

**URBAN AND RSMC  
NEGOTIATIONS  
DISCUSSION PAPER  
MARCH 2015**

Sisters and Brothers:

We are about to enter a new round of negotiations. For a majority of us, this will not be our first involvement in collective bargaining – a regular occurrence for Canada Post workers. Others will experience negotiations for the first time; and what a unique experience it is! We all know that the best way to experience negotiations is to get involved from the start, which means taking part in the process of preparing the demands to be submitted to the employer. As such, this discussion paper is first and foremost an invitation to all members to get fully involved in this process.

The RSMC collective agreement will expire on December 31, 2015, and the urban collective agreement, on January 31, 2016. The negotiating process is the culmination of the Union's day-to-day activities. It's an extension of the work we do throughout the year to defend, represent, inform and mobilize our members. But it's also an opportunity to take stock of the situation and negotiate needed improvements in our wages and working conditions.

The next round of negotiations will present special challenges because we will be conducting negotiations with Canada Post for both units at the same time. That was one of the objectives we set in 2004, and is a major victory. It will increase and strengthen our balance of power with the employer, should we be forced to use our right to strike.

Also, 2015 will be a federal election year. Will the elections take place in late spring or on October 19, the fixed election date? Nobody knows for sure, but what we do know is that it will have a significant impact on negotiations. This begs the question: what type of negotiations will we have if we are again facing a majority conservative government? That is why our "Save Canada Post" campaign is so important. We must force Canada Post to abandon its five-point plan and we must make this an election issue.

This year, the preparatory meetings outlined in section 5.03 of the National Constitution will be taking place immediately prior to Convention, i.e. in March and April, because the regional conferences are scheduled to take place as of mid-June. At these local meetings, members will have an opportunity to debate the discussion paper prepared by the NEB and will adopt resolutions to be

forwarded to their respective regions 45 days prior to the Conference. Then, we will be following the steps outlined in sections 6.04 to 6.21 of our National Constitution.

The National Executive Board suggests approaching these negotiations based on protecting the universal public postal service. We have a vision for the future and it must guide us. We want a postal service that serves the public, is based on service expansion and the preservation and creation of good jobs across the country.

Therefore, the Board proposes that we develop a global program of demands built on themes and principles. Such a global program would enable members of the Negotiating Committee to play their role fully and be creative in negotiating with the employer.

The NEB is proposing a single discussion paper for both bargaining units. One of the reasons for this is that the impact of Canada Post's decisions and changes in the organization of work are similar from one unit to the other.

We therefore hope this document will assist you in your discussions, help you understand the specific context of these negotiations and enable you to adopt the demands you deem essential to protect the postal service, to protect jobs and improve working conditions at Canada Post. We also hope this document will help you make the membership participate fully in the discussions and involve them in negotiations from the very start.

Following is the schedule for preparing the negotiations. It will help you plan your local calendar of activities.

<b>March 2015</b>	Discussion paper to be received by locals.
<b>March and April 2015</b>	Local membership meetings to study discussion paper and adopt resolutions.
<b>End of April to first half of May depending on their regional conference</b>	Deadline for locals to submit resolutions to their respective regions.
<b>June 12-14 or June 13-15 OR June 26-28 or June 27-29</b>	Regional conferences.
<b>Mid-August 2015</b>	National Directors' meeting to discuss the program of demands.
<b>September 2015</b>	Member vote to ratify the program of demands.
<b>October 2015</b>	Notice to bargain sent to employer.

The struggle continues.

In Solidarity,

Denis Lemelin

On behalf of the National Executive Board

## **OPENING REMARKS**

Each round of negotiations must take into account the context in which it occurs. It cannot be conducted in a vacuum. But before getting to the crux of the matter, there are a few important preliminary remarks we would like to make. The first one involves our vision of the universal public postal service (Appendix 1). In preparing our demands, we will have to take this vision into account. For example, service expansion is one issue we will have to draw from in preparing our demands. Our vision for the future must guide us and give us an overall perspective of what needs to be put in place now to prepare for the future. In other words, it must guide the direction we take in the upcoming negotiations.

Our second remark pertains to the role that the Treasury Board will play in our negotiations, as a result of Bill C-60. This new legislation enables the government to direct a Crown corporation to obtain Treasury Board approval of its negotiating mandate for collective bargaining. It also enables the Treasury Board to impose requirements with respect to negotiation mandates and to appoint one of its officials to attend and observe the collective bargaining process between a Crown corporation and its bargaining agents. We do not know how the government will choose to apply Bill C-60, but we know full well that if the Conservatives are in power, they'll use it to interfere in our negotiations with Canada Post. This is why it is so important that we defeat the Conservatives in the next federal election.

The third remark is regarding the negotiations that have taken place in recent months or are currently underway with other bargaining units. We've seen that the employer is directly attacking acquired rights, including the meal period, the defined benefit pension plan and job security. For example, the supervisory association will maintain their half-hour paid lunch if we defeat the employer's demand to take ours away. We have to get ready to face the same employer demands and be determined to meet the challenge of maintaining our acquired rights.

The final remark is regarding the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the matter of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour versus the provincial government. In light of this decision, rendered at the end of January, we now know that we can proceed with our constitutional challenge of the back-to-work legislation (Bill C-6). The Court ruled that any legislation that “prevents designated employees from engaging in any work stoppage as part of the bargaining process” violates paragraph 2(d) of the Charter and “must therefore be justified under s. 1 of the Charter.” In other words, as soon as the government restricts the right to strike, it is presumed to be in violation of the Charter and must prove that the means it has chosen are rational and justifiable and that this right is impaired no more than necessary. As mentioned, this decision enables us to proceed with our challenge, which is in its initial stages, but should intensify in the next few months. It should also require a more in-depth analysis of how the government may intervene in our negotiations.

## **THE CURRENT POLITICAL CONTEXT**

We are well aware of what the political context will be in the next round of negotiations. We have discussed this many times since Canada Post quietly announced its five-point plan in December 2013. There is no need to fully review this context here, but we will go over recent changes. The most obvious of these changes is the sharp decline in oil prices, which will likely have a negative impact on the economy in many parts of the country. Analysts say that it should have a negative impact on the economy, but we know that with the drop in the Canadian dollar in relation to the US dollar, other regions should benefit from a resumption of Canadian exports. The cost of living index has remained steady at around 2% for the past year. Add to all this the recent drop in the Bank of Canada’s key policy rate to 0.75%, and the political direction of the government towards the war on terrorism here and abroad.

All in all, the economic climate is rather bleak and uncertain. We are still far from an actual economic recovery, so there’s a good chance the next round of negotiations will be conducted in a climate of austerity. We all know what austerity means: cutbacks in services to the public and social programs. We are currently witnessing a rationalization process that takes many different forms, all of which take aim at jobs and working conditions, while creating a climate of insecurity that all levels of government are happy to maintain.

However, a federal election will be held this year, but when? Some say that, having delayed the budget to April, the government will launch the election in May immediately following the budget. Others anticipate it will take place as scheduled, on October 19. It doesn't really make a difference for us. The operative principle is a simple one: we must get rid of the Conservative government not only to block Canada Post's five-point plan, but also to have a bit more flexibility in negotiations.

What impact will this have on our negotiations? It's important to talk about the context in which the urban and rural negotiations will take place. Our members must have a clear understanding of the situation. This will help put things into perspective in terms of their expectations. It will also help them better understand what it means to negotiate in this context.

## **THE POSTAL SERVICE AND THE SITUATION AT CANADA POST**

We also have to review what is happening in the postal sector. We know that Canada Post is heading for a surplus in 2014, but that won't change their official line. They will continue to say that implementation of the five-point plan is the only way to make the corporation profitable. We are well aware of their arguments: parcel growth doesn't make up for the letter mail decline, which is between 4% and 5% per year, and direct marketing is stagnating. Or that the pension plan places such a financial burden on the Corporation that it cannot abandon its five-point plan. We know very well what Canada Post's objectives are in its negotiations with all bargaining units: greater workforce flexibility, increased production and cost reduction.

In this context, it is clear that we have to step back and look at the overall situation, from the implementation of new technology at Canada Post to the changes that occur in the world of communications. As we know, there have been many changes at Canada Post since 2007. Modern Post/Postal Transformation has had a major impact on the life of all Canada Post workers.

In the 2010 negotiations discussion paper, we wrote:

*“The wave of change we are dealing with is greater than it ever was in the past. This time, all groups and job classifications are affected. Members of internal groups (1, 3 and 4) will be affected through the rolling out of a new generation of multiline optical character readers*

*(MLOCs). Members of external groups (urban letter carriers, rural and suburban mail carriers and mail service couriers) will be impacted by the implementation of mail sequencing. [...] For internal workers, this means new equipment with a reading capacity that will lead to extending the "continuous flow" process to all types of mail and almost completely eliminate manual sortation. For external workers, mail sequencing will reduce the amount of time spent inside postal facilities and increase the amount of time spent delivering the mail. This will also directly affect the mail delivery method. Elsewhere, motorization will result in merging mail service courier (MSC) and letter carrier duties."*

These changes have occurred and we are experiencing them daily. Through Article 29 of the collective agreement, we've reduced their negative impact as much as possible. However, the organization of work has changed for all Canada Post employees. Also, we have lost 3,500 external and internal jobs.

## **IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES ON WORK LIFE**

All the changes that have occurred in recent years have had a direct impact on work life and on the organization of work itself. We have to discuss this at general membership meetings and identify how this new organization of work has affected us in our workplaces.

The study we have just completed regarding the *Impact of Postal Transformation on the work and life of CUPW members* clearly shows how new technology has impacted the life of all members. More than 2,400 brothers and sisters from both the urban and rural units took the time to fill out the survey. Key findings directly relate to the organization of work and can be summarized as follows:

- increased harassment by supervisors;
- changes to schedules and hours of work;
- changes to work methods;
- more frequent overtime for Group 2 employees in the urban unit and unpaid hours of work for RSMCs.

These also include increased health and safety risks because workers experience more anger at work, and a growing percentage fear workplace violence. As such, there is an important impact on work



life and family life. An *Overview of the impact of Postal Transformation on the work-life balance of CUPW members* is attached as an appendix (Appendix 2) to this paper. Work-life balance is one issue we increasingly hear about, particularly when you consider the labour force replacement at Canada Post. Several thousand workers will be retiring in the next few years.

There is one question we should be asking: How do we address changes in the organization of work? The Union has been dealing with this question for several months. Further to the technological change grievances filed under Article 29 of the urban collective agreement and Article 35 of the rural collective agreement, the Union is conducting, in conjunction with the employer, various studies regarding the implementation of new technologies, changes to the LCRMS and MSCWSS manuals, as well as the rollout of the reaching device and right-hand drive vehicles for RSMCs.

The Union also negotiated service preservation and expansion projects, such as same-day parcel delivery in Toronto and Vancouver. We also negotiated two Appendix AA projects in Montreal regarding the assessment and readjustment of time values for parcel delivery and the replacement of per-piece payments with time values for householder delivery. We also began discussions regarding the sortation and delivery value study outlined in Letter 3 of the RSMC collective agreement. As well, we are continuing the interest arbitration before Arbitrator Keller regarding work methods for Group 2 of the urban unit. This directly relates to the organization of work and these situations must be resolved through negotiations.

This provides a brief rundown of how the NEB sees the overall context of these negotiations. Now we will review in more detail the items that the NEB suggests we discuss. More specifically, the NEB proposes that we approach and prepare for these negotiations based on the following principles and themes.

## **PROTECTING OUR RIGHTS: JOB SECURITY**

Protecting the rights we have negotiated into our collective agreements is one of the principles that must guide us as we negotiate. We absolutely have to maintain our customary demands, starting with job security. Job security is the basis of any collective agreement, and we know that the employer will try to attack it. Job security has to be one of the essential pillars of negotiations for both the

urban and rural units. In any negotiations, it's always important to reaffirm our determination to maintain job security, including all the provisions of the collective agreement that guarantee its fair and equitable application to all employees: **JOB SECURITY FOR ALL.**

## **BUILDING ON THE CURRENT COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS**

In 2012, we negotiated collective agreements that were ratified by all members. We must build our overall program of demands based on these collective agreements. One of the major changes in the last round of negotiations was the introduction of the Short-Term Disability Insurance Plan (STDP). Since the implementation of the STDP for both collective agreements, we've had discussions with the employer to resolve some issues, such as definitions. Other issues have been grieved and are before arbitrators. One such example is the time limits for the submission of medical forms, for which a national grievance was filed by both bargaining units. Finally, a number of issues require clarification, such as the fact that some independent medical practitioners are rendering their decision at the final appeals level prior to having received the Union's arguments. The employer will likely argue that it did not achieve the financial relief it expected and must obtain more. We should also point out that the costs associated with the independent medical practitioners exceed \$200,000.00 for each party. We also have to ensure that the plan provides equal coverage to all members of both bargaining units. Are there other issues we should discuss regarding the STDP?

We have to approach our benefit plans in the same way. We must discuss how we will eliminate, for each plan, the differences between the two collective agreements without a significant increase in employee premiums. For example, RSMCs have lower levels of coverage under the Extended Health Care Plan, but they also have lower premiums. As well, they are covered by an extended disability insurance plan at no extra cost. If we want everyone to be covered by the same benefit plans, we'll have to conduct a serious review of all plans. To help with this work, what problems have you experienced with the benefit plans and how do you think they should be standardized?

In 2011, we managed to protect our defined benefit pension plan, but we know it will again be at issue in these negotiations. In a bulletin to all members, we summarized the Union's position as follows:

- “-The defined benefit pension plan must be maintained.*
- Acquired rights must be protected.*
- Changes to the plan can only be made through collective bargaining.*

*These principles are clear and very easy to understand. First, with a defined benefit pension plan, we know how much we pay into it and how much we will get at retirement. Second, the past is untouchable; acquired rights are to be maintained, and what’s been accumulated is guaranteed. Third, if changes are made, they would only apply going forward, i.e. they only affect the future, and would only occur through negotiations. This will allow each and every member to have a say.”*

Where do we go from here? How should we approach the future of the pension plan knowing that the relief provided to Canada Post from making special payments ends in December 2017? Every member should read the submission we made in the spring of 2014 as part of the federal consultation on target benefit plans. Our Bulletin to the members “The Federal Government and our Pension” can be found at the end (Appendix 3). Members must fully understand the Union’s position and discuss various options for guaranteeing the sustainability of the pension plan without it always hanging in the balance in every round of negotiations and being used by the employer to attack our wages and our working conditions.

## **WORK ORGANIZATION THAT RESPECTS WORKERS**

With the many changes that have taken place in recent years, we know that work organization will be at the heart of the upcoming round of negotiations, regardless of tasks, work methods or hours of work. We need to think about work organization not only in terms of the new technology, but in terms of the services Canada Post provides or should provide Canadians.

As for the latter, it can no longer be denied that, in thinking about the future of the postal service, we must take into account the fact that Canada Post is in direct competition with private sector companies that provide similar services, especially in the area of parcel delivery. A couple of examples are companies like Transforce and Amazon, who directly compete with Canada Post. A closer analysis leads to two conclusions. First, we need to focus on maintaining quality postal

service and expanding services while at the same time ensuring we are protected against contracting out. Second, we always have to keep in mind that the postal service could be privatized, deregulated or dismantled. So what should we do? Members attending local membership meetings need to ponder the following questions:

- Should our program of demands include issues that reflect our vision of the public postal service, such as financial services, postal banking and “last mile”?
- How do we restructure schedules or the work week? To take these realities into account, should we ask that postal work be extended over seven days, for example in wicket work, parcel delivery and courier service?

New technology has obviously caused upheaval in work methods for all postal workers, both rural and urban. Consequently, in this round of negotiations, we need to pay special attention to our quality of life at work, first on the workfloor, where workplace management and relations have deteriorated considerably. We have been able to witness the sad consequences of this deterioration in the case of those of our sisters and brothers who took their own lives or quit their job as a result of overwhelming psychological stress. Members in attendance at local membership meetings will have to discuss whether the social stewards’ network should be recognized under the collective agreements?

When 32% of the members responding to a study survey say they fear breakouts of violence on the work floor, this is a wake-up call that can’t be ignored. We need to equip ourselves to face these situations. So what demands are we going to put forth in response to such situations?

In addition to changing the work methods, the new technology has led to changes in work schedules, which has in turn caused major turmoil in our members’ everyday life and habits. There has also been an increase in overtime and frequency of offers for overtime, resulting in overburdening. The impact is being felt by a vast majority of workers. Families with children have had to change their childcare and before and after care arrangements. Work-life balance is being affected, so this will have to be taken into consideration in our program of demands.

Before going any further, we should remember that the issues we have discussed so far revolve around basic overarching themes and principles that must underlie the next round of negotiations. These are:

- protecting our rights: job security;
- building on the current collective agreements;
- negotiating a work organization structure that respects workers;
- negotiating work conditions that allow for work-life balance.

Keeping in mind these main themes and principles, we can now examine the specific issues that more specifically affect workers covered under the two collective agreements. We need to discuss these points, and tie them in to the above-mentioned themes, and formulate demands to address the problems that have been raised.

## **URBAN UNIT**

### **Group 1**

Recently, we received the final report on the joint, independent ergonomic study of the multiline optical character reader (MLOCR). The findings confirm our concerns: 90% of those who took part in the survey reported discomfort and pain when working at an MLOCR. The ergonomics firm responsible for the study formulated 26 recommendations, which the employer has committed to implementing. However, we will need to constantly keep a close eye on, among others, rotation of duties and the new equipment rolled out as part of postal transformation. Given the speed of this new equipment, we need to be really mindful of the repetitive strain injuries that could result from work on this equipment.

We also need to examine the staffing process. The employer's staffing strategy is based solely on attrition. As soon as a position becomes vacant, it is abolished. We need a mechanism that will allow us to question and challenge the employer's staffing decisions. Should we use bar charts, as is done

for Group 2? Or a type of presumption provision that would protect existing positions until the employer offers irrefutable justification?

We also know that the employer is continually trying to replace full-time positions with part-time positions. The ratio provided for in Appendix “P” is still relevant. We have settled the ratio-related grievances and have put a process in place, but the problems persist. What should we do?

We also know the employer has been changing job titles as well as unilaterally changing duties in each group. For example, it is trying to find ways of having letter carriers carry out depot clerk duties. This is a long-standing situation. We need to solve it, but how? Should we eliminate job classifications, or even groups? This is a discussion we need to have for the upcoming negotiations.

## **Group 2**

Unfortunately, it seems that the interest arbitration before arbitrator Keller will continue for several more months. Consequently, the only decision rendered so far by the arbitrator has been to put an end to the two-bundle delivery method forced on this group by the employer. The arbitrator requested an independent ergonomic study of the new work method. The study is now underway, and we will likely receive its initial findings this coming June. We will need to look closely at this study and see how it will enable us to propose changes or adjustments to the delivery method.

At the same time, we are also carrying out the validation process provided for under the urban collective agreement to adjust postal transformation (PT) time values. As discussed earlier in this paper, we are carrying out two studies in Montreal to examine parcels and replace per-piece payments with time values for householders. Further, we need to remember that the staffing issue, i.e. ensuring there are enough workers to do the job – must remain a constant concern.

There is also the whole gamut of problems that members are facing on the workforce. Whether these involve compulsory overtime, compensatory time off or force-backs, they can no longer be ignored. They have been with us for much too long. For many years now, we have been discussing various solutions, such as an eight-hour day, increasing the percentage of coverage, householder time values,

etc. This time, we cannot avoid discussing these issues. We need to settle them as whole, and not piecemeal. It is an important discussion that members will need to have at their local membership meetings, so as to develop an overall vision regarding delivery methods.

### **Groups 3 and 4**

On January 23 and 24, we held a meeting with sisters and brothers from Groups 3 and 4 to discuss the problems they are facing at work. First, we should remember that there are members from Groups 3 and 4 in 21 locals, for a total of about 700 nation-wide. Our discussion revolved around their day-to-day work situation and identifying not only problems, but their solutions to these problems as well. Their concerns generally reflected those of other union members, but with particular aspects that need to be considered. We have grouped them under six headings and summarized them as follows:

- (a) Staffing: understaffing, compulsory overtime, weekend work, tool quality, shift changes (clause 14.17) and filling vacant positions.
- (b) Job Descriptions and Work Organization: updating based on the new technology, standardization of duties in all postal facilities, integrating equipment into the collective agreement (Appendix “T”).
- (c) Occupational Health and Safety: work on high-voltage electrical panels, working alone, tool quality, uniform quality, insufficient time for clean-up and other operations, safety goggles, etc.
- (d) Training: access to and quality of training, inadequate e-training.
- (e) Maximo (centralized time management program): time values are not in line with reality; program aimed at eliminating jobs; applied differently from one facility to another.
- (f) Wages: This issue will be covered further on.

## **RURAL AND SUBURBAN MAIL CARRIER UNIT**

As you may have noticed, the RSMC unit faces some of the same problems as the urban operations unit. The context is the same, but the numbers are increasing. The rural unit currently comprises over 8,000 members, including all those who are working. The number of suburban carriers has increased dramatically in the past few years and now exceeds 3,500. The situation of relief employees, whether they be permanent or replacements, continues to be a problem.

As mentioned earlier, we have focussed our efforts in the past few years on improving work methods. Let us mention once again the reaching device and right-hand drive vehicles. But there is much left to be done. The following issues need particular attention.

- Workload: Mail volumes have been increasing in all residential neighbourhoods and in new developments.
- Time worked but not paid: We have been attempting to solve this problem now for more than 10 years.
- Increased volumes in suburban areas.
- Wage structure (zones) and employees maintained at the maximum wage level.
- Relief employees: Inadequate staffing and office to which they are assigned.
- Impact of postal transformation: The employer is implementing sequencing and new work methods, e.g. for parcels.
- Variable delivery values.

These are all realities that we need to discuss for these negotiations. It would be good to suggest appropriate solutions.

## **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Bill C-4, which was adopted by the Harper government and amends the *Canada Labour Code* definition of “danger,” and the application of the right to refuse, will certainly impact our working conditions. The government is also giving consideration to amending occupational health and safety



regulations applicable to the federal public sector. We need to look at analyzing these changes and finding ways of protecting the health and safety of our members.

## **WAGES**

Wage negotiations are an inevitable part of the process in each round. We need to deal with the increase in the cost of living and contribute to collectively enriching the society we live in. The last wage increase received by urban unit members occurred on February 1, 2014, i.e. a raise of approximately 50 cents an hour, in line with the 2% increase imposed by the back-to-work legislation. As for rural and suburban mail carriers, the last increase in the variable allowance or where the maximum progression level applies dates back to January 2015.

Elsewhere, the consumer price index has increased by nearly 2% over the past year. To be able to discuss this issue on solids grounds, we asked our Research Department to compare the increase in the cost of living with our wage increases. The figures cover the period between 1995 and now. They are as follows:

**ANNUAL WAGES (\$) – (REGULAR WAGES)**

	<b><u>Feb. 1</u></b> <b><u>1995</u></b>	<b><u>Feb. 1</u></b> <b><u>2014</u></b>	<b><u>Increase</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b> <b><u>Difference</u></b>
<b>Mail handlers</b>	<b>35,292</b>	<b>53,846</b>	<b>18,554</b>	<b>52.6%</b>
<b>Clerks/letter carriers/MSCs</b>	<b>35,605</b>	<b>54,159</b>	<b>18,554</b>	<b>52.1%</b>
<b>Mail dispatchers</b>	<b>35,897</b>	<b>54,472</b>	<b>18,575</b>	<b>51.7%</b>
<b>Letter carriers/Relief MSCs</b>	<b>36,607</b>	<b>55,307</b>	<b>18,700</b>	<b>51.1%</b>
<b>MSCs (heavy vehicles)</b>	<b>37,441</b>	<b>56,225</b>	<b>18,784</b>	<b>50.2%</b>
<b>MAM-10</b>	<b>39,090</b>	<b>59,919</b>	<b>20,829</b>	<b>53.3%</b>
<b>MAM-11/VHE-9</b>	<b>40,425</b>	<b>61,436</b>	<b>21,037</b>	<b>52.0%</b>
<b>EL-5</b>	<b>48,029</b>	<b>72,775</b>	<b>24,746</b>	<b>51.5 %</b>

Note: In 2000, Group 3 members received an extra bump up of 50 cents in addition to the regular increases for the bargaining unit. Group 4 members received an extra 2.5 hours pay per week with no change in hours worked.

**Consumer Price Index and Main Indices, Canada**

February 1995 (2002=100): 87.0

February 2014 (2002=100): 124.1

42.6%

During the four years 2011-2015 the wages for PO 4 and letter carriers increased 7.5%. No increase for the 5th year. The CPI for January 2011 was 117.8 (2002=100). The most recent month is December 2014 which was 124.5. The increase is 6.7% over almost 4 years.

A look at these figures helps put the situation in perspective. We can see how, over the past 20 years, we have nevertheless succeeded in dealing successfully with the increased cost of living. A reminder that here, we are always converting the percentage increases into absolute numbers, i.e. dollars and cents. It has always been our approach to reduce wage differences. We need to ask whether we want to continue in this direction, and assess what we want in terms of wage increases.

## **PROTECTING AND IMPROVING OUR GAINS AND RIGHTS**

In each round of negotiations, our aim is to protect our gains and improve the collective agreement in the following areas:

- Maintaining and improving the union funds negotiated with Canada Post.
- Human rights and equality: One of the prime responsibilities of a union is to promote equality and human rights among its members.
- Protection against harassment and workplace violence: We need better protection against all forms of harassment and violence.

## **ONE OR TWO COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS?**

And now the big question: one collective agreement or two? For many years, we and our members have been saying that we all need to be covered under one collective agreement. What is your view on this?

We have kept this question for last, because we wanted first to highlight the main themes and principles that will guide us in preparing for negotiations, and to underscore points that were common to everyone. We then pointed out aspects that were specific to the different employee groups represented by the union. But we have a decision to make, and it will not be an easy one, given that it has many facets we need to fully understand. Let's start by doing away with some "myths."

The first concerns the fact that many members are under the impression that being covered by the same collective agreement means that everyone would enjoy the same rights, entitlements, benefits and wages. This is not necessarily true. We would need to consider specific circumstances, and how these would be reflected in the collective agreement, for example, based on a particular group or job classification. There are already significant, if not major, differences among employees in the two collective agreements.

The second concerns seniority. Some members worry that urban operations members would use their seniority to bump RSMC sisters and brothers. If both collective agreements were amalgamated, specific rules would have to be drawn up to cover the use of seniority.

Costs also have to be considered. Merging two collective agreements will inevitably entail some cost. This will mean having to make a choice, for example between focusing more on standardizing benefits than on obtaining wage increases. Annual leave is another example. A comparison of the articles dealing with annual leave reveals major differences. This is just one area where such differences arise when comparing both collective agreements. Merging them will require a lot of groundwork and comparison to effectively incorporate their respective language.

We also have to be able to identify the benefits, for example, of standardizing the grievance procedure and consultation process. This would eliminate overlap for both the employer and the Union, and also allow us to avoid internal division and strengthen the voice of the Union.

As you can see, making an informed decision will require us to weigh the pros and the cons. A comprehensive analysis of both collective agreements will be required and issues will need to be addressed so that everyone is satisfied with the results. If the two agreements are to be merged, we will need to decide to put the collective interest ahead of individual interest. Choices will have to be made. Participants at local membership meetings will need to really analyze the situation and decide on the best approach.

If, after deliberation, members agree to go with one collective agreement, they will need to give the National Executive Board and the Negotiating Committee a broad mandate to find the most effective

way of carrying out the merger. And we will need to determine a strategy to get there. Irrespective of the final decision, the Board decided at its last meeting to proceed with striking two negotiating committees as quickly as possible: one for the urban operations unit, and one for the RSMC unit. So which will it be: one or two collective agreements?

In closing, many challenges lie ahead in the next round of negotiations. Our work is changing, and we need to respond, to engage in the required debates and find the best way of improving our working conditions. We will have to develop a consistent program of demands that our members and the public can easily understand.

We need the political will to have this debate and carry it through to fruition. And this should be done in a spirit of camaraderie, solidarity and respect. At the same time, we need to continue the struggle on all fronts and in all forums. Let's work to mobilize the membership to protect our universal public postal service.

HAVE A GREAT DISCUSSION.

*:mcmd cope 225  
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## **A Better Public Postal Service For Everyone! : It's Time.**

**Canada Post belongs to all of us - not just the federal politicians and the large corporate mailers, and certainly not just post office management.**

We believe it's time to get back to the basics. We want improvements instead of unnecessary cutbacks. It's time Canada Post redirect itself to meeting the needs of the people.

### **Fair postage rates:**

Recently the Conservatives authorized increases of 35% to 59% for individuals. The increases for business mailers were 15% to 19%. That's not fair. Postage rates should be affordable and equal for everyone.

### **Accessible delivery:**

The Conservative government is supporting Canada Post's plan to eliminate door-to-door delivery to more than 5 million homes. This will cause serious problems for people with restricted mobility. Canada Post should maintain door-to-door delivery and convert to more door-to-door delivery as finances permit. It's time to put people first!

### **Maintaining rural and urban post offices:**

Canada Post management has been closing post offices. It's time to make better use of the largest retail network in the country to provide more services to the public.

### **Re-introducing financial services:**

It's time for Canada Post to follow the example of postal services in countries such as Switzerland, France, the UK and Italy and use its network to provide banking and financial services.

### **Transparency and accountability:**

Back-room meetings and secret studies have to end. We need real consultation. Canada Post's 800-page secret study described postal banking as a "win-win" strategy. It's time for truth instead of cover-ups and spin.

### **A greener post:**

Canada Post is an environmentally positive option for parcels and courier items. It's time to consolidate delivery services for consumers and reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.

### **Respect and decent working conditions:**

Postal workers deserve safe and healthy working conditions. It's time to make this a priority.

***The Canadian Union of Postal Workers has a better plan for Canada Post. Join us and help us make this happen.***

**SaveCanadaPost.ca  
1-855-878-7111**

Canadian Union of Postal Workers  
Syndicat des travailleurs et travailleuses des postes



## Appendix 2 - Overview of the impact of Postal Transformation on the work-life balance of CUPW members

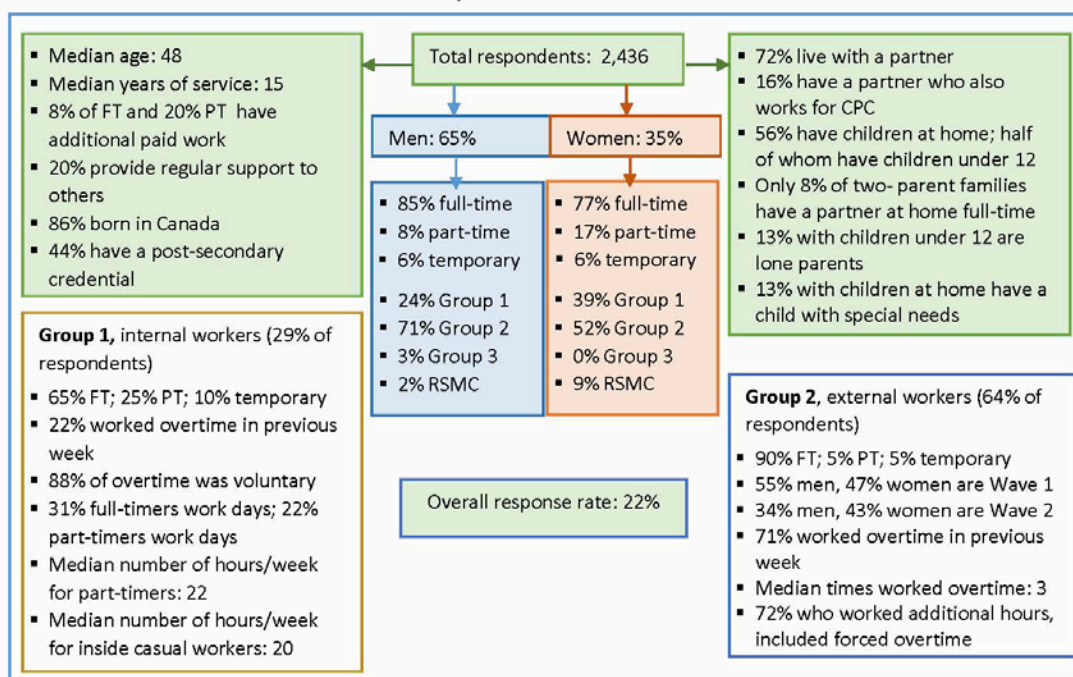
### Overview of the study on the impact of Postal Transformation on the work-life balance of CUPW members



From September 2013 - September 2014, CUPW conducted a study to identify, document and analyze impacts arising from the introduction of Postal Transformation (PT). The study included a literature review on work-family balance, 16 focus groups, and a survey of members in five Locals: St. John's, Montreal, Scarborough, Winnipeg and Edmonton. Online and paper versions of the survey were made available to all participating Locals. Members participating in the union's Special Needs project in all parts of the country where PT has been implemented were also surveyed via telephone.

This overview summarizes some of the study's key findings. The full report is available on the CUPW website.

#### About the members who answered the survey



#### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The majority of respondents reported negative effects from Postal Transformation, regardless of their group, shift or gender.

- While *all* groups reported significant, negative impacts of PT, effects on both life at work and life at home were felt more by Group 2s than others.
- Key work-related changes that had a negative effect on members' health and well-being, and work-family balance included:
  - increased harassment by supervisors
  - changes to schedules and hours of work
  - changes to work methods
  - more frequent overtime (especially for Group 2s).

- The frequency of overtime, especially forced overtime, corresponded to an increase in reported negative impacts related to physical and mental health, anger and fear of potential violence at work, and perceptions of reduced safety at work.
- Negative impacts included greater issues with child care, less time to spend with family and other time-related challenges, increased health-related problems, increased tension in the workplace, and erosion of personal relationships.

#### PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORK AND WORKPLACE

Almost all respondents said they felt productive at work and two-thirds said they enjoyed their job. Two-thirds felt their job was hard, and fewer than half said they had enough time to get their work done or were able to work at a reasonable speed. A lower percentage of Group 2s reported that they enjoyed their work than other groups. A considerably higher percentage of Group 2 respondents found their work hard and a considerably lower percentage thought they had time to get their work done, or could work at a reasonable speed.

#### Views on selected aspects of work by group, all respondents

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	RSMC
My work is hard	42%	78%	46%	47%
I have time to get my work done	62%	39%	72%	68%
The speed at which I have to work is reasonable	54%	36%	80%	68%

- 53% felt safe at work
- 55% felt angry at work
- 33% feared potential violence at work

Among all groups, concerns were raised about feelings of safety and potential violence at work.

In both Groups 1 and 2, a higher percentage of full-time women than full-time men indicated that they felt less safe at work and feared potential violence more. A higher percentage of Group 1 men than

Group 1 women reported feeling more angry at work than before PT.

#### Percentage reporting aspects of life at work that have gotten worse since PT, full-time

	Group 1 women	Group 1 men	Group 2 women	Group 2 men
I feel less safe at work	53%	44%	76%	65%
I feel more angry at work	52%	61%	73%	65%
I fear potential violence at work more	68%	50%	78%	74%

#### Perceptions of supervisors

A Canadian National Work-Life Conflict Study<sup>1</sup> found that supervisor behaviours that help employees cope with work-life conflict include:

- asking for input into decisions that affect employees' work
- making expectations clear
- giving recognition for a job well done
- being available to answer questions.

Respondents were asked a number of questions about their views of their supervisors. There was little variation by group and gender. Part-time workers were slightly more positive in their views than those working full-time.

<sup>1</sup> Higgins, C.; Duxbury, L.; and S Lyons. *Reducing Work-life Conflict: What Works? What Doesn't?* Accessed September 30, 2014, from: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/alt\\_formats/hecs-sesc/pdf/pubs/occup-travail/balancing-equilibre/full\\_report-rapport\\_complet-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/alt_formats/hecs-sesc/pdf/pubs/occup-travail/balancing-equilibre/full_report-rapport_complet-eng.pdf)



#### Percentage who agreed with the following statements about their supervisors

Follows established work procedures	59%
Provides a good level of supervision	47%
Provides a supportive work environment	42%
Has good leadership skills	42%
Takes my opinion into account	36%
Consults with me about changes	35%
Ignores my problems	48%

Respondents were also asked if these perceptions had got better, stayed the same or gotten worse since PT. In each of the categories, Group 2 perceptions were particularly negative, with more than 50% reporting a worsening in each of the categories.

#### Changes to schedule and hours of work

- 72% of all respondents reported a schedule change since PT
- 86% of full-time Group 2s experienced a schedule change compared to 45% of Group 1s
- 51% of full-time Group 2s are working more hours since PT compared to 3% of Group 1s
- 64% of full-time Group 2s are working later hours since PT, compared to 13% of Group 1s
- 85% of Group 2s are working more overtime since PT compared to 24% of Group 1s
- 48% of part-time Group 1s and 42% of part-time Group 2s have had their hours cut since PT

#### Impacts due schedule changes that have gotten worse since PT (full-time)

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	RSMC
Child care issues	75%	90%	50%	25%
School drop-off and pick-up	59%	83%	0%	60%
Time to spend with family	67%	89%	77%	63%
Time to volunteer	67%	92%	56%	45%
Time to take care of self	64%	89%	62%	57%

Roughly equal percentages of men and women, but highest for Group 2, reported that time-related challenges at home and with their children had gotten worse.

#### IMPACT OF PT ON PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The effects on relationships were greater among Group 2s than Group 1s, and were greater among women than for men in both groups. Approximately 70% of Group 2 women reported negative impacts on relationships with their partner, with their children, and with their family and friends.

#### Personal relationships that have gotten worse by group and by gender (full-time)

	Group 1 men	Group 1 women	Group 2 men	Group 2 women
Relationship with children	33%	51%	56%	72%
Relationship with partner	32%	44%	54%	66%
Relationship with other family and friends	38%	49%	56%	72%

Among Group 2s, effects on relationships were worse for those working Wave 2 than Wave 1, and in both waves, they were worse for women

than men. Negative impacts on relationships were greater with increased frequency of overtime.

#### IMPACT OF PT ON HEALTH

Again, for Group 2s, the impacts of PT on health were considerably greater than in other groups.

**Aspects of health that have gotten worse since PT (full-time)**

	<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Group 3</b>	<b>RSMC</b>
Level of fatigue	64%	<b>89%</b>	44%	47%
Level of stress	66%	<b>87%</b>	33%	47%
Level of anxiety	64%	<b>84%</b>	32%	47%
Aches and pains	67%	<b>89%</b>	35%	52%
Frequency of workplace injuries	35%	<b>66%</b>	13%	32%

A higher percentage of women in both groups reported more negative impacts on health than men; as well, greater negative impacts were associated with the frequency of overtime worked.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Respondents were asked to identify one change that would make their work life better.

**Most frequently mentioned suggestions for making work life better**

<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve schedules</li> <li>▪ More day and afternoon shifts</li> <li>▪ Better hours for part-timers</li> <li>▪ Improve communication</li> <li>▪ Treat workers with respect</li> <li>▪ Apply rules consistently</li> <li>▪ Listen to employee input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allow sorting of sequenced mail</li> <li>▪ Eliminate the double bundle system</li> <li>▪ Improve autonomy</li> <li>▪ Reinstate parcel delivery</li> <li>▪ Eliminate Wave 2</li> <li>▪ Stop forced overtime</li> <li>▪ Give time values for parcel delivery</li> <li>▪ Improve route measurement</li> <li>▪ Ensure more equitable routes</li> <li>▪ Shorten some loops</li> </ul>

**Conclusion**

The extent of work-life conflict of many members, particularly those working as Group 2s, should be cause for concern for both the union and management. In addition to the personal health and work-life conflict issues members are experiencing, the proportion of members who feel angry at work, who fear violence at work and who do not feel safe at work is troubling.

Suggested actions for the union include:

- explore more effective ways to communicate with members
- examine ways for full-time officers to have a greater presence in the plants and depots to better understand issues facing rank and file members
- review the articles in the Collective Agreement on overtime, and explore mechanisms to reduce the amount of forced overtime, as well as ways to improve the ability of members to take comp time
- consider how to address the need for accommodation of members, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities
- discuss with the employer ways to ensure a well-trained supervisory workforce with appropriate management skills as well as an understanding of work methods and processes in order to provide a supportive workplace that can meet operational demands, help reduce work-life conflict, and support the health and well-being of employees.



November 6, 2014

## The Federal Government and our Pension

Currently as CUPW members who work at Canada Post we have a defined benefit pension plan.

### WHAT IS A DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN?

A defined benefit (DB) pension plan is a plan in which the monthly retirement pension is determined by a set formula, rather than depending on investment returns or the health of the plan. The formula for the Canada Post Pension Plan is determined by our years of service and our earnings in the best five years of consecutive service. For part-time and RSMC workers, years of service are seen as a ratio of full-time hours.

Defined Benefit pension plans provide the most retirement security. A person will know exactly what amount of money she/he will receive upon retirement. Currently, under existing federal legislation, employers cannot change existing defined benefit pension plans to other types of pension plans.

### WHAT IS A TARGET BENEFIT PLAN?

So what is a target benefit plan? A target benefit pension plan is what we call a shared-risk pension plan. The employer puts money in it, but there is no obligation to fund any pension shortfall; the entire burden is on the existing workers and retirees. And the amount of money a retiree would receive is not guaranteed, it is a moving target depending on the market and investment returns.

In April 2014, the Federal Government signalled that they want to change this legislation. They want to be able to amend the legislation to allow for employers to change defined benefit pension plans into target benefit pension plans in the federal sector (this

includes Canada Post). They issued a call for responses to this proposal. We suspect legislation will be introduced in Parliament.

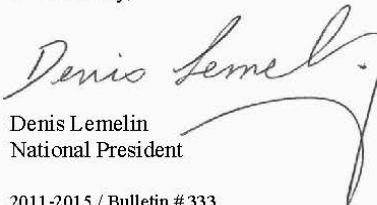
### WE ARE AGAINST TARGET BENEFIT PENSION PLANS: SIGN THE PETITION

Canada Post replied to the call for submissions. In their response they spoke very favourably about the need for Target Benefit Pension plans, and how their current Defined Benefit Pension plan places too much financial burden on them.

CUPW also replied to this call, and opposed any change from Defined Benefit Pension plans to Target Benefit Pension plans.

There have been demonstrations in Toronto and Saint John New Brunswick opposing any change from Defined Benefit to Target Benefit Pension plans. Your Local has also received a petition on this issue. Please sign it. And we encourage every local to establish a Pension and Retiree Benefits Committee.

In Solidarity,



Denis Lemelin  
National President

2011-2015 / Bulletin # 333  
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