

PERSPECTIVE

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Canadian Union of Postal Workers

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2009 NEGOTIATIONS • RSMC PROGRAM OF DEMANDS

The Last Re-Opener: Time For More Improvements

This tabloid contains proposed collective bargaining demands for the third and final “re-opener” of the collective agreement covering over 6,600 Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMCs). These demands are the result of discussions at the meetings that took place across the union during May-June 2009. These negotiations will determine the job security, wages, benefits and working conditions of all RSMCs.

It is important that everyone participate in the negotiations process. In the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) it is the members who propose negotiations demands and vote on the entire program of demands by secret ballot. Read the bulletins, attend the meetings and participate in every action organized by the union to show your support for your demands and your negotiating committee.

The Negotiations Process

The current RSMC collective agreement expires on December 31, 2011. The agreement provides for three re-openers where CUPW and Canada Post management re-negotiate the terms and conditions of employment of RSMCs. If both sides agree, the changes come into effect on an agreed upon date. If there is no agreement, the issues in dispute will be

referred to a third party arbitrator whose decision will be binding.

During the past six years we have made considerable progress. We've introduced improved wages, pensions, dental and vision benefits, paid relief employees, vacations, increases in vehicle allowances and many other benefits and rights.

This year, with your active support, there is much to achieve.

It's Our Money

In the current negotiations the Union is bringing forward a realistic program of demands which meets the needs of rural and suburban mail carriers. Many of our proposals, such as job security, union rights and protections, will not cost money. Some of our demands, such as our very important proposals concerning health and safety, are both necessary for workers and also cost-effective for the employer. Other demands, such as increased wages and benefits, will cost money which will be attributed to the financial cap.

In 2004, we negotiated the labour cost increases laid out in Article 35 of the collective agreement. It was agreed that the value of the total amount of additional wages and benefits received by RSMCs over the eight years would

be \$652 million. So far, RSMCs have received almost \$400 million. The financial increase provided for in the collective agreement is our money. It was negotiated by CUPW and we have the right to determine how it should be spent. The current economic crisis will have no bearing on the financial aspects of our negotiations.

It's Our Fight

The struggle of CUPW to obtain job security, decent wages, good benefits and healthy working conditions for all RSMCs is a fight for all postal workers. For many years CUPW fought hard to negotiate rights for all postal workers including full-time, part-time and temporary workers in all classifications. We recognized that equality is the cornerstone of security. When one group of workers is exploited the rights of everyone are vulnerable.

RSMCs and urban postal workers do the same work. Often they work side by side in the same facilities. RSMCs have the same needs for job security, good wages and decent benefits. It's time to narrow the gap and set the stage for full equality in 2012.

The struggle continues...

The National Program of Demands

Wages

1 Implement a wage increase with an established minimum bargaining unit hourly wage. Fifty per cent of the funds devoted to wage increases to be used to raise the wage rates of the lowest paid workers.

2 Pay employees for all hours worked. Employees shall be compensated for all hours in addition to Schedule A at straight time up to eight hours per day and at overtime rates thereafter.

Job Security

3 Extend full job security to all employees. There shall be no layoffs. Where CPC deletes a route, or reduces the number of routes in a post office creating a surplus situation, the worker with the least seniority will be declared surplus. Current employees who are rendered surplus shall not be required to be displaced more than 40 kilometres.

4 Prohibit the contracting out of work covered by the bargaining certificate.

5 Introduce protections concerning technological change including a definition, a process of consultation and negotiation with recourse to third-party arbitration and guarantees of no adverse effects on employees and guarantees employment, pay and retraining.

6 Prohibit the employer from converting delivery modes (RMBs, CMBs, Lock-Boxes, etc.) without providing the union an opportunity to present alternatives in order to maintain the present delivery mode.

Excessive Workload

7 Implement a Route Measurement System (RMS) which recognizes all work performed by RSMCs, including sortation, preparation, (un)loading, and householder work. There shall be a schedule for the restructures. RSMCs shall receive time values instead of per piece payments in Appendix A. Require that the employer consult with the Union throughout the restructuring process.

8 Limit the number of sets and total daily weight of householders per day. Standardized size and weight specifications for householders; any house-

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holders that fall outside these specifications will be subject to agreement between the parties with a process to defer delivery of sets of householders on days when maximum weights or number of sets is exceeded.

9 Provide the union with the right to appoint observers during the route restructuring process.

Health and Safety

10 Provide four days of paid cumulative sick leave annually to all employees.

11 Implement a long-term disability plan for RSMCs.

12 Require the employer to consult with the Union concerning accommodation of employees.

13 Provide all employees with the right to refuse unsafe work including full union involvement in the investigation process.

Benefits

14 Cover all employees by the drug plan that has been negotiated with Canada Post Corporation.

15 Grant four weeks of paid vacation leave after seven years of continuous service as an employee.

16 Contribute funding for the Childcare Fund to finance programs received by RSMCs.

17 Provide fully paid parental leave.

18 Obtain additional compensation for workers in isolated posts.

Relief

19 Increase the number of postal installations covered by relief (OCRE) and the number of relief employees where it is required. Cover all absences provided for in the collective agreement by relief.

20 Improve the rights of On Call Relief Employees (OCRE) including seniority, transfer rights, sick leave and 6% vacation leave.

Union Protection and Members Rights

21 Provide full remuneration to union representatives performing any union function such as grievance investigations and meetings to settle grievances, consultation and urgent complaints. Grant shop stewards the right to meet with members regarding grievance investigation and urgent complaints as soon as possible, or at the start of the next shift.

22 Advise members of their rights to union representation during interviews and respect the confidentiality of communications between employees and their representatives. Any resignation notice by an employee shall not be accepted without union representation.

23 Guarantee access of union repre-

sentatives to non-public areas of postal installations.

24 Entitle all RSMCs to paid court leave.

25 Update list of Arbitrators.

26 Include a definition of employee to define route holders as regular employees and On Call Relief Employees (OCRE) as temporary employees.

Seniority

27 Require the employer to post all vacant routes then fill all vacant routes by seniority from applications received nationally. The posting will provide all detailed characteristics of the route. The requirement for an employee who has transferred to remain in the position for two years shall be eliminated.

28 Provide for routes to be bid by seniority in the event of a sizeable restructure in a facility. Following a restructure, when there

are more employees than routes, the employee with the least seniority will be deemed to be surplus.

29 Cover uncovered RSMC routes resulting from absences by offering the work on the basis of equal opportunity to RSMCs at the facility.

30 Hire replacements, helpers and assistants to fill resultant vacancies within a post office prior to hiring from the street.

Financial Cap

31 Include a process to ensure that all of the money included in the financial cap (\$652 million over the eight years) is received by RSMCs prior to the expiry of the collective agreement.

RSMC Negotiations Committee

- Donald Lafleur, 4th National Vice-President, Chief Negotiator
- Philippe Arbour, National Grievance Officer, as technical consultant
- Rose Johnson, RSMC, Red Deer Local
- Bonnie Pollard, RSMC, Toronto Local
- Suzanne Simard, RSMC, Saguenay Lac St-Jean Local
- Kathy Zimmer, RSMC, Kelowna Local

Ken Bird, retired lifetime member and former National Grievance Officer, will provide support to the Committee

Recommendation of the National Executive Board

The National Executive Board of the CUPW unanimously recommends that RSMCs vote **YES** to the National Program of Demands for the 2010-2011 re-opener.

CUPW PERSPECTIVE

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