

STRIKE BULLETIN

Friday, Nov. 9/84

Last night, Management (November 7) broke off talks. We spent most of our time discussing their takeaways and making some accommodations. When it came time to discuss our issues Management suggested binding arbitration. The Negotiating Committee unanimously agrees that such a step is unnecessary. Jack White made it clear to management that we are still prepared to negotiate.

We did not want talks broken-off.

Over the past few days the progress we made was:
Medical Certificates to exempt employees unable to work at a V.D.T.
Electronic Monitoring will not be a major method of evaluation
Adoption Leave will be treated as maternity leave.
Commitment to regularly check V.D.T. equipment.

Their major move on takeaways was to drop their proposal on seniority accrual while on Leave of Absences. The gains we made showed progress and we were shocked that management wanted an arbitrator to be called in to settle the issues that can be negotiated.

Do management believe that their outstanding issues are important enough to continue the strike? They refuse to give in on some concessions that taken individually may seem relatively harmless but as a whole are aimed in one direction - to substantially weaken the collective agreement and therefore erode our rights.

COME TO THE MEETING FRIDAY NOVEMBER 8 AT 2:00 p.m. at the MORRISSEY to discuss our position. The negotiating committee will be asking you for a unanimous decision to reject Binding Arbitration and strengthen our commitment to win a fair contract through negotiations.

MANAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

In the recognition clause management wants to exclude from union protection Assist. Head of Cata., Supervisor of 16mm film, Methodist Analyst, Computer Operation Manager.

They want to create a new category of Temporary part-time workers who would have no rights.

They want a probationary period for Part-timers of 500 hours or 6 months which ever comes last in which they also (p.t) have no rights.

They want "schedule" in management clause

UNION PROPOSALS

We want to include supervisor of A.V.S. and Talking Books, Methodist Analyst and Computer Operations Mana.

We would agree to a probationary period for part-timers of 50 hours if management agrees to sick time credit for part-timers.

We want them to agree to exercise their rights in a "fair" and "reasonable" manner.

Increments will be granted only if an employees supervisor recommends.

current practise.

Management wants to change the language in the overtime clause which we think changes the practise of being credited with overtime from a daily basis to a weekly basis.

current practise

They want to add "experience relating to the position" to our advertising vacancies clause and promotions - they would decide whether you were qualified.

A P.T.,F.T. or Temp. Employee shall be considered as a candidate for any vacancy which might occur and is posted within the 1582 unit. The employee will make application to the Personnel Dept. advising of her interests, qualifications, skill and availability to take other position. With reference to the application made to the Personal Dept. all qualified applicants who meet the posted requirement for the vacant position will be interviewedd

Management wants to meet with only 3 members in grievances instead of the 5.

current practise.

Lay-off by position in which they will identify. (They said they would go back to current language if we would)

We want job security, guarantee of retraining and relocation within the Library based on seniority

They want to transfer employees in or out of the bargaining unit. Whenever, however etc. when they want.

No Transfer without consent - current practise.

1 year agreement

2 year agreement

5% in wages

5% in wages & lost wages due to strike.



JOKE OF THE DAY

What is the strike all about?

Chairman of the Board: "We're trying to clean up the language."

A Picketeer: "When I think about management, I need to clean up my language."

This Telepost was sent to Chairman Hartley by the coalition of Women working with Immigrant Women on Thursday, Nov.8.

"The coalition of Women Working With Immigrant Women are in full support of the striking library workers. We demand that the Board address the issues and honour the collective agreement. Women must be given job protection and fair wages. We cannot and will not accept anything less."

MEDIATION: IT WAS NICE WHILE IT LASTED

Brace yourselves. Management broke off talks late last night, just when the prospect of a negotiated settlement began to seem like a real possibility. The Management negotiating team, with fourteen major takeaways still on the table, informed us that they were not prepared to move on any of the remaining issues, that they believed further negotiations were useless and then suggested -- fully realizing that it would be totally unacceptable to us -- that the two parties submit their differences to binding arbitration. Then they walked out, bringing mediation to an abrupt end and making it painfully clear that they have no serious intention of negotiating an end to this strike.

It was a shameful performance. But I suppose we should have expected it. On Monday, after four days of intensive bargaining we succeeded, with the help of an active and energetic mediator, to force Management to withdraw a number of their more inconsequential takeaways and revert to current language, while arriving at satisfactory compromises regarding several other issues, e.g., the matter of electronic monitoring of employees' work performance and medical exemptions from working on VDT/CRT equipment. Some of us were naive enough to think that this represented real progress, that some sort of breakthrough had been reached, that Management was truly interested in reaching a negotiated settlement, perhaps before the end of the week. Yesterday our illusions were rudely shattered.

At the beginning of the day, more than a dozen important issues remained outstanding, with Management holding to its proposals on lay-off and recall, recognition, management rights, advertising vacancies, overtime, increments and part-time employees. Our own remaining proposals had not yet been considered or even addressed by the other side. (The particular concerns of Local 2758 have been completely ignored -- and their negotiators treated with patronizing rudeness by Management's spokesman -- from the very beginning of these talks.)

Most of the day was spent in frustrating, largely unproductive piecemeal bargaining. It gradually became clear that the Board's negotiators were not prepared to make any further significant moves and that they were stalling for time. We did manage to extract a couple of minor concessions -- the letter of intent guaranteeing us a half day on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve was restored and Management agreed to our original proposal to include adoption in the maternity leave clause. However, these gains were cancelled out by Management's provocative insistence on retaining the word "experience" in article 20.05 relating to advertising vacancies and adding it to the other articles dealing with the same issue. But this was merely a prelude to the grand finale.

Late in the evening, the mediator suggested that we finally be given the opportunity to discuss with Management those issues of special concern to us. We therefore proceeded to explain our counter-proposal on lay-off and recall and indicated we would be seeking a wage increase substantially greater than 5% -- our initial position was 15% -- in order to compensate us for wages lost as a result of the strike. We made it clear that both proposals were negotiable.

This provided the pretext that Management had been waiting for all day. In a tone of feigned sorrow and regret -- it was the sort of blatantly cynical display that gives lawyers a bad name -- John Sanderson informed us that the proposals we had just made represented an insurmountable obstacle to a settlement, that further negotiations were useless and that the only solution was final and binding arbitration. And then he led his motley crew out of the room.

We called their bluff. Let's leave aside the issues of lay-off and wages for now which are, in any case, negotiable. Let's continue to discuss some of the fourteen or fifteen Management takeaways that have not yet been resolved and some of which we have seriously attempted to address. Sanderson sadly shook his head. We've been talking for four days, he replied and it's obvious (?) we can't settle this across the bargaining table. The Board's negotiating committee went home, this latest round of mediation came to an end and, not quite believing what we had just heard, we went looking for a beer.

It was such a clumsy ploy. Did they seriously expect us to accept binding arbitration when virtually all the outstanding issues to be arbitrated consist of Management takeaways? Why has Management chosen to break off talks just when some progress was beginning to be made? For some reason they do not want a negotiated settlement. For some reason, they want this unnecessary and destructive strike to continue. For some reason, they want the library to remain closed. Perhaps they are trying to save face, to salvage their careers and what is left of their reputations at the expense of their employees and what was once a great library; perhaps they really are intent on breaking our unions. There's no point in trying to fathom their reasons, since it's become obvious we are not dealing with intelligent life forms. The lunatics, sadly, have taken over the asylum.

Two points, however, are clear. 1) Our strike is about to enter a new and grimmer phase. 2) More than ever, it is a strike we cannot afford to lose.

R. Cupido,
1806 Negotiating Committee

"IN ANY LANGUAGE THE CONTRACT STINKS" was the banner's message in front of the library for the Multicultural Rally on Wednesday at 4:30. And that, too, was the message brought by members of the various communities. Jean Forde and Donna Greenberg, the excellent organizers of this event, introduced speakers representing the following communities: Jewish Labour Committee, Sri Lankan, Filipino, Chinese, Italian, Latin American and Black. The cleaners from the Portuguese community, who had won their struggle this year at First Canadian Place, stirred up the crowd with their songs. There was familiar music, like the "We Shall Not Be Moved", sung in their language, and the folksy Chicken-and-Egg song with updated lyrics. In their finale the singers beat their fists against the front doors of the library which roused one security guard into calling the police. Thanks to Jean and Donna the rally was enthusiastic and the evening ended with supporters - multicultural representatives, members from other CUPE as well as other union locals - joining hands in a chorus of "Solidarity Forever".

PETER GZOWSKI interviewed three strikers this morning on his "Morningside" show, probing the feelings of people on the picket line. Sandra Alston, one of the radio guests, declared that the feeling was one of anger among the library strikers.

UPCOMING EVENTS - NOV. 12th - 17th

- Monday, Nov. 12th - 2p.m. Strike Committee meeting - Morrissey(2nd floor)
EVERYONE WELCOME!
- Tuesday, Nov.13th - 11a.m. Fun and Games Pinada Event
- Meeting of the Executive Board of Metro Council for a report on the progress of our negotiations.
- Wednesday, Nov.14th - 12:30p.m. - 1582 Membership meeting to discuss a dues increase - how much, when etc.
- 2p.m. - 1582,1806,2758 joint membership meeting with a showing of the Laura Skye film about CUPE women - "Yes You Can".
- 4:30 - 6p.m. - Labour Solidarity Rally
- Saturday, Nov.17th - 9a.m. at the Faculty of Library and Information Science, U.of T., 140 George St. - Heather Laing's(management's lawyer) seminar on "The Problem Employee in the Unionized Workplace.
Is it true that alternate seminars are being given by our Negotiators? - "The Problem lawyer in contract Negotiations"... "The Problem Employer in the Unionized Workplace".
-

ARTS & LETTERS RALLY

TO SUPPORT LIBRARY WORKERS

SAT. NOV. 10 12 * 2 PM

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- JOHN ROBERT COLOMBO *** Poet, author, anthologist, editor, translator
DIONNE BRAND *** Poet
DAVID DONNELL *** Winner of the 1983 Governor General's Award for Poetry
GREG GATENBY *** Poet, Literary Co-ordinator for Harbourfront Reading Series
JUDITH MERRILL *** Science Fiction author
TED PLANTOS *** Poet, Editor of Cross-Canada Writers' Quarterly
RICK SALUTIN *** Playwright
LIBBY SCHEIER *** Poet
LAURA SKY *** Producer of the film Yes, We Can!
TIM WYNNE-JONES *** Winner of the 1979 Seal First Novel Award for Odd's End