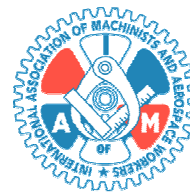




The Tool



INFORMATION BULLETIN FROM LODGE 1660, I.A.M.A.W.

March 2005
Number 1

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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

I.A.M.A.W.
LOCAL LODGE 1660
663, 2^e AVENUE
LACHINE, QUÉBEC
H8S 2T3



514.637.3031



514.637.1917



local660@aim1660.org

Closures

In this issue of the bulletin we address the matter of plant closings. First, that of Addico, where more than 50 of our brothers have lost their jobs, and that of GE Hydro Norway, Lachine's sister plant, where 150 workers face the same treatment. In both cases, it's a question of plant closings of two large businesses which are in full expansion: Oasis International, who has let go its' employees to concentrate on Mexico, and GE which is moving its' production into China.

Some people think that these are clear strategies to increase the business' profits, while others believe otherwise, that the society is not few shareholders, but a lot of workers, to whom the businesses have social responsibilities.

It is astonishing to realize to just what point the situation of the plant of GE Hydro Norway is similar to that of Lachine: nearly a hundred years old, once flourishing and employing hundreds of workers, but for many years now submitted to the *lean policies* of GE. We can also understand why the fears the workers entertain of a plant closing in Lachine, are really with foundation, and that the menace has still not yet been removed. The management of GE Lachine has not yet met with the Union shop committee or the workers, to re-assure them and explain to them what has come out of the large re-organisation of last January.

ADDICO Closure

53 OF OUR BROTHERS LOOSE THEIR JOBS.

The Addico plant in Montreal, (Pointe-Claire), an affiliate of the American multi-national OASIS Corporation, will close its' doors permanently this month on the 25th of March. Approximately 70 workers will find themselves in the street, about 50 of which are our brothers, Unionized with Local Lodge 1660. The business's operations will all be transferred to Mexico.

This closing was totally unexpected, since all seemed to be going well at

this Company. The high quality of the products and good productivity of the plant were acknowledged by the employer. There were even some new hires last December.

The business, which fabricates refrigerated drinking fountains, had, for many years, consolidated its' operations under the ®"Whirlpool" banner.

The majority of the Unionized workers had from 5 to 10 years of service, (the most senior 14 years), and earned between \$8.25 and \$13.00 an hour. The Company will

not give them any separation payments nor the notice prescribed by the Labor Code. They will try, by the grievance procedure, to obtain compensation equivalent to one week of salary per year of service.

The business, lured by even lower salaries, decided to regroup the majority of its' production in Mexico. In addition to the Montreal workers, 500 of the 700 workers of Oasis in Ohio will also be dismissed.

We salute our Brothers and Sisters who will lose their jobs, and we wish them the best of luck. We are disgusted with the treatment they have received at the hands of this unscrupulous multi-national which is in such a hurry to exploit the low salaries. We must stress here the importance, for these workers, to remain united and organized.

News from Norway

Lachine, February 11, 2005

To our GE Hydro's organised colleagues at Sørumsand, Norway

Hi,

Two years ago, our union implemented the Strategic Surveillance Committee aimed at analysing the risks of closure of our factory. The factory's activities were at their lowest level and we were very pessimistic about our future. Further to a slight production stabilisation and to some verbal short-term commitments by local management, the situation improved until last autumn. The lay-off of a quarter of the factory workers, the substantial lack of workload for 2005 and management apathy who supposedly were unable to make any plans before GE Energy's extensive reorganisation in January 2005 and the completion of China's big factory have confirmed our fears. Therefore, the Strategic Surveillance Committee has been reactivated.

Today, we know that it is you who have to bear the brunt of a closure. We feel very sorry for you and wish to express our solidarity. Just like yours, our factory is nearly centenary, our workers are qualified people who are on average 45 years old and seniority ranges between 20 and 25 years. In the past few years, there has been practically no investment and 80% of

production has been outsourced. Of the 2000 people who worked at the factory 20 years ago, we remain only 140 workers today. We are sure of our value, but are uncertain about our future. Your factory's closure is clear evidence that we were right and that there are good reasons to fear the company's projects.

We would like to receive further information about your situation in order to sensitize our members adequately.

In solidarity

Pierre Rhéaume
President
Union Council, Local 1660
International Association of Machinists
Canada

Regarding your letter dated 11 February

Pierre Rhéaume
President
Union Council, Local 1660
International Association of machinists

Sørumsand 3 March 2005

Regarding your letter dated 11 February
We thank you for your letter regarding the difficult situation we face, and appreciate your solidarity towards us.

In August 2004 we were told about the restructuring, which you also refer to in your letter. During autumn 2004 we were visited by several

delegations from GE, amongst them by Mark Little. We tried to get our management to inform us about the results from these visits, but there was little they would tell us. The only information we received from these visits was that our shop at Sørumsand received good reviews and that Mark Little was impressed by our performance. The shock was therefore enormous when we were told of the closure.

Our history is quite like yours when it comes to average age, seniority and the number of employees. Our average annual wages are de 300 000 Norwegian Kroner (about 47 870 US\$). In addition we have compensation for shift work, overtime and work on sites outside our premises.

As to assignments we have had in our factory lately they include deliveries to all continents. Hyatt in the USA, Nathpa Jhakri and Tala in India, Kafue Gorge in Zambia, Yixing in China, Kareeya in Australia, Biasca in Switzerland, Rio General in Guatemala, Guri and Caruachi in Venezuela, Cheongsong in Korea, Yamula and Birkapili in Turkey and Kamoaki in Japan. These are but some examples and we have had several major projects in Norway.

The changes that GE has done since they took over in 1999 are many and poor. For us the GE-system has been a straitjacket, which has stopped us from being effective. The focus of management has always been on the level above, and little on production and value added. The last downsizing we had in 2002 when the focus was on turnover per employee. This led to too few employees in relation to the assignments we had. We took this up with Tracy Moore and told her that this was going in the wrong direction. We compared it to a soccer team, which normally is to have 11 players, and was forced to play with 8 and was told to win the league. We have had confirmation these days that one of the big problems GE has in its hydropower area is to little resources, which in turn has give GE major costs when it comes to poor quality, bad contracts and poor project performance.

With its decision to close down our site at Sørumsand GE has said that production will stop in the end of 2005. They will keep an installation staff of 10 persons to supervise power stations in Norway and abroad. What has happened the last days is that three persons in the Norwegian management wish to buy the factory together with other investors and negotiations with GE have just started.

You tell us in your letter that much of the production is taking place in low cost countries and we see the same picture. Our company has had a lot of production in Bulgaria, but quality has for years been poor. The company has decided that production in Bulgaria will end because quality has not improved in 6 years. What has been produced in Bulgaria will be transferred to other low cost countries, but we do not know where.

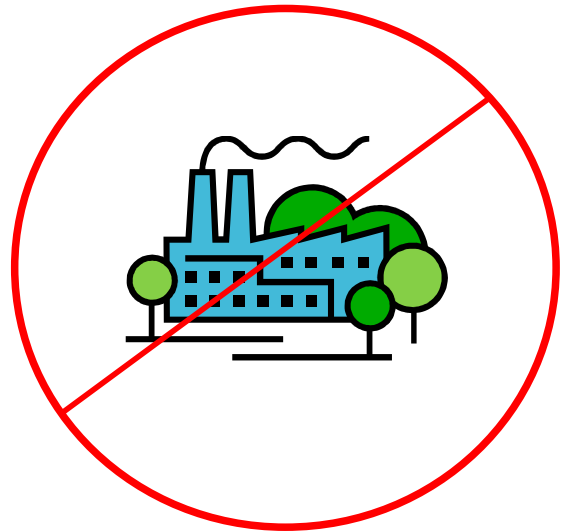
The work that our union does at this stage is first and foremost directed towards continuous production and new owners.

We have had many meetings with Norwegian Parliamentarians form different parties and they all have in common that they hope there can still be a shop at Sørumsand, which is geared at the Norwegian hydropower market. Norwegian el-supply is at 99% reliant on hydropower and it is therefore of great national importance to keep our shop at Sørumsand.

We hope this answers your questions, and we will gladly answer more if you so require.

Fraternal greetings
Local union shop

Torfinn Mørkved.



News Briefs



Employees of Messier Dowty, landing gears manufacturer, located in Saint Janvier near Mirabel, join a Union for the first time.

Montreal, February 21, 2005 - Some 125 employees of production of **Messier Dowty**, manufacturer of landing gears, located in Saint Janvier, have joined a union for the first time.

The demand for certification has been deposited by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which already represents many thousands of members in Bombardier Aerospace, Rolls Royce and Héroux Devtek and other companies of the aerospace sector.

Amongst the forty or so groups that have deposited requests for accreditation to be represented by QFL Unions, within the last two months, we mention the personnel of the following businesses, the automobile garage at **Wal-mart** in St.-Hyacinthe, **Le Funambule** day-care center in St.-Jerome, The **Buffalo** distribution center in Montreal, as well as the technical and administrative personnel at **La Maison des Futailles** (*House of Casks/Barrels*????) (SAQ) in the city.

Brother **Michel Lavoie** was nominated to the position of Vice-President of Local Lodge 1660 at the last General Assembly of February. He also occupies the position of Shop Steward at G.E. Hydro.

If you believe that you are the victim of discrimination because of a **handicap** for whatever reason, or of certain incapacities following a work accident, or a sickness... If your employer fires you or de-classifies you as a result of this handicap, your Union can help you to defend your interests and study the situation to see if there is material for a contest. Consult your Union Representative.

A new Collective Agreement was signed recently at **Plastic Decorators**. The shop is situated in Montreal's east end, and they make labels and publicity materials for plastic containers and packaging. The 35 members who work there, one-time members of Local Lodge 987 of the A.I.M., are, for the most part, women. The new three-year contract includes raises of 2½, 2½, and 3%. **Yves Raymond**, Union Business Agent gives us a report of the negotiations :

The round of negotiations lasted four months, and necessitated five (5) meetings with the management team. The negotiations were longer than usual because the employer stressed the fact that the business was in peril. The Committee then asked for help from the Solidarity Fund of the QFL to make an analysis of the Company's financial situation. The analysis was extended over five years, and showed that only the last year was problematical and could be easily explained. The help of the analysis allowed the Committee to gain raises of 2½ %, 2½ % and 3 % for the three years of the Collective Agreement, rather than a wage freeze the first year and cost of living increases for the last two years. The shift premiums were also raised by ten (10) cents an hour. On the non-monetary side, the major changes were on the work shifts, the recall period, now a maximum of 18 months, and the length of a disciplinary lay-off, which didn't exist before. The perseverance, solidarity and experience of the negotiating Committee allowed them to turn a reversing trend into one of advancement.



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

OPINION COLUMN

The new union busters

In days gone by, many companies, especially large corporations, have tried a gamut of tricks to try to bust Unions. They didn't like Unions (they still don't,) because Union interfered with management's right to run a satrapy, or a dictatorship. In the case of small one-man or family businesses, it was (and still is) a case of "I (or we) own the Company and I (or we) will run it any bloody way we please". In the case of large corporations, it is a case of "I have a degree which I worked hard for, and the Company has put me in charge, so I will run it any bloody way I please". The Union impedes this thinking by assuring that members get their legal rights, and also receive a modicum of respect, a concept with which the bosses don't always agree. We could make an analogy with the Captain of a merchant ship in the mid 1800s, whose word at sea was law. He could even hang a sailor from a yardarm if found guilty of an offence, and not have to answer to anybody in his home country.

Some cases in point:

In the company where this writer works, when the Company decides to lay people off, there are rules of pre-notice to be respected, based on years of service. Lay-offs are also done by strict order of seniority within the given occupation. If the Company wants to send a worker to another work shift, the employee must be given a week of notice, to make arrangements with baby-sitter, day-care, spouse etc. These rules are better than what is accorded in the Labour Code, and are included in our Collective Labour Agreement. Employees also have a right to refuse work that they deem dangerous to themselves; they also have recourse to disciplinary suspensions, to unlawful dismissal, even to harassment in the workplace, according to the Labour Code.

Many of these rights are included in the Provincial Labour Codes, or in Civil Codes, but your average employee doesn't know about them,

and your average boss knows that your average employee doesn't know about them. This is where the Unions come in. They strive to have these, or better conditions included in their various Collective Labour Agreements. Some contracts have conditions incorporated into them which do not even appear in the various Labour Codes, such as bonuses, danger pay etc. Bosses love dumb employees, harken back to feudal days when the Squire, or Laird or Sieur or Lord, who owned the land, lorded it over his serfs, most of whom could not even read or write. His word was absolute law. Most managers would love to have this type of power, because, as we all know, power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The Unions put a rein on this type of thinking.

In past times, an employer could fire an employee if he didn't like his or her face. This could be the best worker in the Company, but that didn't matter. This was a dictatorship (Imagine trying to please Idi Amin). One could be fired if a boss of the opposite sex came on to one and was spurned, or if a boss of the opposite sex was sleeping with one and one broke it off, (sexual harassment, strictly illegal everywhere in Canada).

These are just some examples of the type things that go on, even now, in our educated age. In the past, bosses used scabs and goons during times of labour strife to try to bust Unions. They would lock their employees out, and fire them all, and hire new ones. Some examples of this which come to mind are the Air Traffic Controllers strike in the U.S. Several years ago, or, if you want to get closer to home, the Gazette's lockout of their typesetters, still unresolved.

Nowadays, the Companies have a whole new bag of tricks. This is called GLOBALISATION. They don't have to resort to scab anymore. Nowadays, parts which this writer used to produce within his own shop are now out-sourced, (sub-contracted) to non-Union shops. Why? The Company claims that

they can get them cheaper from another supplier. We question this claim. Given the cost of material, transportation, inspection by our inspectors, re-packaging, rejections etc...etc... we truly wonder if they are cheaper. A good accounting department can adjust the books, to make even components from the U.S., whose dollar is worth more than ours, look cheaper.

Using this new tool, OUT-SOURCING, the Company can proceed to lay-off workers in small batches, so that no media attention is generated. At a given point, the Company cries “we don’t have enough man-hours in store to keep the shop viable”. The trick here is that the orders are there, but we just won’t produce them in our shop. The solution! “We’ll have to close the shop. Since we’ve already laid off XX employees, there are only ½X left, we’ll buy them off with their buy-out premiums, and shut it down.” Who needs scabs anymore?

This then, seems to be new management strategy for busting the Unions. Now, all employees, whether Union or non-Union have the modern day Sword of Damocles know as GLOBALISATION hanging over their heads. Here in Canada and in

Quebec, we are all gradually losing our jobs, indeed our livelihoods, to the new age Union busting strategies. Pretty soon, this will be a banana republic, without the bananas.



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.



**Collaborate to the Union's bulletin
Send us your articles or stories!
local1660@aim1660.org or by
fax at (514)-637-1917**

Organizing new members

In order to incite our members to provide us with contacts which would lead us to get a new certification and the signing of a first collective agreement, District 11 will reward the member who has given the contact in the following manner:

Between 20 and 50 new members :	A cheque in the amount of 100\$
Between 51 and 100 new members :	A cheque in the amount of 250\$
Between 101 and 250 new members :	A cheque in the amount of 500\$
Between 251 and 500 new members :	A 1000\$ value gift
Between 501 and 750 new members :	A 2500\$ value gift
Between 751 and 1000 new members :	A 3500\$ value gift
More than 1000 new members:	A 5000\$ value gift

The cheque or the gift will be remitted to the member who has given us the lead as soon as District 11 will collect its first Per Capita tax paid by the newly unionized group.

Build the union *in democracy*

Convinced that everybody has a right to fully benefit from the wealth generated by work and that this right can only be exercised if the workers are joined freely, in democracy and in unity, we all join together for our well being!

That is what happens every time you vote on something related to the workplace or the collective agreement. You have the ability to determine yourself what your working conditions will be and how your relationship with your employer will develop.

That does not mean that each and everyone of you will always get what they want, but it means that each of us can say what we have to say regarding the proposals and the acceptance or refusal of its results.

Today, I am still as enthusiastic and proud to build our union, as I was when I started. Do like many of your Brothers and Sisters and exercise your right to vote. Whether it is for the union, the collective agreement or the monthly meetings, you always have the right to vote. That is what we call democracy.

Occupational *injury*

Don't sign anything! Don't fill any form! See your Occupational Health & Safety Representative first. If you feel the need, your prevention representative will help you throughout the steps with the employer or CSST. The processing of your file in a just and expeditious manner depends on it. This help is provided for at article 279 of the Act respecting industrial accidents and occupational diseases.

Honorable Mentions The news bulletin "THE TOOL" as well as our Web site have won honorable mentions for their qualities within the IAMAW.

IMPORTANT

Since February 1st, 2005, at each monthly General Assembly, Local Lodge 1660 votes to pay the \$2.00 monthly dues for workers who are unemployed, on C.S.S.T., or on sick leave, therefore allowing you to keep your active status within the Union for the duration of your recall period with your Company. **If this is accepted by the members, for the month that you are not at work, for one of the three reasons mentioned above, you no longer have to pay the \$2.00.**

PRESIDENT	CHRISTIAN BILODEAU (christian_bilodeau@sympatico.ca)
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DIR. HEALT AND SEC.	ANDRÉ BERGERON (sectionlocale1660@videotron.net)

THE OFFICE IS OPEN FRIDAY OF 8H00AM.

GENERAL MEETING - IS PRESENT(E)S, It IS THAT SOLIDARITY!

The assemblies take place third Tuesday of each month with 19h00 with the room to the 663, 2nd Avenue with Lachine

The Union Sign-up form.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO SIGN IT!

Even if you have paid dues since your first pay-check, you are not a member in good standing until you have filled out and signed your Union sign-up form. It is only after this symbolic gesture that you can enjoy the full benefits of your Union membership. If you don't have a Shop Steward in your workplace, call (514) 637-3031 to obtain a form. This is a primordial gesture to obtain your rights.

**Check out
our Web sight
www.aim1660.org**

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