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CORPORATE PLAN 2019-2023 SINGS THE SAME TIRED OLD TUNE

Canada Post Corporation (CPC) has released a Corporate Plan for 2019 to 2023, approved by its board of directors in October of 2018. Normally, CPC provides the plan to CUPW before it goes public, but in this case the plan came to our attention through the media. Unfortunately, the refrain is all too familiar.

We've been pushing for a bold new outlook on Canada Post's future. With the new chair and directors on the CPC board, a new CEO, and a renewed mandate form the federal government last January, this plan could have turned that corner. But, although the doom-and-gloom is toned down, it predicts losses for Canada Post. We have long experience of CPC projecting losses, then outperforming their projections, while in the meantime they have used the projections to cry poor at the bargaining table.

The answer, as we've been saying for years, is growing revenue from expanded and new services. We realize adding revenue-bearing services is not easy, but it's the path to growth. We can't accept the alternative: that costs would be cut, while our members are already strained, overburdened, pushed into unsafe working conditions, and many are not paid for all hours worked! Enough is enough.

It's Time to Build

Postal banking, senior check-in service, broadband, more services at postal counters, among other things, could bring new and more diverse revenue into the mix. We need CPC to join us in thinking about a bigger future, not a smaller one.

CPC depicts the pay equity settlement as be a financial burden on them going forward. Let's look at this the right way around. For decades they were not complying with pay equity law, and exploiting a female-predominant group of workers. Because of our pay equity process and the hard work of our pay equity committee, they're not getting away with it anymore. RSMCs have a right to pay equity, and CPC must pay. They're in no position to complain about it.

They also portray the pension situation as a threat. The corporate plan suggests they will have to make special payments to the pension fund based on the solvency deficit. In 2014, CPC got an exemption from making the special payments. In fact, the pension has a surplus on a going-concern basis – the measure that matters. CPC knows full well that they have a good case for permanent exemption from the solvency test, and the unions agree. They should be making this case to the government instead of waving a paper-tiger deficit over our heads. Our pension fund is sustainable, and we'll defend it.

Negotiate!

Meanwhile we know we were approaching some improvements to some of the above issues at the bargaining table in 2018. We had some solutions worked out on injuries and overtime. Financial services were on the table. The back-to-work legislation halted all of that, but it's not too late for the government to send CPC's negotiators back to the table to work out a negotiated settlement – the only kind of settlement that can resolve key issues and allow us to look to the future.

It's time for CPC to stop building the old austerity rationale. There's room to grow, there's a need for more services, and there's political will in the federal government to see Canada Post expand its role and relevance as a public service.

As soon as CPC takes such initiatives seriously, we're ready to work together and build a relevant, viable, and more sustainable postal service. Let's get a negotiated settlement, and then build something according to a real vision and commitment to public service.

In Solidarity,

Mike Palecek
National President

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