



July 7, 2016

Sisters and Brothers: we're here to win, not gamble away our rights

We often say “solidarity” to each other. But now comes the real test of solidarity for our union. Do we practice what we preach or is “solidarity” just a catchphrase? Do we still believe that an injury to one is an injury to all? The solidarity that we share between us is the only way we will survive this. If we show each other our solidarity, not only will we survive, we will win.

We *must* stay firm and united against the boss's efforts to divide us. When your co-workers are hurt, you help them. When a group of our members are getting a raw deal, we fight for them. That is what we've always done. We fought for cleaners, coders and part-timers. We fought for equality and human rights, and we should always be proud of that. When postal workers fought for paid maternity leave in 1981, some called us fools. I doubt they'd say that now.

Management well knows that if they can divide us and break CUPW solidarity, they can crush our union. That's why we're being pressured to fight amongst ourselves, not with the boss. That is why RSMCs are being pitted against urban members, casuals against permanent workers and so on. It's a desperate ploy by Chopra and his cronies appealing to the worst in people: fear, stress, greed, self-interest, lack of concern for others. It's not going to work for them.

Keep Calm and Show Our Strength

When they've got the threat of a lock-out hanging over our heads like this, the pressure becomes intense indeed. But we are strongest when we are together and this time around, we're in the strongest position we could possibly be in. Nobody is going to bully postal workers into taking the first (and worst) deal the boss hands us. Not when there's support and momentum behind us, and the wind in our sails!

- We've exposed Canada Post's manipulation of the negotiations process and their set-up for a lock-out. Now they're backing away from the mess they've made and crying for the government to step in and bail them out (again).
- We've put the unfair treatment of our RSMC sisters and brothers in the spotlight. Now all of Canada knows about this issue.
- We've been emphatic about our struggle for better and expanded services. This will be a major feature of the postal review.
- We have gained massive public support and recognition for our struggles, and both Canada Post and the Liberal government know it.

All Members Have a Stake in These Negotiations

There's a lot still on the table that's not in the media. It's not just about pay equity or pensions, although those are important issues that have come to the forefront.



- It's about fighting their incessant and greedy demands for cutbacks
- It's about Canada Post trying to shut down almost 500 corporate retail outlets
- It's about job security and staffing issues
- It's about our health and safety
- It's about maintaining standards for the next generation of postal workers and not selling out our sons and daughters to worse jobs and working conditions.

Arbitration is Not Our Friend When We Have the Power to Win

We fought for our right to free collective bargaining, which was illegally taken away from us in the last round. There are several good reasons why we need to safeguard our constitutional right to free collective bargaining and only submit to arbitration as a very last resort.

We've tried arbitration before and all we ever got out of it was concessions imposed on us. Arbitration doesn't necessarily mean we will get a fair settlement. It just takes our power away and puts it in the hands of a third party. While we would almost certainly win our pay equity claim (because it's the law), Canada Post likes to drag things out in the courts (especially pay equity claims). Sometimes, after months and years of expensive court battles, the boss agrees to abandon the process and finally bargain a collective agreement!

Canada Post is addicted to government intervention and refuses to negotiate fairly with us. If Canada Post can count on a government to step in and bail it out every time, either with back-to-work legislation or arbitration, what is going to make Canada Post negotiate with us next time around?

Saying we'll stake everything on an arbitrator's decision is a gamble. There are far many outstanding issues to risk everything on a roll of the dice. They are too important to our members.

It's much better to keep the pressure on Canada Post to sit down and negotiate.

Sisters and Brothers, we can do this. Let's not falter at this crucial time.

In Solidarity,



Mike Palecek
National President

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