



COAST TO COAST UPDATE
AU COURANT D'UN OcéAN À L'AUTRE
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS
FRATERNITÉ INTERNATIONALE DES OUVRIERS EN ÉLECTRICITÉ



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Greetings:

Tragically and typically on average over 700 Canadians died each year during the early 1980's, almost two each and every day of the year, from workplace related events.

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), alarmed with these staggering statistics and committed to emphasize the tragedy and get something done about it, initiated and declared April 28th as an annual day of remembrance in 1984 for our Canadian workers who lost their lives or were injured in their workplace. Following the lead of the Labour movement, in 1990 the Canadian Parliament approved a private bill to establish the Workers' Mourning Day Act on April the 28th of each year.

The CLC initiative is now honoured in 80 countries worldwide and in 1996 the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions also adopted April 28th as a Day of Mourning for our fallen and injured Sister and Brother workers.

Over the last decade, the number of Canadians who die every year because of something that happened to them at work has been steadily growing. In 1998, the number stood at 809. In 2005, the number was 35.5% higher.

In 2007, according to the latest report from the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, 1,055 people lost their lives at work. That's three people every day of the year.

The IBEW in Canada solidly endorses the CLC initiative born in 1984 and appeals for the support of each and every Local Union and IBEW member to take the time on Tuesday, April 28th to honour and commemorate all of our members who have died or been injured on the job.

We also need our members, employers, the public and our governments at all levels, to eulogize and remember the injured and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice to provide a decent living for their families by campaigning and working towards a zero injury workplace.

This April 28th, remember those whose lives have been taken. Mourn them. Take a moment of silence in your workplace. Think of the families and friends left behind. Then, in the memory of our lost Sisters and Brothers, let's move on with our responsibility to fight, lobby and train for a safer, injury free workplace.

In solidarity,

Phil Flemming, IVP



2009 IBEW CANADA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Thank you to everyone who submitted their names and essays for the 2009 IBEW Canada Scholarship Award. Congratulations go to the five applicants whose essays were randomly drawn:

- Travis Payne – Local Union 37**
- Katy Gilbert – Local Union 636**
- Julie O'Brien – Local Union 894**
- Blair Oversby – Local Union 1730**
- Teneille Dzuba – Local Union 2067**

Wishing you a successful year in your continued education!

Western/Eastern Winter Schools - Workplace, Respect And Dignity - Bullying

The Western Winter School took place in Victoria, BC on February 16th and 17th, 2009 and the Eastern Winter School was held on March 2nd & 3rd, 2009 at the Delta Halifax Hotel in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Twenty delegates from IBEW Local Unions attended the Western Winter School as did twenty nine delegates from IBEW Locals across Atlantic Canada; including two delegates from Local Unions in Montreal attended the course.

This years Course was titled 'Workplace Respect and Dignity – Bullying' and covered a myriad of topics including the definition of *bullying*, the profile of the bully, the victims of *bullying*, consequences and impact of workplace *bullying*, and the role of unions and management to minimize and eradicate workplace *bullying* through preventive actions. Whereas recently there was a report showing that *bullying* in the workplace has been of increased concern, this training course was very timely, enabling Local Union leaders to become more familiar on how to deal with these sensitive issues.

Participants were informed how to identify *bullying* in the workplace as well as the various types of *Bullying* that exists. Types of *bullying* included physical, verbal, exclusion, defamation and abuse of authority. It was shown that workplace *bullying* has a huge impact on employee productivity, absenteeism and increased costs in Health and Welfare Plans. In every situation of *bullying* in the workplace there are several players that participate. The players involved in the *bullying* incident were shown to be the 'Bully', the 'Victim' and the 'Observer', each having their own specific traits and profiles which were identified and discussed with the participants.

Many Canadian workers have been faced with workplace *bullying*, have seen it occur or know someone who has suffered from it. Unfortunately, many Canadian workers have left jobs they enjoyed because of being bullied. Because of these alarming facts, participants were shown how to deal with these incidents in an effective, timely and professional manner.

During the day and a half training session there were frequent breakout sessions which lead to much interesting conversation on the topic of *bullying*. The participants were very engaged in the training and it became very interactive, both with the instructors and other participants in the course. On Monday evening, the participants gathered for a hospitality 'meet and greet' that were enjoyed by all. Local Union leaders from various branches of the IBEW had a chance to mingle and discuss and learn the issues that affect IBEW members in the different branches of our Union.

With respect to workplace *bullying*, here are some general tips that will help all Local Unions:

- Encourage all members to act towards others in a respectful manner
- Have a policy in place that includes a reporting system
- Educate the membership that *bullying* is a serious matter
- Try to work out a solution before the situation gets out of control
- Educate members of what is considered *bullying* and treat all complaints of *bullying* seriously and deal with them promptly.

Thanks to the Local Unions that sent delegates to the Winter Schools and thanks also to International Reps Laird Cronk, Brian Murdoch, Mike Power, Brian Matheson and Cordell Cole for facilitating the courses.

Union vs. Non-union

(The following excerpts have been taken from articles written by Local Union 353, Toronto, ON)

Kesheng Ai arrived in Canada from China in 2002, and received his electrician's license in 2004. "My first job was with a non-union company. It was always push-push. It was just like working in China. Then I got into the IBEW union in 2005 when my company was organized. Things have changed so much for me now," Ai says. "I have amazing wages and benefits, my pension is growing and my boss treats me with respect. If it wasn't for this job through the IBEW, I would be back in China by now."

Gabe Spoletini of Urban Electrical Contractors in Concord, ON comments "We used to be a non-union shop; but since unionizing, we've never looked back. We've gone from 12 to 148 employees in four-and-a-half years. Is the union perfect? No! Yet in Toronto, we're very cooperative. It's not 'us versus them.' A big advantage of the union is its training centre," he says. "Training is vital. Builders appreciate quality workmanship. And safety is the No. 1 issue on the jobsite."

A similar view was expressed by Rocco Ianuzzi of Richview Electric, "Overall, the experience of being a union contractor, versus my experience as a non-union contractor, has been a positive one," he says. "As a non-union contractor, my business was basically an 'island unto itself.' As a union contractor, I indirectly have partners. The old myths of the union being adversarial could not be further from the truth," Ianuzzi says. "It has been a win-win relationship."

2009 Ontario Budget Highlights

Two main themes emerge from the 2009 Ontario Budget. One is a large investment in Ontario's infrastructure and the other is tax cuts (for individuals and corporations). Both could have important implications for the construction industry.

On the capital expenditure side, the following are some of the key points:

- \$32.5 billion in infrastructure spending over the next two years – it is estimated that this will create 146,000 jobs in 2009-10 and 165,000 jobs in 2010-11.
- Approximately \$1.2 billion on social housing infrastructure.
- \$648 million investment on roads and bridges in northern Ontario including the widening of Highway 11/17 east of Thunder Bay and the ongoing widening of Highway 69 to Sudbury and Highway 11 to North Bay.
- \$219 million over six years for highway projects in southern Ontario such as the widening of Highway 7/8 in Kitchener / Waterloo, Highway 406 in the Niagara region, Highway 6 in Guelph and Highway 403 in Brantford.
- Just under \$1 billion over the next two years on the Windsor Gateway

\$780 million for community infrastructure such as arenas, libraries and local transportation projects

Overall, this is one of the most aggressive capital expenditure plans that we have seen in Ontario's history.

On the tax side, there are some very important changes that will affect individuals and corporations. These include:

- Harmonization of the PST and the GST to form a single value added sales tax of 13%. The exemption for books, children's clothing and other items will continue. There will also be an exemption from the tax to new homes under \$400,000.00
- A \$1000.00 payment over 3 installments to help families with a combined income of up to \$160,000.00 to help them adjust to the new single sales tax.
- \$260 refundable tax credit for each adult and child.
- Extension of the Northern Pulp and Paper Mill Electricity Transition Program by 1 year (1.8 cents per kilowatt hour)
- Extending the write-off period for new machinery purchases.

Various cuts in corporate taxes:

It is hoped that the additional reduction in corporate taxes will help existing manufacturers stay in Ontario and at the same time, act as an incentive to attract new investment.

There are two other notable items contained in the budget. There are some changes planned for pension legislation including changing the solvency payment period, ensuring workers and retirees get clear information regarding the financial health of their plans and establishing an independent and sustainable Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund agency. There

are also plans to introduce further reforms in response to the feedback on the Ontario Expert Commission on Pensions

The other notable announcement is the increase in the Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit from \$5000.00 per year to \$10,000.00.

To view additional information on the budget, please go to www.ontario.ca/finance-news.

Ontario Budget: The Right Prescription For The Times

The Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario today announced its support for the strategic investments in infrastructure announced in today's Ontario Budget.

The construction industry in Ontario is beginning to feel the effects of the global recession as manufacturing jobs disappear and the new housing sector grinds to a halt. Places like Windsor, Hamilton and certain parts of northern Ontario face high unemployment rates in the construction trades. As a result, the construction industry faces the challenge of renewing its workforce by attracting youth and under-employed workers to apprenticeship programs and retaining skilled journeymen.

The Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario is an umbrella organization that represents over 100,000 unionized construction workers in Ontario.

For more information contact: Patrick Dillon 416.347.8245

Canadian Workers Hit With More Job Losses

(The following article excerpts were taken from the CLC website under News Releases for March 13, 2009)

Georgetti says recession will get worse if government fails to fix EI

Canadian workers have been hit with more staggering job losses and the President of the Canadian Labour Congress says that shock is giving way to outrage among laid off workers.

"The hard working people of this country are getting hammered by job losses. People are fed up with a government that refuses to fix the Employment Insurance program. Simply put, if the government doesn't fix the problems with EI now, this recession will get a lot worse, more people will suffer and the recovery will take longer," says Ken Georgetti.

Statistics Canada reports that another 83,000 jobs were lost in February, pushing the unemployment rate to 7.7% and increasing the number of Canadians who want to work but cannot find a job to over 1.4 million. Since October, 295,000 jobs have been lost, most of them full-time. However, the latest data available also shows that the EI program was only able to help 45% of unemployed workers in December.

Georgetti says Employment Insurance is an important form of economic stimulus. "It helps people deal with tough times like these. It ensures that while the mill or the factory is shut down, money is in peoples' pockets so the grocery store, shops and other services in the community aren't driven out of business too."

Quick Analysis from Senior Economist, Sylvain Schetagne

- The unemployment rate is up, now at 7.7% (it was 7.2% in January).
- The unemployment rate is back to where it was in July 2003, more than five years ago.
- The number of Canadians who lost their job last month: 83,000.
- The number of full-time jobs lost last month: 110,000.
- The number of full-time jobs lost so far this year: 225,000.
- Canadian workers who have lost their jobs since October 2008: 295,000.
- Canada now has over 1.4 million unemployed men and women. This represents an increase of 23% since last October.
- The construction sector was hardest hit in February, as were men aged 25 to 54. Young workers also took a hit last month, pushing their unemployment rate to 14.2%, the highest since 2001.

The Canadian Labour Congress, the national voice of the labour movement, represents 3.2 million Canadian workers. The CLC brings together Canada's national and international unions along with the provincial and territorial federations of labour and 130 district labour councils.

Website: www.canadianlabour.ca

Bill C10 Update *(The following article was an announcement on March 30, 2009 from President Des Rogers of the Federal Government Dockyard Trades & Labour Council—West)*

On March 12, 2009 the Senate passed Bill C10 through, and it went back to the House of Commons and received Royal Assent. This now means that the Expenditure Restraint Act, Part 10 of Bill C10, is in effect. This also means that the government was successful in the stripping away of our legally awarded 5.2% wage adjustment received from Arbitrator Norman during our Arbitral process. This is an extremely disappointing end to the very lengthy process we just went through, and we all share the membership's anger towards the government for this action.

Over the past 1 ½ months, I have spent close to 3 weeks in Ottawa on this business as well as on National Defense business. Where there has been an open slot in the meetings schedule, meetings, phone calls etc have been arranged to lobby for changes to this bill. The membership went on a huge letter writing campaign, and flooded the inboxes of a great many, if not all, Members of Parliament from coast to coast to coast. I was told by many MP's I spoke to that they had been the recipients of these messages, and to take it back to our members that their voices had been heard in Ottawa. This same campaign was turned onto the Senate members after the bill was passed through 3rd reading in Parliament; unfortunately the outcome was pre-ordained in my opinion. Congratulations should go out to all members that assisted in this effort, on behalf of the Council, thank you.

There are a great many in Ottawa who agree with us that this legislation is patently unfair, and should never have been drafted to reach so far into the past to strip away our award. Many of these people are senior members of National Defense, and are disheartened to see this loss and the effects it will have on the membership. I have made it very clear to senior DND

officials as well as to local management that we are not pointing the finger at this department for this monetary loss. Ultimately I believe it comes down to Treasury Board and the Finance Minister crafting this legislation in such a way that there were far too many "poison pills" hidden within Bill C10 for the MP's and Senators to effectively remove them, without being seen as the cause of withholding of the monies also in the bill that are needed in various areas to attempt to get through this economic crisis. The Expenditure Restraint Act is a prime example. Which party would hold up the passage of this bill in order to ensure the continuation of fair collective bargaining for Public Service employees? Who would speak out publically condemning the legislating of public service wages when thousands in Canada are losing their jobs? In all public forums where I have been speaking against this legislation, whether in person, in the newspapers or on radio and TV, the point we have been trying to get through is that we are not fighting against the imposed wages of today; we are fighting the stripping of a legal award dating to Oct. 1, 2006.

The NDP and Bloc members, as well as local Liberal MP Keith Martin, spoke out continually on behalf of the Unions and the Public Service employees in Canada, but the Liberal party opted to support passage of this legislation as they did not want to be publically perceived as the party that caused another election. As I said, Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca MP Keith Martin did speak out continually in support of our membership, both publically in the house and privately with the leaders of the liberal party, trying to drive home the patent unfairness of this legislation. The most that the Liberal leaders would say is that when the Liberal party takes power, they will ensure that this legislation is reversed. I have attended many hours of debate in the House over the past few weeks due to the generous help of Denise Savoie, NDP member for Victoria. Denise offered up anything that she or her staff could do to assist me while there, and secured speakers gallery passes for the debates and the final vote, where normally the public is not allowed to attend. It was very saddening and frustrating to sit there watching the demise of free collective bargaining in the Canadian Public Service, and see the smugness of the government members upon the passage of the bill.

Now that the final outcome has been seen, it is time to look to our options for the future. We will be seeking an independent legal opinion regarding the potential outcome, costs and timeframes of a court action. We will also be looking at the possibility of joining forces with other Public Service Unions to form a united challenge to this regressive legislation. There will be more information put out in the coming weeks regarding our course of action, as it becomes available.

Have you Hugged a Union Member Today?

(Article taken from the 'Canada Labour Views' Reports newsletter dated January 26, 2009)

Saint John local protecting retiree benefits for future generation:

What adjective best describes unions? Look at the commentary under a union story on any newspaper or television web

site and you'll get the answer - Greedy. The purveyors of the dismal science assure us that we all, individually and collectively, act in our own interests in every decision we make. But, somehow, unions acting in their interests calls down public wrath of a special kind.

Two very contentious strikes that were continuing last week illustrate the point. The Canadian Union of Public Employees at York University and the Amalgamated Transit Union at OC Transpo each have the bad luck of having to inconvenience large numbers of the public, hence the reaction.

Oddly, when two companies (Petro-Canada and Le Journal de Quebec) locked out their employees for over a year to try to achieve concessions in disputes that were recently settled, there was little public display of indignation for their actions. No one outside the union movement called that greed.

There are at least two union issues that I think we need to remember before any of us makes a sweeping moral judgment on the union movement:

First, in Saint John, NB, Moosehead Brewery and the Brewery and Soft Drink Workers have extended their contract for two years because, after negotiation, conciliation and mediation, they could not agree on whether retiree benefits would be sacrificed. The people who would be affected by this change were not the ones voting; only employees hired after ratification would lose benefits. Here were union members fighting so that a different generation could enjoy the same benefits they will. Greedy?

The same battle has been fought over two-tier wage and benefit packages across the country. Sometimes it is successful for the union and sometimes it is not. Sometimes it can be reversed when economic conditions improve. The fight over defined-benefit pensions is the same, though victories seem to be fewer.

The other fact we need to be reminded of is the way unionization influences wage rates. The difference between union and non-union wages (the "union benefit") is the aspect we most often see. But there is another. Wages at unionized employers are flatter: there is less difference between the top wage rate and the bottom than there is in non-union facilities. In negotiating contracts, unions act in a way that provides proportionately more benefit to the lowest-paid of their members. Greedy?

It is aggravating enough for someone outside the labour movement (but who recognizes the positive contributions it has made to workplaces and to society generally) to see uninformed arguments and intemperate language being used to vilify unions. It must be even more so for union members.

However, perhaps the crucial test of unions will come when the Big Three have to present their plans to lower labour costs to the Canadian and American governments to qualify for loans. The ability to see past pure militancy and to evaluate economic and political limits is there and we will see it used.

Conference Board Predicts Labour Peace – Neither Side Will Have the Upper Hand *(The following 2 articles taken from the 'Canada Labour Views' Reports newsletter dated February 16, 2009)*

OC Transpo riders and York University undergrads might not agree, but the theory and the evidence both support the Conference Board's conclusions. Unlike in past recessions, neither management nor unions have many chips and both will tend to behave and react rationally this year.

No one will have any interest in strikes or lock-outs in 2009, the Board's *Industrial Relations Outlook, 2009* concludes. Of the organizations surveyed for last fall's Compensation Planning Outlook, well before the current round of closures and layoffs, 86 per cent stated a work stoppage "will not" or "definitely will not" take place this year in their workplace. There is no indication that this number has dropped.

This is a marked change from previous recessions when management used high unemployment to force concessions from unions. These cycles were also marked by more time lost to strikes and lock-outs.

The *Outlook* is the product of a roundtable involving six participants: three national union figures, one government official and two business representatives.

CLV Reports has begun to see numerous wage freezes in manufacturing agreements, a harbinger we have been looking for since the first bad news began to circulate. Many of these agreements are being achieved early, and they are being ratified by close to unanimous votes. There is no stomach for strikes.

Union negotiators and, to a lesser extent, their management colleagues are left with two problems. First, they need to be able to reduce the expectations of their members. Second, they need to focus the attention of the members on other issues on which progress can be made. This may be in pensions or job security for unions, or in productivity and flexibility for management.

Because trying to make wage increase predictions is like shooting at a moving target, *CLV Reports* did not publish our annual predictions last fall. The Conference Board now forecasts a 2.6 per cent increase across the public sector, down from the previous forecast of 3.5 per cent, and 2.9 per cent in the private sector, down from 3.2 per cent.

The *Industrial Relations Outlook* finds that, in the public sector, and with the notable exception of health care, the prospect of deficits and the massive spending planned for infrastructure will serve to lower wage increases. In the private sector, both manufacturing and mining have seen the demand for their products drop. With so many companies in poor shape, union members are aware that there is little money for wage increases. Management, however, has no wish to risk a strike, either, if the loss of production might push the company over the edge.

Thousands More Manufacturing Jobs Gone – Worst Monthly Job Loss in 30 Years

Statistics Canada reported that the economy shed 129,000 jobs in January. Full-time jobs dropped by 113,900 while part-time went down by 15,100. The unemployment rate rose

to 7.2 per cent, more than any monthly employment decline in the last 30 years including the recessions of the 1980s and '90s. Since October there have been 213,000 jobs lost – a drop of 1.2 per cent, mostly full-time. The three largest provinces suffered most: Ontario shed 36,000 jobs; Quebec, 30,000 and B.C., 18,000.

Manufacturing continues to bleed jobs with over 100,000 positions gone in January. Most job loss, not surprisingly, occurred in motor vehicle manufacturing, but employment also fell in non-metallic mineral production, furniture, computers and other electronics, electrical equipment, appliances and their components, and clothing. In the goods-producing sector as a whole, 120,500 jobs disappeared in January, with an additional 8,400 losses in agriculture, 2,200 in natural resources, 4,600 in utilities and 4,400 in construction. Compared to January 2008, the goods-producing sector has lost 160,200 jobs for a drop of 4.0 per cent year-over-year.

Following hard on the heels of the continuing manufacturing slump was a drop of nearly 30,000 jobs in transportation and warehousing – mostly in truck transportation in Ontario. The service sector as a whole shed 8,600 jobs. A loss of 21,600 positions in business, building and other support services, coupled with a loss of 11,900 in public administration and 8,100 in trade was mitigated by a gain of 30,800 jobs in healthcare and social assistance. Year-over-year in January, the service sector gained just 71,500 jobs (up 0.5 per cent).

As noted, B.C., Ontario and Quebec bore the brunt of the job losses. Ontario's economy lost 71,000 jobs in both full and part-time work. Its unemployment rate of 8.0 per cent was the highest since November 1997. In British Columbia, which was suffering a slump in the construction industry, 68,000 full-time jobs disappeared, and only 33,000 part-time were added. In Quebec, by contrast, 8,000 full-time jobs were added but 34,000 part-time lost, likely as a result of declines in public administration jobs once the December Quebec election was over. As far as the other provinces were concerned, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick saw nominal increases, but their participation rates (except for Saskatchewan which was unchanged) went up, so unemployment percentages rose as well.

As far as demographics are concerned, the core age group (those aged 25 to 54) lost 111,000 jobs for an unemployment rate of 6.2 per cent, the highest since November 2004. Two-thirds of the jobs lost were held by men, not surprisingly as men outnumber women in manufacturing where most job loss occurred. Young workers (aged 15 to 24) saw 28,000 jobs disappear; however, participation in the work force also fell, resulting in an unemployment rate of 12.7 per cent. Older people (over age 55), only about one-third of whom are still in the workforce, saw their unemployment rate rise from 5.6 to 6.0 per cent.

CEO Pay and Shareholder Activism *(The following article was a letter written by Ken Georgetti to the Members of the CLC Executive Council on March 5, 2009)*

Growing anger with bloated CEO salaries and bonuses resulted in a unique victory for investor shareholder activism – one

which is rooted in the labour movement's involvement in using the power of workers' capital as a lever for social change.

Over the last two weeks, majority shareholders at four banks (Royal Bank, Bank of Montreal, Bank of Nova Scotia and CIBC) voted in favour of a "say on pay" proposal, which would allow shareholders to vote on executive compensation in upcoming shareholders' meetings.

The story behind the story lies in our movement's involvement in using the power of large institutional investors where we have significant workers' capital – like our pension funds – to force changes in corporate governance, and to actively promote fair labour practices and sustainable development through responsible investment.

Through the Shareholder Association for Research & Education (SHARE) in Canada, and the Committee of Workers' Capital internationally, our labour movement actively works to influence corporate behaviour at the shareholder level through research, education and developing motions for debate at shareholder meetings. It was SHARE's work on "say on pay" resolutions that led to positive vote results over the last two weeks at Canada's banks.

SHARE's work is not limited to shareholder activism. For example, its latest research into the impact of good labour practices on real estate property performance is another education tool to promote investment in real estate companies and property developers and have fair labour practices and sustainable environmental practices as cornerstones of their business practices.

The CLC has responded to affiliate requests to raise issues at corporate shareholder meetings about their labour policies, contracting out, director independence and executive salaries. We have also taken on issues such as investment in the global arms industry, in Canadian companies operating in other countries using environmental practices detrimental to the surrounding communities and indigenous populations.

The publicity around "say on pay" demonstrates how labour can flex its muscles to influence corporate power in a variety of different ways.

International Women's Day Statement 2009

(Article taken from a statement announcement made by Barbara Byers, Vice-President, CLC, on February 26, 2009)

Budgets.....as if women matter.....International Women's Day is supposed to be a day of celebration, but lately women have little to celebrate.

International Women's Day is supposed to be a day of celebration, but lately women have little to celebrate. The economic crisis is in full swing and women workers in Canada are bracing themselves for the worst economic turmoil in decades, without the support they need to weather this storm.

If the recent federal budget is any reflection of what we have to look forward to, women are in big trouble. The budget didn't just leave women out; it was carefully crafted to deliberately attack and undermines women's equality.

The Canadian Labour Congress says the federal government cannot continue to ignore the women of Canada, who have waited long enough for equality.

Over the last couple of years, Canadians have witnessed a series of attacks on women by the federal Conservative government, which has put equality at the bottom of its list of priorities.

The budget proposals on "pay equity" put women in a worse place than they were to begin with. Women who work for the federal government will have their rights to approach human rights processes removed. Federal "pay equity" is to be subject to market forces – the very forces which create pay inequities in the first place. This is unacceptable.

The budget did nothing to change the fact that six out of 10 women paying into Employment Insurance can't access benefits. Unless EI eligibility requirements are changed, women and other vulnerable workers will bear the brunt of economic hard times with no safety net.

Our demand for a national, affordable, accessible childcare program has fallen on deaf ears once again. In the coming months, child care programs across the country will be closing as federal money runs out. Canada, already the lowest ranked of advanced economies on child care, will fall further behind.

Announced tax cuts won't help. Fully 40% of women who file tax returns, pay no taxes because their incomes are too low. When women have an average annual income of \$27,000 a year compared to men's \$45,000, tax reductions in the higher tax brackets are of little help.

There is much to do. This International Women's Day, the Canadian Labour Congress continues its economic equality campaign with the launch of a new workshop called "Skills for Change". International Women's Day provides an opportunity for women to organize together to challenge this anti-equality federal agenda.

Lesson Learned - Cutting Corners Cost Shopkeeper More In The Long Run *(Article taken from the 'Workforce' section of the Toronto Star – January 29, 2009)*

Electrician Les Carbonaro, an organizer with the IBEW Local Union 353, picked up the phone at his union office one day, expecting a potential member or a contractor on the line. It was neither. The caller was a woman opening a country-craft store.

"She had a problem," recalls Carbonaro. "She didn't have a lot of money and hired a non-union contractor, who'd convinced her that he could do the job cheaper if he did not take out permits."

"During the construction, an electrical inspector who happened to be in the convenience store next door noticed that there was no work permit posted at her shop and went in to investigate." Apparently, the inspector discovered that the store had been

wired with lamp cord. Explaining to the shop owner the potential dangers of such wiring to her staff and the public, he condemned the site. Unfortunately, the woman had already paid the non-union contractor most of the money for the job, and when she asked him to fix the problem, he disappeared.

"I felt badly for her and told her that there was little I could do," recalls Carbonaro. "[But] I did give some union contractors' names and advice and wished her the best of luck."

"About a month later, the woman called back to thank me," he continues, "and to let me know that the experience had taught her a very valuable—and expensive—lesson."

She also said that the non-unionized contractor took six weeks to do the wiring, while the union contractor she eventually hired did it in six days. Her biggest surprise? The union contractor was actually cheaper.

Notes Carbonaro: "I guess you don't always get what you pay for."

Interesting American Article on Canada – "Worthwhile Canadian Initiative" *(This article was published in Newsweek Magazine, issue dated Feb 16, 2009)*

The legendary editor of The New Republic, Michael Kinsley, once held a "Boring Headline Contest" and decided that the winner was "Worthwhile Canadian Initiative." Twenty-two years later, the magazine was rescued from its economic troubles by a Canadian media company, which should have taught us Americans to be a bit more humble. Now there is even more striking evidence of Canada's virtues. Guess which country, alone in the industrialized world, has not faced a single bank failure, calls for bailouts or government intervention in the financial or mortgage sectors. Yup, it's Canada. In 2008, the World Economic Forum ranked Canada's banking system the healthiest in the world. America's ranked 40th, Britain's 44th.

Canada has done more than survive this financial crisis. The country is positively thriving in it. Canadian banks are well capitalized and poised to take advantage of opportunities that American and European banks cannot seize. The Toronto Dominion Bank, for example, was the 15th-largest bank in North America one year ago. Now it is the fifth-largest. It hasn't grown in size; the others have all shrunk.

So what accounts for the genius of the Canadians? - Common sense. Over the past 15 years, as the United States and Europe loosened regulations on their financial industries, the Canadians refused to follow suit, seeing the old rules as useful shock absorbers. Canadian banks are typically leveraged at 18 to 1—compared with U.S. banks at 26 to 1 and European banks at a frightening 61 to 1. Partly this reflects Canada's more risk-averse business culture, but it is also a product of old-fashioned rules on banking.

Canada has also been shielded from the worst aspects of this crisis because its housing prices have not fluctuated as wildly as those in the United States. Home prices are down

25 percent in the United States, but only half as much in Canada. Why? Well, the Canadian tax code does not provide the massive incentive for overconsumption that the U.S. code does: interest on your mortgage isn't deductible up north. In addition, home loans in the United States are "non-recourse," which basically means that if you go belly up on a bad mortgage, it's mostly the bank's problem. In Canada, it's yours. Ah, but you've heard American politicians wax eloquent on the need for these expensive programs—interest deductibility alone costs the federal government \$100 billion a year—because they allow the average Joe to fulfill the American Dream of owning a home. Sixty-eight percent of Americans own their own homes and the rate of Canadian home ownership? - It's 68.4 percent.

Canada has been remarkably responsible over the past decade or so. It has had 12 years of budget surpluses, and can now spend money to fuel a recovery from a strong position. The government has restructured the national pension system, placing it on a firm fiscal footing, unlike our own insolvent Social Security. Its health-care system is cheaper than America's by far (accounting for 9.7 percent of GDP, versus 15.2 percent here), and yet does better on all major indexes. Life expectancy in Canada is 81 years, versus 78 in the United States. American car companies have moved so many jobs to Canada to take advantage of lower health-care costs that since 2004, Ontario and not Michigan has been North America's largest car-producing region.

I could go on; the U.S. currently has a brain-dead immigration system. We issue a small number of work visas and green cards, turning away from our shores thousands of talented students who want to stay and work here. Canada, by contrast, has no limit on the number of skilled migrants who can move to the country. They can apply on their own for a Canadian Skilled Worker Visa, which allows them to become perfectly legal "permanent residents" in Canada—no need for a sponsoring employer, or even a job. Visas are awarded based on education level, work experience, age and language abilities. If a prospective immigrant earns 67 points out of 100 total (holding a Ph.D. is worth 25 points, for instance), he or she can become a full-time, legal resident of Canada.

Companies are noticing. In 2007 Microsoft, frustrated by its inability to hire foreign graduate students in the United States, decided to open a research center in Vancouver. The company's announcement noted that it would staff the center with "highly skilled people affected by immigration issues in the U.S." So the brightest Chinese and Indian software engineers are attracted to the United States, trained by American universities, then thrown out of the country and picked up by Canada—where most of them will work, innovate and pay taxes for the rest of their lives.

If President Obama is looking for smart government, there is much he, and all of us, could learn from our quiet—OK, sometimes boring—neighbor to the north. Meanwhile, in the councils of the financial world, Canada is pushing for new rules for financial institutions that would reflect its approach. This strikes me as, well, a worthwhile Canadian initiative.

Local Union 804 - Kitchener, ON Wins "A" Division Championship in New York

The IBEW Local Union 804, Kitchener Hockey Club was vic-

torious at the 46th OPC IBEW Tournament hosted by Local Union 3 – New York, NY at the ‘Icehouse’ in Hackensack, New Jersey on April 3-4, 2009. Congratulations to all the players, coaches, committee members, and union men and women who made this tournament a tremendous success.



IBEW CCO John Pender and the rest of the council made Canada proud in the ‘Garden State’ and some of them even *donned the blades* to add the extra touch of sportsmanship and brotherhood to the event.

Special thanks to Local Union 3 Business Manager Chris Erikson and his committee for being the ultimate hosts, making everyone welcome and at home for the first time this tournament was held state side.

Congratulations to all the teams for a great display of our national game and to the Kitchener, Boston, and Toledo teams for winning the championships in their divisions.

Union Savings Benefit Programs/Gift Certificate Contest Winner

One of the winners in the recent Union Savings Benefit Program contest for Loblaw’s/Westfair gift card, in the contest that ran from January 1st – 31st, 2009 on the Union Savings website (www.unionsavings.ca), is **Christine Butt**, IBEW Local Union 1620 member.

IBEW Local Union 1620, St. John’s, Newfoundland is a participating affiliate in the Union Savings Benefit Program and was encouraged to visit the Union Savings website and enter into this contest.

Congratulations Christine!!!

2009 Harley Davidson Draw

Just a reminder that tickets are selling fast as there are only 500 tickets to be sold at \$100.00 each with an “Early Bird” draw held at the 21st Annual MS Golf Tournament on May 21st, 2009 for one cash prize of \$5000.00.



The draw for the Harley will take place as soon as all tickets are sold, or will be held at the 2009 All Canada Progress Meeting in Prince Edward Island on September 2nd, 2009 with another draw for a cash prize of \$5,000.00.

All drawn winning tickets will go back in the draw and remain eligible for the next draw prize; *so for \$100.00 you could win cash and a Harley!*

Tickets are available through your International Representative and can only be purchased by IBEW dues pay-

ing members. Be sure to get your ticket(s) early to qualify for the ‘Early Bird’ draw.

2009 Projected Meetings

- 05/3 – 6/09 BT Legislative Conference
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Ottawa, ON
- 05/14 – 16/09 IBEW Construction Conference
Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill
Washington, DC
- 05/19 – 21/09 Electricity Sector Council “Bright Futures”
Conference
Toronto, ON
- 05/21/2009 IBEW First District
21st Annual MS Golf Tournament
Location TBA
- 05/30 – 06/7/09 Utility Department Conference
Hyatt Regency Denver
Colorado Convention Center
Denver, Colorado
- 06/15 – 19/09 Broadcasting, Manufacturing
& Telecommunications Conference
Sheraton Downtown
Nashville, Tennessee
- 07/13 – 14/09 Railroad Conference
Chicago, IL
Location TBA
- 08/1 – 7/09 NJATC – Nat’l Training Inst.
Location – TBA
- 09/1 – 3/09 All Canada Progress Meeting
Charlottetown, PEI
- 09/9 – 11/09 Membership Development Conference
Bally’s Las Vegas
Las Vegas, Nevada

A Quote to Think About

“I think the purpose of life is to be useful, to be responsible, to be honorable, to be compassionate. It is, after all, to matter: to count, to stand for something, to have made some difference that you lived at all.”

– Leo Rosten