



CEP Atlantic Communications Council Membership Bulletin April, 2007

CIRB

The company and the Presidents of each Local met on March 1st & 2nd in Halifax with John Vines of the CIRB. The purpose of these meetings was to facilitate mediation to resolve the remaining Xwave positions in dispute. At this time we have accepted the 160(+/-) positions that the company has said were doing ‘bargaining unit work’ and meetings to discuss terms and conditions of employment are underway. Another meeting will be scheduled for late May early June to continue these talks.

XWAVE

A meeting was held on Feb 6 & 7 in NB where preliminary discussions were held with the company. We met again on Mar 14 & 15 at which time we are happy to report we made progress on terms and conditions of employment. Another meeting is scheduled for April 30 in PEI at which time we hope to have another update for members.

BIENNIAL LOCALS MEETING

As we reported in our last bulletin, preparations are being made for the Biennial Locals meeting being held in Memramcook NB on May 11 & 12th, 2007. The purpose of this meeting is to vote on resolutions on changes to the CEPACC By-laws and elect the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Recording Secretary and Treasurer of the Council. We will update you on any revisions to our Bylaws after this time.

JOB EVALUATION/PAY EQUITY

As reported in our last bulletin, the joint job evaluation/pay equity committee met in February for a presentation of the ‘Watson Wyatt’ job evaluation/pay equity tool. On March 27th, we were presented with the ‘Hay’ tool. The committee will have to meet again in the near future to decide on which tool would be best suited for the union’s needs and proceed from there.

FLEX CONNECT – HEALTH SPENDING ACCOUNT

This is a reminder to all employees who have chosen the Health Spending Account option during the open enrollment period of FlexConnect benefits. 2005 balances must be used before May 31, 2007 or employees will forfeit this benefit. The money in your Health Spending Account may be used to supplement any Health service you use or any Health purchase you make that is in accordance with Revenue Canada’s Income tax coverage.

OUR LOST SERVICE AND THE EVI SURVEY

Recently, we welcomed 34 new members into our bargaining unit as a result of the CIRB Hamilton decision. This decision deemed that the work done by these employees was bargaining unit work. While developing a Memorandum of Agreement, with HR representatives of the company to bring this work and those workers into the bargaining unit, we discussed and debated many issues. One of these important issues was Net Credited Service. We saw this as an opportunity to discuss a grave injustice, the five months of service that was taken from us because of the strike. {The company says 4 months 26 days, we will settle for that!} We argued that now would be an opportune time for the company to return that which was unfairly and callously taken from us, our service. After those discussions the company HR representatives took our position back to senior management for approval. Ever since our return to work from the strike on September 20, 2004 we have been told to put “it” behind us. There were counselors made available to help us cope and “get over it” upon our return. Any time the strike is mentioned in the workplace we still hear the same thing from managers, “get over it”; “put it behind you”. Well, we say to senior management it is also time for you to get over it as well, it is time to drop the grudge and move on. Once again the senior management of this company has decided to deny us our service and ignore an opportunity to right a wrong! In the coming weeks you will see another EVI survey. We strongly advise every member in our bargaining unit to send a clear message to senior management that you cannot continue to deny us our lost service and expect us to be contented employees. There are numerous boxes or places in the survey where you can insert comments. Lets deliver a **STRONG** collective message to the upper echelons of this company, enough is enough, suck it up, get over it and give us back our service!

SDB

The Council has been dealing with SDB issues from the cut off of benefits to providing application forms. We would ask that all employees print a copy of the forms and have a copy at home should you ever need it. Please print along with that, the instructions for applying for SDB benefits. Employees must have their complete application in to Health and Wellness by the 10th calendar day they are absent from work. This will ensure that there is no disruption in your pay. If you are having problems with getting your forms filled out, you must call Health and Wellness and let them know of your situation as we all know that you may not always be able to see your doctor on a moments notice.

BILL C-257 – ANTI SCAB LEGISLATION

The issue was hard fought but unfortunately the end result wasn’t what we wanted. Bob MacDonald (Local 401), Karen Lewis (Local 410), Mary Croke (Council Executive/Local 410), Lisa Martin (Local 506) and Joyclin Coates (Local 2289) spent two days lobbying Federal Liberal MP’s. Under the direction of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) 130 labour activists from all across the country met in Ottawa with one goal in mind, get Bill C-257 passed in the House of Commons. The vote took place on the evening of March 21/07 with a result of 122 In Favour, 177 Against! The excuse that MP’s were using were concerns around essential services not being provided in the event of a strike. Our answer to that argument was that the Canada Labour Code provides for employers to sit down with unions before bargaining commences and attempt to enter into an agreement around essential services. If they can’t agree, the company can then apply to the Canadian Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) to have services declared essential. The ruling of the CIRB is final and binding on both parties. Some of you will remember that Aliant did just that before we started bargaining in 2002. The company applied to the CIRB to declare some of the services we provide as essential. The Board ruled that a strike by

Aliant workers did not impose “an immediate and serious danger to the safety or health of the public.” We therefore had no workers declared essential.

In order for a Bill to become law, it must first pass 3 readings in the House of Commons. It is then sent to the Senate for consideration. If approved there, it must receive Royal Assent. When Bill C-257 passed the second reading in the House of Commons, the business community aggressively lobbied the Federal Government to get the Bill defeated. They fear mongered by arguing that essential services would not be provided for, which would cripple their businesses, destroy the economy and be a threat to public safety. Anti-Scab legislation has worked in Quebec and British Columbia for many years with no negative effective on their businesses, economy or public safety. Henri Masse, President of the Quebec Federation of Labour says, “*Over the last thirty years, governments have changed, business and labour leadership have changed, yet there has never been a call to reopen our anti-scab law: this law has civilized labour relations and has reduced the number of disputes and their length. Workers and employers, everyone has been a winner.*”

When Stephane Dion publicly pulled his support from the Bill a few weeks ago, many Liberal MP’s followed. The Bloc Quebecois originally introduced the Bill to the floor, which the NDP stood solidly behind. The Conservatives voted almost unanimously against it (one conservative voted for it – Jeff Watson of Essex, Ontario.) Most Liberals either abstained or supported it through the 1st two readings but now some of that support was wavering. The CLC and the entire labour movement have been actively lobbying since the Bill was introduced but now we really had to get aggressive. There were over 50,000 e-mails and faxes sent to Liberal MP’s offices on the Tuesday and Wednesday before the vote. Labour activists lobbying in Ottawa, phoned and met with MP’s to discuss the issue and convince them to vote in favour. There were many successes but obviously not enough. Liberal MP’s were under a tremendous amount of pressure from the labour movement and from within their own party. Reportedly one MP said that he knew it was a good Bill but couldn’t support it now with Dion pulling his support. Even though it’s clearly provided for in the Canada Labour Code, some MP’s still hid behind the essential services argument. One MP informed us that Aliant and Bell were one of the most active businesses in lobbying government against this Bill. There are reports that Charles White, member of the board of directors for Bell Aliant and another board member from Bell were in attendance in the House of Commons during the vote. Thank you to all members of the Atlantic Locals who e-mailed, called or faxed MP’s. Your efforts did not go unnoticed. We **WILL** live to fight another day. Maybe next time we will have MP’s in the House of Commons who will **SUPPORT** working people.

REMEMBER THAT THE NEXT TIME YOU MARK YOUR BALLOT!

The following is a list of the MP’s in Atlantic Canada and how they voted on Bill C-257.

Newfoundland & Labrador

Bill Matthews – Random-Burin-St. George’s – Liberal – Yes
Norman Doyle – St. John’s East – Liberal – Conservative – No
Loyola Hearn – St. John’s South-Mount Pearl – Conservative - No
Gerry Byrne – Humber-St. Barbe-Baie Verte – Liberal - No
Fabian Manning – Avalon – Conservative – No
Todd Russell – Labrador – Liberal – Yes
Scott Simms – Bonavista-Gander-Grand Falls-Windsor – Liberal – Yes

Nova Scotia

Geoffrey Regan – Halifax West – Liberal – No
Robert Thibeault – West Nova – Liberal – No
Scott Brison – Kings – Hants – Liberal – No
Mike Savage – Dartmouth-Cole Harbour – Liberal – Abstained
Rodger Cuzner – Cape Breton-Canso – Liberal – Yes
Mark Eyking – Sydney-Victoria – Liberal – Yes
Gerald Keddy – South Shore –St. Margaret’s – Conservative – No
Peter Stoffer – Sackville-Eastern Shore – NDP – Yes
Alexa McDonough – Halifax – NDP – Yes
Peter McKay – Central Nova – Conservative – No
Bill Casey – Cumberland-Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley – Conservative – No

Prince Edward Island

Wayne Easter – Malpeque – Liberal – Yes
Lawrence MacAulay – Cardigan – Liberal – Yes
Joe McGuire – Egmont – Liberal – No
Shawn Murphy – Charlottetown – Liberal – Yes

New Brunswick

Mike Allen – Tobique-Mactaquac – Conservative – No
Jean-Claude D’Amours – Madawaska-Restigouche – Liberal – Yes
Yvon Godin – Acadie-Bathurst – NDP – Yes
Charles Hubbard – Miramichi – Liberal – No
Dominic LeBlanc – Beausejour – Liberal – Yes
Rob Moore – Fundy Royal – Conservative – No
Brian Murphy – Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe – Liberal - Yes
Andy Scott – Fredericton – Liberal – Yes
Greg Francis Thompson – New Brunswick Southwest – Conservative - No
Paul Zed – Saint John – Liberal – Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Fawcett, Chairperson	Noel Pauley, Vice Chairperson
Phil Briffett	Chuck Rouse
Joyclin Coates, Treasurer	Mary Croke, Recording Secretary