



MODERN SWEATSHOPS

Some of our members work in Call Centres and although we have different types of call centres, they all have one thing in common: there are problems in each and most members are unwilling to file complaints.

At tax time, the Client Services and Business Window Call Centres move into high gear, hiring many part-time and full-time terms to address the incoming taxpayer enquiries. When the busiest months are over, the call centres begin to reduce their staff again. There is an appearance of nepotism and favouritism in determining whose contract is extended and whose is terminated. Often members are unwilling to file grievances for fear of being the first to go once jobs are cut.

The Collections Call Centres operate at approximately the same staffing levels year round, but they have their own problems. The outgoing calls are computer generated and members are closely monitored. A member's performance is based not on the quality of his/her work, but primarily on the number of closed case files. The managerial style in these centres is often very oppressive and there is a high ratio of term to indeterminate employees. Again, members are often unwilling to file grievances.

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BARGAINING BEGINS

For more details please see the insert



**SI VOUS PRÉFÉREZ AVOIR CE COMMUNIQUÉ EN FRANÇAIS, VEUILLEZ VOUS
ADRESSER À VOTRE PRÉSIDENT- E DE SECTION LOCALE**

UTE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Union of Taxation Employees offers two \$2,500.00 National Scholarships and ten \$1,000.00 Regional Scholarships each year. All scholarships are available for members, their spouse, their common-law spouse and/or their children. The application requirements include an essay (500-700 words – *use the word count function*) or audio/visual submission on one of the following topics:

- Why I believe that my work, my spouses work or the work of my parent(s) is important to Canadians;
- Labour's contribution to the Community;
- What you foresee as the role of organized labour in the future or;
- *What effect is Wal-Mart having on the Union/Labour movement in Canada?*

The U.T.E Honours and Awards Committee will base their selection on the following:

- Submission by the applicant;
- Statement pertaining to your program and career plans;
- Statement of your community involvement and;
- Statement of your union involvement, that of your spouse or that of your parents.

The full requirements and the scholarship application form are available on our website at: <http://www.ute-sei.org/English/docs/scholarship-guidelines.cfm>

Please note that the deadline is June 15th and that we cannot grant extensions. While you are looking at UTE's scholarship opportunities, it may be worthwhile to investigate the 15 scholarships offered by the PSAC.

<http://www.pfac-afpc.org/what/benefits/scholarships-e.shtml>

*Susan Duncan,
Web/Communications Officer*

UTE UPCOMING EVENTS

April 14-15
Regional Health and
Safety Conference
Winnipeg MB.

May 26—27
Regional Health and
Safety Conference
Moncton N.B.

June 18—21
Executive Council and
National Union
Management
Committee
Ottawa ON

August 24-26
National Health and
Safety Conference
Ottawa ON

ARE YOU A PART-TIME WORKER?

Recently, a trend has developed in some of CRA's offices. The employer is hiring more and more people on a part-time basis. The employer has the right to do this but if it is an attempt to circumvent benefits, including your pension, they are not allowed to do it.

For example, you are hired to work a 30-hour work week and in reality, the employer has you working 37.5 hours every week. If this is the case, then this might be a contravention of the Public Service Superannuation Act (PSSA). There are many possible examples that could be used but if you are hired to work "X" hours and the employer has you working more hours than "X", regularly, you should keep a record and have this information reviewed by the UTE National Office.

There are no guarantees that there will be a positive result from this review, but if what we are hearing from our members is correct, then there are many possible cases where a positive outcome is foreseeable. Do not let the employer short change you on your benefits. Contact your union representative.

*Pierre Mulvihill
Labour Relations Officer*

(Continued from page 1)

The Compensation Call Centres do not deal with outside calls, but with calls from our own members.

Most of our members at these centres are indeterminate employees.

Unfortunately, they are understaffed, overworked and trying to deal with problems generated by an employer who wanted to move to a centralized system too quickly. Our members working these centres are caught in the middle and many feel stressed while trying to help their fellow members. They lack technical experts in compensation and do not have the support required to do their jobs.

All of our call centre members work in high stress environments, dealing with confused and sometimes very irate callers. Are our call centres becoming the modern sweatshops?

Do you work in a call centre and are you having problems with your employer's interpretation of your collective agreement? Do you wonder "can they do that"? Your union cannot help you if we are unaware of the problems. If you have questions about your working conditions, talk to your shop steward.

Susan Duncan

Web Communications Officer



the president's corner

Compensation Issues:

Since the employer opened the two new centres for Compensation, we have been inundated with complaints regarding compensation of our members. The inability to obtain a Record of Employment (ROE) within the required time frame, some members getting paid too much, some less and some not getting paid at all, are a few of the types of problems that have arisen.

In reviewing the problems I can say that they basically fall into four categories: System problems, late paperwork, recovery of salary overpayments and emergency cheques. After an initial meeting with the Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner of HR, some changes have been made and a follow up meeting will be held on April 16th.

Prior to compensation moving to a call centre, the employer went from 5 cheque runs in a two week pay period to 2. With only one chance in 7 days to make changes, update data or make corrections, of course things will take longer. The employer has now advised me that they are going to 4 runs in a two week period.

It has been noted that late paperwork from the employer has also caused a great many of the problems. This issue has now been put into Management Performance Agreements to help with this issue. My solution was to hold up the Manager's pay until our member's pay was corrected if late paperwork was the cause.

The employer's recovery of salary

(Continued on page 4)

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	6	2				4	8	
8								7
		7	3	9	5	2		
		4	6	1	7	9		
3								2
	5	8				7	6	
	9		4		6		5	

SUDOKU

To solve this number placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid and with some given numbers, each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9 — but with the same number used only once in each box and row.

Solution on the UTE web site.

PERSONAL LEAVE CREDITS AND RATES OF PAY

Members should be vigilant in monitoring monthly their personal leave status and credits on the employer's ESS (Employee Self Service) program. Many members have reported discrepancies in their credit balances. Some examples include:

- vacation leave credit balances that change inexplicably;
- sick leave credit balances that change inexplicably;
- incorrect continuous service dates that change inexplicably. This date affects many entitlements; including vacation leave credits, pay increments; eligible retirement dates, and long service awards entitlements. In some cases, the credit balances are changing from one month to the next.



Members should closely examine their pay stubs to ensure that they are receiving the correct rate of pay for their position; that they receive increments when they are due; and that they are being paid in the correct zone in the case of members in the GL and GS classification. Refer to your collective agreement for the correct rates of pay, increment levels and zones.

Annette Melanson
President Local 60005

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overpayments was “*first and all dollars*”, which caused some of our members to go with a small or no paycheque at all until the overpayment was recouped. The employer has now issued a new Policy on the recovery of salary overpayments. Although the Policy is not exactly what we wanted, it is far more humane than the “*first and all dollars*” approach.

For emergency cheques, two problems arose: (1) It was taking too long to receive an emergency cheque, and (2) the criteria to obtain an emergency cheque were far too stringent. The employer is now sending emergency cheques by Purolator, but it is still going to take approximately 3 days. They have a working group set up between Compensation and Finance that is reviewing the criteria and other matters surrounding emergency cheques. I should know more after our follow up meeting on April 16th.

I want to remind our members that the people working in the Compensation Centres are our members as well, and I'm quite sure that they are not sitting at their desks thinking up ways to mess up your paycheques. After talking with our members in the Centres, we have taken the position with the employer that our members in the Centres are under trained, over worked and understaffed. You might want to ask the employer why that is?

Betty Bannon, National President

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that all address changes should be done via e-mail to Sylvie Bastien (basties@ute-sei.org) or via the national web site. If you do not have access to an e-mail, please pass it on (with your PSAC ID) to a local representative or mail it directly to the National Office at
233 Gilmour Street, Suite 800, Ottawa ON K2P 0P2.



OVERVIEW OF OUR 2007 BARGAINING PROCESS

This is our first round of collective bargaining under the new *Public Service Labour Relations Act* (PSLRA). While this legislation makes significant changes to some areas of the process, the basic framework for negotiations remains unchanged. The bargaining period starts **July 1, 2007**, and the UTE/PSAC began its preparation work in January 2007. The PSAC will hold preparatory meetings with the employer to set the dates and locations for the face-to-face bargaining. We will inform you of them as soon as they are known. In the event of an impasse, the dispute resolution method is conciliation with the right to strike.

1) PREPARATION:

a) Program of Demands:

The UTE Standing Bargaining Committee, with PSAC's assistance, prepared the Program of Demands, which was sent to the Locals on **February 23, 2007**. This program includes bargaining demands that were not selected during the last round of bargaining but are still current. Other demands deal with major issues for our union, and some are from the Treasury Board program that pertain to our members.

b) Bargaining Demand Collection:

After the Program of Demands was sent out, the Locals had **until March 31** to send a maximum of 10 new demands to the UTE. Please recall that the UTE had established an **ongoing demand collection process that ended on March 23, 2007**. This process has enabled members to send more than 80 demands to the National Office. These demands will be added to those we receive by March 31, 2007. They will be sorted, categorized and translated into both official languages for the work of the National Bargaining Committee.

c) Bargaining Demand Selection

The UTE National Bargaining Committee consists of four (4) members from the Standing Bargaining Committee and the chairs of the following national committees: Staffing Committee, Technological Change Committee, Workforce Adjustment Committee, Health and Safety Committee and Equal Opportunities Committee. The UTE President is an ex-officio member of the National Bargaining Committee.

This committee will meet on May 15 to 17, 2007 to select, amend and draft, or compile demands that include several demands from among all demands received at the UTE. These demands will also be prioritized, and the report that constitutes our official position will be sent to the PSAC.

At this meeting, the National Bargaining Team will be selected.

2) BARGAINING:

a) Notice to Bargain:

The PSAC will send the official Notice to Bargain to the CRA on **July 1, 2007**, which is four (4) months before the expiry of the current collective agreement, as set out in the new PSLRA.



The PSAC/UTE Bargaining Team, with the PSAC negotiator and researcher, will meet with the employer's bargaining team to exchange official bargaining demands and to agree on the manner in which the bargaining will proceed, as well as on the dates of the face-to-face meetings.

b) Bargaining Periods:

The Bargaining Team hopes to embark on intensive bargaining periods beginning in July. The UTE's objective is to have a signed contract as soon as possible, ideally before the expiry of the current collective agreement, which is October 31, 2007. This objective does not take precedence over meeting the demands and expectations of members.

During the bargaining, information bulletins will be posted on our website from time to time. You can register to receive these bulletins automatically, on the UTE website (www.ute-sei.org) using "**subscribe**".

c) Request for Conciliation and the Conduct of the Strike Vote:

Under the PSSRA, if the parties were unable to reach a tentative agreement, a Conciliation Board would be established. This has changed. Under the PSLRA, if the parties are unable to reach a tentative agreement, a request for conciliation is made and a Public Interest Commission (PIC) is established.

Under the previous legislation, the strike vote was often conducted early in the process and the union went into conciliation with a strike mandate from the membership. This, too, has changed. Under the PSLRA, a strike vote must be exercised within sixty (60) days. This means that strike action will be legal, only if commenced within sixty (60) days of the strike vote. It also means that the strike vote will now be taken much later in the process to ensure that the vote is not "stale". Another significant change for us in this round of negotiations involves the conduct of the strike vote. Under the PSLRA, all employees in the bargaining unit can vote, not just union members.

d) Tentative Agreement:

The best scenario brings us to a tentative agreement. If the members of the PSAC/UTE Bargaining Team are of the opinion that the employer's offers are what the membership wants, and that they would not be able to obtain more even with a strike, a tentative agreement will be presented to the members. This agreement is to be approved by vote, as set out in the UTE policy (<http://www.ute-sei.org/English/Publications/policyandprocedures/index.cfm>)

e) Right to Strike

The PSLRA requires that the following conditions be met before we can legally take strike action. Essential Service Agreements must be signed off and in place for thirty **(30) clear days**. The Public Interest Commission must have reported, and seven **(7) clear days** must have elapsed since the report was sent (cooling off period).

The commencement of strike action must take place within sixty **(60) clear days** of the strike vote.

CONCLUSION

This bargaining process will determine the impact of the amendments to the PSLRA. We will no doubt have adjustments to make to our strategies to achieve the ultimate bargaining objective, which is to meet the demands and needs of the PSAC/UTE members who work at the CRA.

Bargaining is everyone's business, and we must stay informed.

*Denis Lalancette
On behalf of the Bargaining Committee*





THE UNION AND YOU

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Have you thought about it? The Canada Revenue Agency is preparing for the shortage in the workforce due to attrition. It is time for you and your Union to do the same.

Within a few years, your Local's Executive will start to retire and there will be a shortage of active representatives within your Local.

Here at Jonquière, some executive members are already talking about retirement and counting down the number of years until they can go. It is not a problem yet, but we will eventually have to tackle the issue. I am not yet sure how we will do that, but we will have to look seriously at it.



The union succession issue is probably the same at all Locals, and if you do not want it to become problematic, it is perhaps time to think about getting more actively involved in the union, in any way. You will see that the work involved is rewarding and who knows, it may interest you enough that you want to do more.

Defending our members' rights starts with your active involvement.

Daniel Gagnon
President, Local 10004 Jonquière

ORGANIZING THE ORGANIZED

Numbers—whether of strikes, members or union density—are important measures of a union's strength, but they don't tell us much about members' understanding of and commitment to unions.

Rather, the future of unions and their power rests with an informed, committed, membership who understands that they are the union and that the power of the union rests with them. Unions are something that you really need to experience to fully appreciate. And becoming an activist in a union, and learning about the power of collective action and solidarity, is a transformative experience.

For the Canadian labour movement to have a future, we need to think about how to make sure that a new generation of Canadian workers gets to experience that transformation. We need to also consider how we structure our organizations so that increasing numbers of members themselves experience this transformation—from being “dues payers” who see the union as a purchased service to becoming “activists” who see themselves as the union.

For an earlier generation, this transformation took place during organizing campaigns.

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During an organizing campaign, workers reject what might be called the “market approach” to jobs where, if you are unsatisfied, you simply quit and get another job. When workers decide to organize, they are deciding to stay and to transform the workplace. And, in the process, they transform themselves and their co-workers.

Successful campaigns are a positive assertion by workers that they have a right to negotiate the terms and conditions of their employment. Not surprisingly, members gained through new union organizing are among the most committed and activists.

Today, however, the vast majority of Canadian union members become union members by getting a job in a unionized workplace. The challenge for unions is to transform these inactive and potentially reluctant “dues payers” into informed, committed, union activists.

The key place where this transformation happens is in the local union. New members don’t join the national office, or even the regional body.

The thousands of local unions in Canada are the keystone of our labour organization because they’re the springboard for membership participation and leadership development. It’s the experience members have at the local level that determines whether they will see their union as just an agency, or whether they will grow to understand that the power of the union is embodied in the membership and is in the workplace at all times whenever union members are present. And it is committed activist members who are the best promoters and organizers of unions. So, as important as it is to build quantitative strength through growth, I believe the challenge for Canadian unions is to build qualitative strength through involving greater numbers of members in the activities of the union.



Unions are schools for democracy in a society where there are very few places we actually get to practice democratic decision-making. Unions exist to provide workers with a vehicle for exercising their rights in the workplace, reaffirming the most basic principle of democracy: the right to participate in decisions that affect you. They are builders of a community of interest among members, and also with the wider community. Communities don’t simply exist, they must be constructed. As well, unions increase the likelihood that workers will stick with a job and attempt to improve it rather than simply quit and get another job. And protected by rights enshrined in a collective agreement, workers can and will provide management with valuable feedback, which is essential for the improvement of any organization.

Unions are the premier institution of a free, democratic society, promoting democracy in the workplace, as well as economic and social justice and equality. They have this role because they are instruments of transformation of members and of society at large. And in this wonderful transformation rests the real power of unions.

Elaine Bernard/Our Times/CALM

- *Elaine Bernard is a Canadian labour educator from Canada. Elaine Bernard directs the Labour and Worklife Program at Harvard Law School. Our Times is an independent, pro-union Canadian magazine dedicated to promoting worker’s rights and social justice. www.ourtimes.ca*



UTE'S SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

A BIG THANK YOU TO THE UTE

I have recently returned from Africa where I had the privilege accompanying Captain Smith and his team to Cameroon with the International Children's Awareness (ICA) Canada Project. I was able to see first hand the incredible work being done by this organization, and the difference it makes in the lives of so many. For almost 3 weeks in sometimes challenging conditions we worked with Canadian and Cameroon military personnel, as well as local officials and townspeople on the many projects the ICA is involved in.

We helped dig the foundation for a new medical clinic. We carried rocks and sand to expand water storage facilities and replaced outdated water pipes. We distributed books and supplies to many schools. We followed up with orphanages and other institutions, which are provided with funding and assistance by the ICA. It was some of the hardest and most rewarding work I have done. I was so impressed I have asked to return again on my own with them, and Captain Smith has indicated I would be welcome to join them again.

So thank you again to the UTE for providing me with the subsidy to volunteer and learn more about the ICA. I would encourage all members to support this worthy organization.



*Roxanne Lodge
PM-01 Reassessment Officer Winnipeg Tax Centre*

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S AWARENESS (ICA)

UTE, in partial fulfillment of its commitment to ICA, has in co-operation with Captain Ed Smith, selected a promotional item to be sold. It is a magic box picture frame and it sells for \$15.00. All profits are going to ICA. (\$5.00 from each sale)



This item is a radio, pen holder, picture frame, calculator, perpetual calendar and alarm clock.

Please see your local executive to purchase this item and help support this very worthwhile endeavor.

Each sale helps ICA come closer to achieving its goals.

This item will look good on your desk or will make a great gift for a loved one.



PROMOTIONAL ITEM



Step right up Ladies and Gentlemen, and Welcome to the Great Agency Circus.

Today you will be given a guided union tour of the various work areas.

First, to your left, on the ground floor, you have the forms counter, that, NO LONGER PROVIDES FORMS! Our clients, (who have no choice but to be our clients) NOW NEED AN INTERNET CONNECTION TO order them. Or you can call the “1-800... Hello your call is important to us” number, to order and receive them in a few scant weeks rather than right away.

Again, with the goal of improving service, management thought it would be good to centralize mail distribution. Therefore, in Montreal, in addition to receiving its own mail, our “NTSO” (No Tax-Services Office) will also receive the mail for the Laval, Quebec, Sherbrooke and Montérégie NTSOs for redistribution back to them. Wow!!! What a concept! Why didn't I think of that! It should really improve service, receive their mail faster and, in particular be more cost-effective right?? Are there a few sceptics out there???. Don't worry. As for costs, relax, they just have to reclassify CR-3's down to C R-2's. And they did just that.

And now, to your right, we have the Cash Counter that still for a while actually receives cash (thanks only to the pressure from our Union.) This Beloved Agency would like to shut down its wickets and ask the banks to do the job on its behalf. This will require a game plan. First, CRA will have to reduce the number of wickets provided to the public when it's time to make monthly or quarterly payments. Second, because after all “**It Is The Agency**”, order employees to sabotage their own jobs by requiring them to tell clients that money will soon no longer be accepted there and that they will have to go to the other side of the bank, on the Internet, or by mail, but definitely not at the “NTSOs” wicket here. Oh, never mind! It's getting too complicated ...

You owe us money, but don't pay us in Canadian funds and especially not directly to us. Well..! Some situations are simply beyond comment, eh? OK! And now back to the tour, with a visit to Client Services. The name sounded good. But wait, a picture is worth a thousand words, so picture this...

Last year, a client (who has no choice but to be our client) came to the counter for a copy of his T4s. He was asked for two pieces of ID. They checked on the computer, printed his T4 and gave them to him on the spot. Result: a satisfied client and an employee who was pleased to have been of service. Time required: about 2 minutes.

This year, the same client comes and asks for the same thing.

“Of course, Sir.” Just enter your contact information on this form and at the end of the day, another employee will print your T4s, put them in an envelope, that will be processed by a mail room somewhere, and someone else will look after sending them to you in about 10 days.”

Yes, but I'm here now. You have my file on the screen in front of you. The printer is just behind you.

“Sir, I see that you don't understand. The Agency decided to improve its services this year. That's why we can't do what we used to.”

Geez! What a bunch of....key-pushers (we don't say pencil-pushers any more).

Result: A frustrated client. An employee under pressure who will have a burn-out in 6 months or a year. Time required: you try and figure it out.

Next; a client walks up. *Hello! I would like to talk to an agent to get some information about RRSPs.* “Do you have an Appointment?” *Um, no! Do I need one?* “

Yes you do, Sir. In October 2006, we decided to improve our services.”

Were we told about this? Was there anything on the TV or on the radio or the newspapers?

“Well, not really. I think the Agency wanted to surprise you.”

“It certainly is a surprise, but that's ok. I'll just go to the forms counter and pick up your brochure on RRSPs.

“Um, well, we don't have forms counter downstairs anymore.” *Geez! What a bunch of ... pencil-pushers ... (it appears he doesn't have a computer ... (another “1-800... Hello your call is important to us”)...*

Result: another frustrated client. Savings: enough money to pay for more clowns.

I could keep going on but I think I have run out of space. They want to go too fast. The same thing is happening in compensation centralization. They want to re-invent the wheel, but it will end up being square. And whether they want it to or not, that's not going to make it roll faster.

Thank you for reading this.



MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

PSAC ANNOUNCES THAT 'DESIGNATES' CONTRIBUTED \$34,438.85 TO THE ONTARIO PSAC HARDSHIP FUND FROM THE 2004 STRIKE.

Monies to the hardship fund come from those PSAC members from all Components who honoured:

PSAC Constitution, Section 24, Sub-Section (7): "... members who receive remuneration during a legal strike of their bargaining unit, shall be required to remit 25% of the remuneration they receive from the employer for each day worked during the legal strike to the PSAC."

PSAC Regulation 6B: "any member receiving money from the Employer during a strike of his/her bargaining unit to remit 25% of this pay (after standard deductions) to be set aside for a national Hardship Fund to assist members encountering financial hardship due to being on strike or honouring a picket line and thereby being prevented from reporting to work."

This normally applies to those who are known as 'designated' employees. It is the responsibility of the 'designate', the local union representative, and the Component President to ensure compliance with this PSAC constitutional obligation.

Back to the \$34,438.85.

The PSAC was on general strike for 5 days in 2004. The 'designates' were required, to remit 25% of their net salary for each day of strike activity worked. A very conservative estimate at best, suggests one component having 500 'designate' members working daily in Ontario. Let's say the 25% amounts to \$50.00, a day, the fund in Ontario alone should have received approximately \$25,000.00.daily.

OKAY count 'em ... 5 days at \$25K a pop ... More like \$125,000 not \$34,438.

Doing the math nationally, the over-all PSAC Hardship Fund should have received half a million dollars, give or take.

But back to Ontario's numbers. This information affirms the Constitution of the PSAC was not honoured. The 'oath of office' sworn by all Union Executive members to uphold and defend the Alliance Constitution was not honoured.

A review of all the meetings of the PSAC National Board of Directors from the STRIKE till now certainly reflects they chit-chatted about designate dollars. Granted some discipline was meted out. Hmmmm SOME or SUM????

Simply put, the some's sums don't add up.

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And now the classic, more cutesy politics!

Simply put, there will be no further disciplinary action after the February 2007 NBoD meeting. There will be no further disciplinary action against those who did not uphold the PSAC Constitution - if they got away with it by now, there is nothing further that can be done.

Unacceptable

Unacceptable to:

the PSAC membership who did honour the PSAC Constitution;
to those who did join the picket lines when called upon;
to those who did experience a reduced income as a result of their strike actions;
to those who have had their retirement date delayed for complying with the general strike,
and a Union insult all the more, to those 'designates' who did remit their 25% as a 'designated' employee.

Sister Betty Bannon, the President of the UTE Component, stated in October 2004, that she would be the first to lay a disciplinary charge against any union executive member who did not comply with the Constitution of the PSAC.

How many other Component Presidents gave this direction to their membership?

Quite obviously some did not! So where are we now? Since February 5, 2007, end date, nothing can be done.

If Component Presidents are not prepared to uphold the Constitution of the PSAC and ensure that their Union leaders do the same; what are they saying to the memberships they represent?

The last time I checked, the Constitution of the PSAC was not written on cellophane, but you can sure see through it .

I can only say 3 things:
Shame! ... Shame! ... Shame!.

In Solidarity,

David J. Quist
President, Union of Taxation Local 00008





MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

REVISIONS TO THE REHABILITATION BENEFIT OF THE FEDERAL DISABILITY POLICY

As of July 24, 2006, an important amendment was made to our contract. It affects the Disability rehabilitation program salary cap.

Prior to this date, any employee participating in a rehabilitation program was limited to earn no more than 100% of their pre-disability salary.

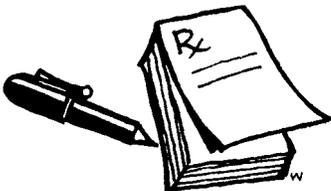
The change to our contract is a long awaited triumph for all employees of the Canada Revenue Agency. Finally a person on rehabilitation program is allowed to earn 100% of their current salary. A much needed change, that brings meaning to each increment and raise employees receive. Previously although received, this benefit was lost in the calculation.

Sun Life applied the new contract effective as of January 2006. Employees affected received retroactive payments late last year.

Announcement of this amendment also advised that anyone who felt that they were adversely affected by the previous restrictions would be able to apply to have their claim reviewed prior to the January 2006 cut off date.

A 1-800 number was set up to field enquiries and members. Callers were prompted by a voice message to leave a name and certificate number. They were overwhelmed by the response and updates have been sparse. The most recent update advised no further request were needed, all claims will automatically be reviewed.

Frustrated by the lack of new information, I made a call to James Infantino (PSAC Disability Insurance and Pensions Officer). He provided a brief update on what is sure to be a lengthy process. He advised that Treasury Board has been given approval for the review, and they are in process of reviewing these claims.



Brother Infantino also shed some light as to what the requirements are for consideration of a retroactive payment prior to the January 2006 cut off date.

Those members, who are now or have been on a rehabilitation program and made more than 100% of their pre-disability salary will be effected.

Any employee on a rehabilitation program is familiar with the monthly statement from Sun Life. It provides the calculations of your benefits. This will be your greatest resource into understanding how and if you will be entitled to an adjustment.

Employee A

Starting Amounts

Monthly Gross Pre-Disability Income (total earnings allowed under policy)	\$3500
Long Term Disability Monthly Benefit Payable	\$2500
Actual Reported Gross Rehab Earnings	\$1500

Benefit Calculation

Long Term Disability Monthly	\$2500
Plus 100% Actual Reported Gross Rehab Earnings	\$1500
Total Income from All Sources	\$4000
Less 100% Gross Monthly Pre-disability Income	\$3500
Excess Amount Over Cap Limit	\$500

The important figure is the "excess over pre-disability cap limit".

This change represents great progress for all employees. It represents a long overdue application of full salary to employees previously placed in unnecessary financial hardship, due to a disability or illness.

While this is a major victory, our disability contract still needs work.

It appeared that this change would also apply to the salary cap for when an employee on a rehabilitation program has to retire on medical grounds. This is not the case.

Once an employee retires on medical grounds, the rehabilitation program no longer applies.

Provided that the employee meets the requirements under the Long Term Disability contract, the salary cap for long-term disability reverts back to 70% of the employee's pre-disability salary, regardless of how long the employee has been back at work. This is our current contract. This has to change. It does not make sense that one has been ruled discriminatory and the other is not. These issues are one in the same. No person would choose to be sick or choose to stop working and have their income cut by 30%.



To those people who fought for the above changes – we send a sincere Thank You. Your tireless efforts have made financial improvements for many CRA employees who could not fight for themselves. Being on a reduced income as a single person, or as a family member – inflation being what it is, any increase in income is a welcome change.

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