

THE TOOL

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

Number 3,
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The Rand Formula

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Here is a little information on what is called the Rand Formula. The Rand Formula, which permits the Unionisation of an entire group of workers in a business, characterises Unionism in Canada since the 1950s. The ruling that originated this formula, came about following arduous labours by diverse groups of workers; and although it has since permitted a certain amount of Union peace, it is regularly contested by management representatives; most recently by Association of Young Liberals of Quebec.

The Rand Formula story

After World War II, many unions proved intent on firming up the advances made during the previous several years. As well, thousands of unorganized workers looked to unionize. Certainly, everyone sought to prevent a return to the low wages and unsteady work that characterized the inter-war years. This reasoning once again brought labour into direct conflict with many employers. Business was not pleased with the concessions labour had won during the war and did not want to see those rights extended any further. Consequently, a new strike wave roared across the country. By

1950, when labour relations calmed somewhat, every major industry in every part of the country had been affected. As labour historian Craig Heron wrote about this time, "in the peak year of 1946, strikers shut down the British Columbia logging industry, the Ontario rubber industry, the central Canadian ports, the Southam newspaper chain, the country's steel industry, and dozens of mass-production plants in the biggest strike Canada had ever seen." (Heron, p.75) In the next several years, packing-house workers and railway workers launched a huge national strike. In Quebec, asbestos workers literally battled company and provincial police in a violent dispute that set labour on a new path in that province.

A landmark legal decision followed a strike in Windsor, Ontario involving 17,000 Ford workers. Justice Ivan Rand granted the union, as part of the settlement, the compulsory check-off of union dues. Rand ruled that all workers in a bargaining unit benefited from a union-negotiated contract. Therefore, he reasoned they must pay union dues, although they did not have to join the union. This decision meant a degree of financial stability for unions never previously

Are you moving?

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local660@aim1660.org

enjoyed. This formula, when combined with the decision of the federal government to codify P.C. 1003 into the Industrial Relations and Disputes Act, created the legal framework for labour relations in Canada for the next 30 years.

Labour used its improved bargaining power to secure better wages and working conditions, and protection against arbitrary management decisions on firings and promotions through grievance and seniority clauses. The increased finances of the unions allowed them to hire more permanent staff and develop greater expertise in collective bargaining. These were all measures for which labour had fought long and hard. Important victories as they were, critics worried that these developments would make unions too bureaucratic and less responsive to the needs of their members.

At G. E. Hydro: Re-formation of a Strategic Vigilance Committee

Following the announcement of a significant number of lay-offs at G. E. Hydro, the workers held a Special General Assembly, on November 1st to discuss fears that the company is progressively edging towards a plant closing. Between now and Christmas, more than one quarter of the shop employees will be dismissed without any promise of an early return. Also, General Electric envisions the completion of an important reorganization of their Energy Sector in 2005, and local management knows that crucial decisions concerning the Lachine shops will be taken.

For the last three years, the main shop has been functioning with a number of shop employees which doesn't meet the threshold of viability of the business. On another tack, G. E. will inaugurate a mega-shop for the production of hydro-electric equipment in China.

Knowing that for the last ten years more than three-quarters of the activities of the main shop have fallen into the hands of sub-contractors, also, that during this period, practically no major investments have taken place locally to grow the

business, and that the activities of the Bar shop are coveted by other G. E. units, and given that at every reorganisation, the number of shop employees has dropped... confidence in seeing our jobs secured is very weak.

During the Special Assembly, we discussed the willingness of the employer to offer temporary assignments or other measures which could defer the number of lay-offs. The question of the pertinence of working overtime, while people were laid-off for lack of work was also broached. The contracts in hand, in the shop, were negotiated with very short production cycles, the pressure, therefore, being strong for certain workers to work overtime. On this question, the points of view were very varied, but the majority of the members affirmed that in this context, overtime work did not serve our interests.

It was decided to re-form the Strategic Vigilance Committee to keep an eye on the question of saving our jobs. This Committee was created about three years ago when we were in a similar situation as we are now. At that time, following several actions which were taken, the Committee was assured that the survival of the shop was not menaced in the short term. It was, therefore, with the same view that the Committee met with management on two different occasions. The Committee asked that the Company to show more sensitivity in dealing with lay-offs; those workers having fifteen or more years of seniority deserve better. As for representatives of management, they took the opportunity to show us the efforts taken to try to bring work into the shops. Manifestly, very few decisions are taken locally, G. E. businesses are strongly centralised at the top and they follow the cold logic of lean manufacturing in their shops, while all the while developing their production capabilities in China at all costs.

The Committee is looking to continue their activity, and hopes that G. E. Lachine will maintain a minimal base of jobs that will assure the viability of our jobs, and of the two shops. We believe in our value, and are convinced that our know-how and our production capability in the hydro-electricity domain are worth something.

News

Comings and Goings

Small Bargaining Unit **Structures de Bois Superieur** has disaffiliated themselves with Local 1660. The 10 workers in St. Isidore decided to renounce their Union Membership. On the other hand, 15 or so office workers at **ARAMARK** in St. Laurent have joined us. This multi-national business manages a service network, such as supplying and maintaining food vending machines. **Our President, Christian Bilodeau, takes this opportunity to extend his welcome to each member of this new Bargaining Unit.**

Negotiations

The 15 workers of **Plastic Decorators** are in the process of re-negotiating their Collective Agreement which expired on September 22nd.

GE HydroTechnical Association

The 35 workers of the **Technical Association** at G. E. Hydro, (Old Technical Unit) have had a service contract with Local 1660 for the past year, and they foresee joining Local 1660 at the end of their contract.

Honorable Mentions

The news bulletin "**THE TOOL**" as well as our Web site have won honorable mentions for their qualities within the Grand Lodge A.I.M.T.A.. The energies within the Local Lodge 1660 of **Nancy Cousineau** (secretary) and **Pierre Faucher** (treasurer) have helped a lot.

Brother Andre Davignon

We would like to salute brother Andre Davignon on the occasion of his retirement. Andre accumulated 26 years of seniority as a G. E. Hydro worker and also as a Union member of the I.A.M. Andre did a very great deal for our Union : Whether it be as Shop Chairman at G. E. Hydro, (a position which he held for 8 years), President of the Provincial Council of Machinists, or as a negotiator, a Shop Steward, a Secretary-Treasurer, a Communicator or even as an ordinary Union member. He never missed an opportunity to defend the interests of the workers, this without taking into account his time and energy. Andre is a man of conviction, and we salute the integrity and the consistency which he always showed in his Union engagement.

General Assembly
Attending it shows **Solidarity**



9 more people will retire on January 1st 2005

- Gerald Dion
- Richard Ouimet
- Doriel Drakes
- Jack Turcotte
- Lambert Taylor
- Maurice Hebert
- Michel Lafontaine
- Yousef Haddad
- Michel Hebert



The Union Sign-up form.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO SIGN IT!

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



**Merry Holidays and Best wishes
for New Year**



The opinion column

This platform belongs to you. Do not hesitate to send us your articles. All articles in this forum are not necessarily approved by Local 1660

Member's Opinion : At G.E. Hydro

Don't worry about anything, everything is going well! How many times have we heard this magic phrase spoken by Company management?

We are told that the year 2006 looks very good, that is to say better than 2005! ... Where there is a little slow period. Not much to be done, a low spot after all, except that they forget to tell us that many fathers will have trouble making ends meet this year. The lay-offs are forecast to be long and numerous.

Permit me to say that, for us, it doesn't go well. They are risking losing qualified people. But it seems for them, "that a miserable year in a life is nothing much". A supervisor told me that seeing as all the people laid-off have 15 or more years of seniority, the Company is sure that they will all come back to save their vacations and pensions, and that there won't be any serious consequences for the Company. In their eyes, we are aquired material, and they can shut off the valve whenever they want. They aren't worried.

We are all asking ourselves if this doesn't seem like a disguised plant closing. All of those peo-

ple who worked at Valmet remember the scenario. We all know that General Electric intends to proceed with the grand opening of its' lagre plant in China in January 2005, what will be left for Lachine? The crumbs, the prospect of a closing ...

It is high time that we all remain in solidarity, not only those that are laid-off.

The situation concerns everybody, and who knows where it will end? Remember the affirmation of former plant director, Jean-Pierre Guay, during an information meeting three years ago, who said that the plant could function with a reduced personnel for 2 or 3 years. If there are no improvements, it seems that all will not be well for the future of our plant, and that we should start worrying now about the plant closing. We are now at a critical point. One must not forget, that the fixed costs, lighting, heating etc. ... remain the same.

Do you really believe that a company like G. E. Will keep an enormous plant like ours empty? Think about it.

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

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our Web sight**

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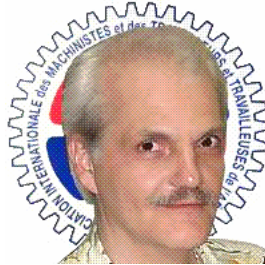
If you have any questions concerning Health and Safety at work, problems with insurance claims, or problems relating to your Collective Agreement, we have resource persons who can help you at Local Lodge 1660, and who can answer your questions.

If you are a new employee, and have been working for several weeks or months in the Company, and you haven't yet filled out an application to become a regulation Union member, ask your Union Representative.

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