presidents. Our other Administrative Vice President is Wendy Sol, who was elected by acclamation.

The theme of our Convention was "Rising To The Challenge" and this was broken down into five different areas, these being Collective Bargaining, Organizing, Political Action, Union Renewal, and Globalization.

The Convention dealt with a number of resolutions in each of these areas.

In the area of organizing, a resolution was passed which established a task force to:

"prepare a report and proposals on strategic approaches to organizing; new models for organizing; and the development of a culture of organizing in CEP as well as the resources required to carry out this organizing plan, and that this report be prepared as soon as possible following this Convention so that it can be reviewed with CEP members at appropriate regional meetings prior to the next Convention."

This resolution also mandated that the task force's report:

“propose to Convention 2008 an increase in the 7% per capita organizing allocation to a significantly higher percentage of revenues”

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It is my belief that while this is a necessary measure to take, if something like this is adopted at our 2008 Convention, it may significantly change the way our National Union operates.

One other theme of our Convention was the ongoing job losses in all of our Sectors, with a special focus on the job losses in the forest industry. The National Executive Board will be organizing a “National Day Of Action” to occur on January 22nd, 2007 regarding the crisis in the Forestry Industry. As more information becomes available we will ensure it gets distributed.

We also had a very moving tribute to Brian Payne at Convention. Brian has been our National President for six years now and had the overwhelming support and admiration of the delegates. Brian’s contribution will be missed, and while I’m sure Dave Coles is “up for the job” he has some very big shoes to fill.

I want to again thank the members for providing me the opportunity to attend this Convention. This was a particularly rewarding time for me, as I was appointed the Chair of the General Resolutions Committee, which is a fairly high profile position at Convention.