

## **2nd National Vice-President**

### **Report to the 2011 Convention**

My normal activities as 2nd National Vice-President include attending meetings of the Executive Council, Presidents' Conferences, the very infrequent meetings of the Executive Committee and National Union Management meetings. I have occasionally replaced UTE delegates at meetings of the PSAC National Board of Directors. I am a member of the National Technological Change Committee and the Honours and Awards Committee. I participate actively in local AGMs (mostly in the Quebec region) and Interregional meetings. My main task is of course my own portfolio: Bargaining, in the course of which I chair the Standing Committee on Bargaining and the National Bargaining Committee. I am a member of the PSAC/CRA Bargaining Team. I am also an active member of the Saguenay Lac St-Jean Chibougamau-Chapais PSAC Regional Council.

As I noted in my 2008 report, the modus operandi developed between the three positions at the national level reflects the reciprocity of two of the three positions. However, I do enjoy the support and respect of the other National Officers as far as my activities and areas of responsibility are concerned. Not being nearby sometimes results in my having to make an extra effort to achieve my objectives. The language problem is however the major obstacle when complications arise or when someone has to be chosen to sit on a committee, because there is often a desire to save the cost of translation. It should be said that the interests of members always come first when such situations occur.

I have attended various UTE Special Meetings and Regional and National Conferences and the Convention of the Fédération des travailleuses et travailleurs du Québec. I am active politically, and in constant contact with the elected representatives of my region. I regularly write articles for the UTE Newsletter and opinion pieces for the Regional Newsletter, and they publish my articles from time to time.

#### **Honours and Awards Committee**

I attend meetings of the Honours and Awards Committee to select recipients for honours and awards, as set out in the UTE Regulations. I also promote the various awards at local AGMs. My propaganda at AGMs and on the UTE portal is bearing fruit. The objective the Committee set, namely to promote, encourage and strive to foster an atmosphere of appreciation and recognition at all levels of the union, is now a reality. Increasingly, honours and awards are being bestowed in recognition of the participation and dedication of union activists at all levels of the UTE. Another objective is to enable selected individuals (students and other deserving persons) to receive monetary awards to help them in their studies or organizational activities.

The awarding of pins, certificates of achievement or merit, and life memberships is now a regular occurrence. These acts of recognition benefit the union as a whole, and I even think it could have the effect of increasing member interest and helping to provide for the UTE succession. The regions seem to have grown closer and with a number of barriers eliminated, solidarity within UTE is palpable.

Two regions have named the study grant from their region in order to recognize the contribution of members who have had an impact on union activity in their region. I believe UTE members are now convinced of the notion that their union has an important role to play in society, and the feeling of belonging is stronger than ever.

### **Technological Change Committee**

The Committee meets regularly with the Employer to update the implementation of new technologies and existing technological change. The Committee also oversees the setting up of pilot projects to shield workers from their effects. The Committee closely monitors the possible impact on jobs in order to keep the union and the WFA Committee informed and ensures that workers' rights are respected.

Technological changes are less numerous than in the past, and their effects have not been devastating, but every job lost is lost forever. It should not be thought that there cannot be further technological changes, because the constant pressure from the government to reduce costs is forcing CRA to look for ways of reducing budgets, and can only encourage the search for technological solutions to replace people, which in itself is nonsensical because people are essential to the capitalist system.

The proximity of our neighbours to the south has also emphasized the search for and implementation of ways to enable the employer to remain competitive and efficient. The Committee continues to press the employer to produce reports as quickly as possible in order to notify locals and their members at the earliest possible date of the implementation of permanent technological changes and their effects.

### **Bargaining**

The main roles and activities of the 2nd National Vice-President responsible for Bargaining are set out in By-law 8 Section 4 and parts of Regulation 10 of the UTE Constitution:

By-law 8 Section 4

(1) oversee the implementation of the Regulation governing Collective Bargaining procedures;

- (2) issue frequent bulletins on the state of negotiations during the bargaining process;
- (3) be the Chairperson of the Standing Bargaining Committee;
- (4) participate on the PSAC/CRA Negotiating Team;
- (5) be the Chairperson of the National Bargaining Committee;
- (6) be a member of the PSAC National Strike Co-ordinating Committee; and
- (7) ensures that the bargaining process for UTE is handled in a sound manner in the best interests of the members.
- (8) attends and participates in discussions and meetings in preparation for bargaining between PSAC/UTE and the employer

Our 2010 Bargaining Process has again been speedy and historic, and an agreement was signed after six days of bargaining, following the accelerated bargaining process. I would like to congratulate Sister Gaby Lévesque and all members of the Bargaining Team for the dedication and selflessness they showed throughout the bargaining process. We all realize that this is not the agreement of our dreams, but given the economic situation, it is a good agreement because we have suffered no losses. We have to acknowledge the good faith demonstrated by CRA in the process. The agreements between Treasury Board and the Conservative budget clearly indicate the intention to attack our severance pay and possibly other articles in our collective agreement. That intention points to a bumpy ride in bargaining and we shall have to prepare and plan our activities carefully in order to try to limit the losses during the next bargaining process. Personally, I wish to make **no concessions**, but we have to remain realistic: the protection of our gains in the collective agreement **is the business of every UTE member** because **our collective agreement is our heritage**.

It is up to us to maintain solidarity and be prepared to mobilize, in order not to be the next target of the callous policies of the government in place. The double standards and iniquities embraced by the leaders of this country and their lack of respect for the workers who participate in the economy have to end. **Roll on the day when politicians preach by example; it is a long way off, because a defeated Conservative MP with 14 years of service will receive \$106,000 annually (having earned \$232,000 as a minister) and it seems he will be entitled to severance, according to remarks by the defeated Bloc MP who will receive \$31,900 annually.**

In order to ensure that our solidarity will continue and that members will be well informed, I shall shortly be submitting an action plan based on the various local and national meetings and member publications in order to ensure that members are properly informed and prepare them to mobilize in order to preserve what they have gained.

## Conclusion

I would like to thank the members of the Technological Change Committee, the Honours and Awards Committee, the National Bargaining Committee, the Standing Committee on Bargaining, the Bargaining Team, the members of the Executive Council and all UTE staff members. The work done by all of these people is crucial to UTE's survival: they are the leaders, and it is a pleasure to note that while opinions differ, objectives are shared, because we all wish to give the best of ourselves in order to provide appropriate representation for grassroots members.

I also wish to thank the Leaders of Locals from coast to coast, because they are the soul of the union, and it is they who can take the pulse of the membership and let us know what members' expectations are. They are also the people who can make an action plan a success.

I am an eternal optimist, but I have to admit that I see dark days ahead, days of confrontation to ensure that the gains in our collective agreement are protected, and the same is true for jobs, both term and indeterminate. We shall have no choice, if that is the desire of the government in power, which has failed to understand the importance of workers within the economy and the services that are indispensable to the health and safety of taxpayers. I also attach my article prior to the general election that appeared in my region's local newsletter.

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### CHOOSE A SOCIETY

Le Quotidien

*The time has come to go to the polls to choose which party will form the next government. We must wait no longer before acting. We are on a downward slope and we have to apply the brakes to the penny-pinching tendency of the outgoing government.*

*Upon reading the above, some will say that I am an advocate in my own cause. Quite right! My cause in this case is the middle class. Who makes up the middle class? Workers and owners of small businesses who, modestly affluent or in many cases just above the poverty line, provide for their own shelter, clothing, food, entertainment and travel, thereby enabling other workers to build, sew, sell, feed, entertain and repair.*

*It is the same people who also donate when the hat is passed for hospitals, media food drives or any other fundraising purpose to help the deprived or unfortunate all over the world. They are the individuals who in 2010 contributed \$9.9 billion in income tax and will suffer an increase in 2011, compared with the \$3.2 billion for corporations in 2010, and they who will get a cut in 2011. I am not making this up: it is the intention of the Conservative Party as stated in their budget. Let us not be fooled by a few highly publicized crumbs scattered about. The middle class is a key link in the real economy.*

### ***The middle class***

*What will happen if the middle class disappears? Will the poor be poorer? Can we make things better for everyone? What type of society do we want? A society of rich and poor, governed so as to spread equality downward, impoverishing the majority and helping the richest at the expense of the poorest?*

*A society that allows multinationals to avoid social involvement? Or a society that improves economic growth by trying to find a balance for sustainable profits that respect the environment and, above all, mankind. We must resist a servile civilization. Impoverishment has exclusively negative consequences: criminal activity of every kind, because human survival instincts surface and the result is survival of the strongest.*

*This violence is already with us! It is therefore up to you, young and old baby-boomers and members of the X and Y generations who do not vote. The time has come to make your vote count, so as to make it clear that we want government for the people by the people, and they will just have to do the right thing until the next election. As Barack Obama put it, your vote can change the world.*

### ***Denis Lalancette***

#### ***Chicoutimi***

I sincerely believe that society is at a turning point, and it would be pleasant merely to enjoy the aftermath of our successes in the recently negotiated agreements, but I am not yet ready to retire. For those reasons, I shall be reaffirming my intention with respect to another term in the same office. I am prepared to take up the challenges, and fight to defend my beliefs and ideology, namely the rights of people and workers, and survive in a system that is supposedly democratic but based on mercantilism.

I am attached to my collective agreement, and I see it as my birthright.

In closing, I would be remiss in not expressing my thanks and wishes for a retirement filled with good health, joy and happiness to Sister Bannon and her spouse, Dan. Betty, as I told you, you are the best president I have known during my union career. I shall miss your unifying spirit, determination, hard work and critical thinking, but since we must render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, we have to let you go and wish you only the best.

Respectfully submitted,

Denis Lalancette  
2nd National Vice-President