



# THE TOOL

## Information bulletin from loge 1660, I.A.M.A.W.

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### The Union Solidarity Pact

#### Index

The Union Solidarity Pact	1
G. E. Hydro: Travel Now... Pay Later	3
Health & Safety	3
Francisation Committee at G. E. Hydro	4
CPR Courses	4
The opinion column	4
Information	5
	6

Your Union decided to support the "Union Solidarity Pact" during the monthly meeting of last May. This resolution, now circulating within the QFL, aims to bring the series of anti-Union and anti-social reforms adopted by the Charest government last December to the attention of Quebec workers.

These reforms, affect the Labor Code, as well as various Safety, Health care, and Daycare domains.

As of this time, the majority of Unions affiliated to the QFL have adopted this resolution.

If at first, many of these reforms seem to target employees in the Public Sector, most of whom are at the point of starting to negotiate the renewal of their collective agreements, private sector employees are also concerned. The amendment to Article 45 of the Labor Code demolishes established rules regulating recourse to sub-contracting, and reduces employers obligations towards their employees.

The case of the Bombardier cafe-

teria employees, is a prime example. After declaring a "Lock-out", the sub-contractors no longer have to respect existing working conditions. The average salary, dropped from \$19.25, to \$7.75/hour, they also lost their pension fund, and nearly all of their insurance.

In fact, Quebec companies are Canada's champions when it comes to resorting to sub-contracting. Quebec businesses sub-contract an average of 45.7% of their main activities. The Charest government favors increasing the use of sub-contracting, along with all of the consequences that it implicates: weakening of working conditions for sub-contracting workers, and endangering jobs in the originating companies.

We, therefore, consider it important to support the "Union Solidarity Pact".

We invite you to consult the QFL web site, which contains much information and studies on the consequences of the present reforms.

#### Are you moving?

When you move, please inform your Union Steward of your new address.

Members can get a change of address form on line at the following address.

[local660@aim1660.org](mailto:local660@aim1660.org)

<http://www.ftq.qc.ca/>

Here is a translation of the substance of the resolution.

### **QFL Union Solidarity Pact:**

**Given** - the laws adopted under a gag order last December by the Charest government;

**Given** - the consequences of the application of these laws on the right to unionise, on free choice of a Union in the health sector, on the allowing of sub-contracting cheap labour, and on quality public services at an affordable price;

**Given** - that a large number of our members have already started to live with these consequences in their milieus on a day to day basis;

**Given** - the expressed desire of this government to maintain this course with policies for which they have not received the popular mandate;

**Given** - the necessity to tighten our ranks, and oppose the politics of this government with an effective solidarity;

### **It is resolved that:**

**We engage** - by the present Solidarity Pact, to employ any and all of our resources to support those amongst us who may be affected by measures emanating from the laws adopted last December, (against the sub-contracting of cheap labour, or also to support QFL Unions in the health-care sector, for example), and to participate in the co-ordination of all activities of the QFL, its' Unions, and its' Regional Councils;

**We engage** - within the scope of all of our means, to support any actions which may

be initiated, whether in defence of our acquired rights in labour relations, or in our acquired social rights.

**We engage** - to immediately begin debate on the principle of a general strike, which could be called in the event of a frontal attack against all, or a part of QFL membership, making such a recourse necessary; such a debate could bring us to a General Counsel, or even an extraordinary Congress;

**We reiterate our engagement to build a society based on fairness, social justice, the re-distribution of wealth and a social dialogue.**



### **Francisation Committee at G. E. Hydro**

The Company recently put a Francisation Committee into place. The Company was asked to form this Committee in order to conform to the conditions of the Law on the language of work. Brothers Yves Lauzon, Pierre Rhéaume and Réjean Barland participate on this Committee as the Union's representation.

## G. E. Hydro: **Travel Now... Pay Later.**

On different occasions in the past, the Company has asked certain workers to go on missions to either sub-contractors, or other G. E. Plants in other locations, to implement various production operations. These solicitations, seem, at first sight, to be of much value to the concerned workers, but we must ask ourselves, are they harmless to the rest of the workers of the Lachine plant? Your Union, and other workers have been asking themselves this question for a long time.

The erosion of our jobs worries us, even though the business considers this to be an irrefutable tendency of rationalization and globalization of the markets.

Does sub-contracting and the moving of activities normally done here, to other venues serve our interests? Can we remain active in this process?

Your Union believes that it's trickery to contribute to these projects, and that this contributes directly to the weakening of our working conditions. We also recommend that our members not participate in such missions. In particular, we ask our members, who may be solicited in the future to go and work in the G. E. Plant in China, to refuse to go.

Beyond the immediate monetary advantages of participating in these types of missions, workers should try to evaluate the consequences for themselves, and their co-workers.

## **Health & Safety**

Last spring, two serious accidents occurred in two shops affiliated to Local Lodge 1660. Two workers received serious injuries to their hands including the loss of fingers.

These events revealed serious shortcomings in the Health and Safety conditions of our members. The Union decided on a rapid intervention in order to give special training to the workers concerned, with the goal of better equipping them to defend the security of the workers and to promote accident prevention.

This training dealt with an essential aspect of Health and Safety: the right of workers to work in safe conditions, and how to exercise this right.

At the present time, at G. E. Hydro, the company is installing a new workstation for preparing runner blades during the course of machining. One must weld lifting lugs, (necessary both for lifting the blades as well as strapping them to the machine tool) and one removes them after by the arc air gouging process. The new station will eliminate smoke, by capturing it, and also greatly reduce noise. The workers in this area had been exposed to the smoke and noise for several years. On several occasions they demanded improvements to their working conditions, from their foremen, and even the managers. Union Safety representatives regularly brought these problems to the joint Health and Safety Committee meetings, without the company remedying the situation.

Finally, after all these years, three workers exercised their individual rights to refuse work that represented a danger to their health. Their actions, more than their words, forced the company to act, and to install this new workstation for welding and arc-air gouging.

These individual and collective Union actions, have proved themselves in the past in our shop. Measures which had been demanded for a long time, came into being because of workers who refused to work in

conditions dangerous to their health.

**Article 12** of the Law on Workplace Health and Safety (which deals with the right to refuse dangerous work) is one of the most powerful tools that we have to protect us and to make possible the exercise of the right to work in safe conditions.

If you wish to have more information about the Law on Workplace Health and Safety, or any other information, talk to your Union representatives.

### **CPR Courses to be offered soon**

**A** CPR course is being offered to Lodge members.



Local Lodge 1660 is offering two sessions of CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation) September the 28<sup>th</sup> and October the 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The course *Cardio-Help* will be given in the evening. It

deals with emergency intervention which may help you to save the life of a child or an adult. It expounds basic techniques of CPR, artificial respiration and the clearing of airways for children of 8 years and older, and even for adults.

**The** course is available to all, and is based on practice. The course will be given by an HDFQ certified instructor, from 6 :00 p.m. until 10 :00 p.m. at the Union hall at 663 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, in Lachine. The cost of the training for I.A.M. members is \$40.00, (including a manual, the dummy and all other necessary materials). A card from the Heart Disease Foundation of Quebec attesting to the training will be sent to the participants. There should be a maximum of 8 participants per session.



### **The opinion column**

This platform belongs to you. Do not hesitate to send us your articles.

All articles in this forum are not necessarily approved by Local 1660

### **SAFE? HOW SAFE?**

**This** writer works in a Company where Management and the Health and Safety Committee, which is composed of both Union members and Management personnel, are constantly harping on about safety in the workplace.

**This** Union member questions the goals and functionality of this Committee. Their stated goals are to make this Company a safe place to work, and to eradicate accidents.

**Let's** look at a safe place to work. During this writer's period of employment, there have been two fires in the shop in recent years. A few years before the first fire, the Company built a new office building adjacent to and adjoining the shop. Before they could get insurance coverage for the new building, the insurers demanded that all physical openings between the new offices and the old shop be provided with steel fire resistant doors, self-activating steel fire doors, or other fire retardant materials.

**Adjacent** to the shop, there are washrooms and a locker room which are part of the old building. Above these spaces, is a mezzanine level with some offices, also a part of the old building. Above the mezzanine offices, is a standard suspended ceiling much like one would find in any modern office building.

**Between** this suspended ceiling and the roof



of the old building is a space of about 6 feet, where there are lots of nice tinder dry wooden cat-walks, wiring, piping and God (or maybe the maintenance people) knows what else.

**T**here are two trap doors, by which climbing up a ladder, one can access this crawl space.

**T**hese doors are supposed to be kept closed at all times to prevent fire from propagating into this space from the shop. The last time that this writer looked, they were wide open, and the time before that, and the time before that, etc ad infinitum. Having the doors there is a very good idea, but leaving them open “doh”. We are sure if the insurers knew about this, they would instantly cancel our fire insurance.

**A**nother fire resistant measure, also a very good idea, is the self-activating roll-down steel door at the entranceway to the small lunchroom. After the second fire, some sage wag decided that the oil room, which contains barrels of lubricating and hydraulic oils should have such a door. All well and good, except that this door is absolutely and totally useless.

**W**hy you ask? A good question. If one examines the ceiling of this oil room, one would see that there are several openings which would allow flames to propagate to the mezzanine level. Also, numerous phone lines pass through this room unprotected by conduits or wiring ducts. This, in a room that has some explosion proof electrical fittings, and other regular electrical fittings (i.e. not explosion proof), for the fire detectors which were installed later. How fast does vinyl insulation burn, anyway? This room also has grounded oil barrels, a superb idea. Talk about doing things half way. The oil room is a perfect example of a disaster waiting to happen, and a perfect example of the left

hand not knowing what the right hand is doing.

**O**n any given evening, this writer can take a walk around the shop and find some mechanical or electrical access covers left open, or partly open, with wiring or moving parts exposed to view or touch. Whether the power is off or not, such covers should always be replaced at the end of a shift, even if the work is not finished.

**N**ow let's talk about eradicating accidents. this discussion is much easier.

**W**e work in a shop that is full of dust, sparks from grinding, and razor-sharp burrs from machining. As long as these hazards exist, and they can hardly be eliminated in a functioning machine shop, there will be accidents.

**A**n accident is a sudden and unforeseen event which can occur in a micro-second. Nobody ever plans to have an accident.

**T**he only way we can permanently eradicate them, is to all stay home. Not too good for production eh?


**A**lso, being an old building, the concrete floors have been patched and re-patched a myriad of times, therefore it is not the safest surface to walk on. Many city sidewalks are in better shape.


**T**his, of course, can open the door to trips or sprained ankles, etc.

**W**e can, therefore, only conclude that the EHS (Environment Health and Safety) Committee in this shop is falling a little short of the mark.

**D**oes this make you feel safe? For this writer, there are serious doubts.

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The form for paying unemployed dues is available on our Web Site.

*If you have any questions concerning Health and Safety at work, problems with insurance claims, or problems relating to your Collective Agreement, we have resource persons who can help you at Local Lodge 1660, and who can answer your questions.*

*If you are a new employee, and have been working for several weeks or months in the Company, and you haven't yet filled out an application to become a regulation Union member, ask your Union Representative.*

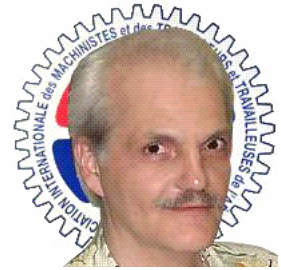
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