

# Our Health Our Safety

Volume 7 • Issue 2

Fall 2009

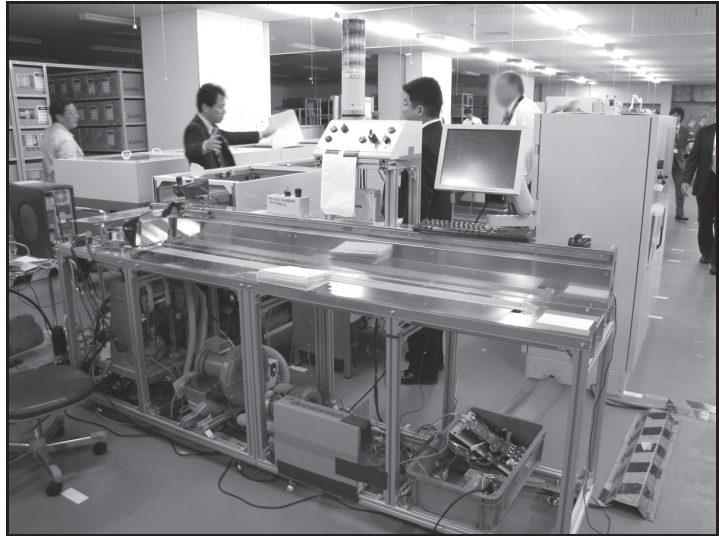
## New equipment under Modern Post

In the Fall 2008 issue of *Our Health Our Safety*, we published “Health and Safety and the Modern Post.” Since then, we’ve obtained more information about the type of equipment Canada Post intends to purchase to carry out its “postal transformation.” A CUPW delegation also visited the Toshiba plant in the Tokyo area to review the new mail sorting equipment. Below you’ll find a preliminary overview of this equipment.

### MLOCRs

Canada Post has awarded Toshiba a contract to design and manufacture new Multi Line Optical Character Readers (MLOCRs).

The MLOCr will have up to 304 stackers spread out over two levels; one 50 inches above the ground, and the other, 29 inches. Two rows of trays that can fit the different types of lettertrays will be placed below the stackers, at 29 inches for the upper level and 16 inches for the lower. These machines will have printers linked together by a telescopic arm located at every third row of drawers. The TT1200-series equipment will be a different version from the TT1100 machines now in use in Sweden. It is manufactured to Canada Post specifications. According to Toshiba, the new equipment sequences up to 41,000 letters per hour with a reading accuracy rate of 99.9%. The first machines should be ready for delivery to Canada Post by November.



A prototype of the feeder table for the future MLOCr at the Toshiba factory

### Breaking News!

At a union-management meeting held on October 22nd, Canada Post announced that it would only be installing 173 MLOCRs in its facilities. Therefore, the four-level BCSs will not be introduced on the work floors.

### Human Guinea Pigs?

The employer would like us to believe that these machines are ergonomically safe despite the fact that no health and safety study was conducted. Canada Post presented CUPW with a work simulation report claiming that the risk of ergonomically-related injuries resulting from sweeping the stackers of the BCS and MLOCr is minimal.

### Inside

- ODC (Open, Dump and Cull Table)
- Householder Collating Machine
- New Carts and Containers



Canadian Union of Postal Workers

We still remember the first generation of these machines that arrived in the 1990s and the resulting number of injuries our members suffered. In 2006, CUPW forced the employer to conduct an ergonomic study of the Bar Code Sorters, resulting in several recommendations. But has Canada Post learned from its mistakes? There's good reason to worry about the impact of these machines on our members when we consider that the new MLOCRs will be much higher than the current ones and that workers will not be able to see over the machines. The staffing levels needed to operate these new machines are another basic issue. The Union has already raised the matter and told the employer in no uncertain terms that our members will not be used as human guinea pigs.

### Open, Dump and Cull Table

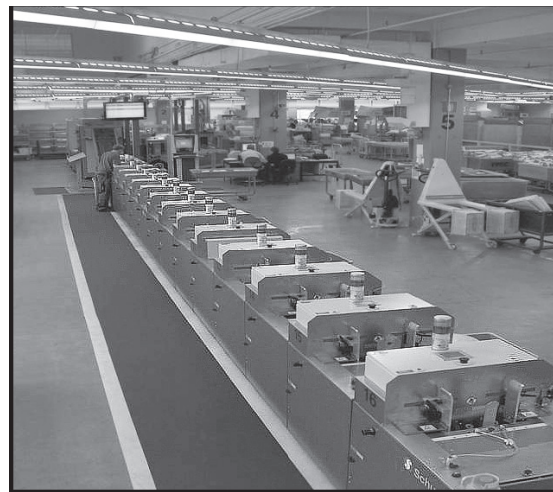


Open, Dump and Cull Table

As part of its Modern Post initiative, the employer has asked an Ontario supplier, DS Handling, to create a new table to open, dump and cull the mail collected from stations, offices and street letter boxes. A pilot project took place in Montreal in September and the new tables will likely be used in the plant being built in Winnipeg. The main advantage of this change is that the entire table can be raised or lowered to the ideal height for the person doing the work. It has a conveyor that

carries the mail at 1 foot per second to the main conveyor, which, in turn, leads to the Edger Facer Machine (EFM). The upper level of the table has six trays, i.e. two on the left-hand side and four on the right. Both tray systems are adjustable for clearing the machine. The Union continues to provide input for the safety of the workers asked to use this table and will update you regularly.

### Householder Collating Machine



Householder Collating Machine

Canada Post intends to use a machine to collate unaddressed ad mail for letter carrier delivery. Schur, a Swedish company, has produced a machine capable of collating up to 16 sets of householders with an output capacity ranging between 16,000 and 24,000 bundles per hour, depending on the number of employees assigned to the machine. A six (6)-month pilot project is currently underway at Depot 74 in Vancouver. The employer argues that this equipment is used in other countries and that it respects safety standards, but the fact is that there are a lot of health and safety problems, ranging from noise and dust levels to the thickness of the bundles. Once again, the number of employees asked to operate this machine will have to be discussed, but it's obvious that the employer is willing to do anything to present this machine as

cost-effective. CUPW officers and members at the local level remain vigilant and are enforcing their rights.

### New Carts

**A**nother important Modern Post change is the appearance of new carts. Two types of carts produced by Cannon Equipment have been presented to us so far: the Induct to Delivery cart (C-51) and the Delivery Cart (C-52). The C-51 cart is supposed to replace the current monotainers. The first generation of C-51s was piloted this summer. The results were so disastrous that the Union asked the employer to remove them from circulation. Modifications were later made to the brakes, the handles and the door. A second pilot took place in Winnipeg in early September. Once again, the Union asked for more modifications and more extensive testing. At this time, it is clear that carrying and stacking these carts in groups of three is dangerous. We also have serious reservations about their height, ease of operation and effectiveness.

The C-52 letter carrier depot cart has wheels and handles. It measures 58 inches high, 28 inches wide and 42 inches deep. The cart



C-51 Cart

has two loading levels: a shelf on the lower level for letter carriers, and an adjustable shelf in the middle of the cart that can carry parcels and householders totalling up to 150 kg. Two brake pedals have been installed to stabilize the cart while loading. A black net with hooks at the front of the cart prevents mail from falling out. This is the second prototype and it has been tested in Terrebonne, Quebec, and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Union representatives were



C-52 Cart

in attendance during the testing and identified several health and safety issues, as well as cart design problems. In response to a survey prepared by the Union, the participants in the last testing phase, held in Winnipeg in early September, all expressed their dissatisfaction with the lower shelf, which they found much too low.

As was the case for the householder collating machine, the employer appears determined to introduce these carts, no matter what. The National Joint Health and Safety Committee (NJHSC) is still discussing them.

The Union fights to keep unsafe equipment off the work floor so we've asked for additional modifications to be made. The Union also wants more testing to be done, so it can obtain more comments from workers. After all, workers are the ones in the best position to assess this equipment.

### New Letter and Parcel Containers

**C**anada Post plans to change most of these mail containers. The employer also wants to change the street letter box (SLB) clearance method by replacing the bags with a new type of container. A third type of container for AOs (other



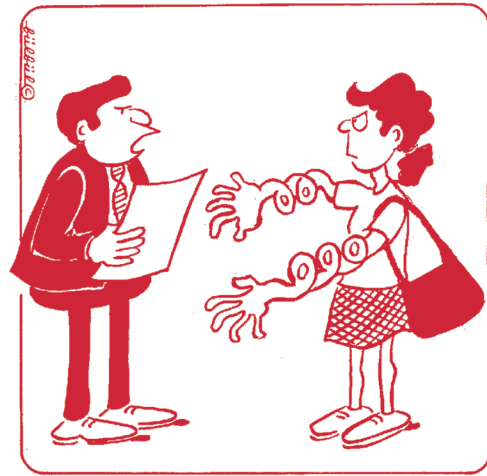
mail items) and small parcels, called a packet tub, is also currently being considered for loose loading. The employer wants to replace Lettertainers and Flattainers with a smaller container called Letter Flattainer (LFT). The LFT is about the same size as the current Lettertainer. These containers have handles and can be fitted into one another through a slot in the lid. The LFT will be grey. Since it will have a lower capacity than the Flattainer, the maximum possible weight will be below the 22.5 kg limit set out in the urban operations collective agreement.



**SO95 Container**

The container for SLB clearance is the SO95. Its size is such that its use requires a change in the format of the SLB. Green plastic prototypes are currently being tested in Winnipeg and Montreal. At the September 2, 2009 NJHSC meeting, the employer presented a new white plastic prototype with handles and a lid. This prototype has the same dimensions as the green containers. It is still undergoing modifications and has yet to be tested in the field.

The packet tub will be 24 inches long, 19 inches wide and 13 inches high. When empty, it weighs 3.1 kg. Its proposed use is for loading onto bulk trailers for short hauls with parcels. Similar prototypes were tested in bulk trailers (Ottawa-Montreal) and long hauls (Montreal-Vancouver). The employer intends to use it only for the new mechanized plant in



**"It is too expensive for business to follow ergonomic regulations."**

Winnipeg and the surrounding area.

There will be more equipment to review in the upcoming months, not to mention training for members asked to use this new equipment. The Union will continue its assessment of the new equipment through the NJHSC while focussing on the health and safety of its members. Periodical follow-ups will be provided in bulletins, letters and other publications. When dealing with technological change, keeping workers informed is key, so that we can all keep fighting together for our health and safety in the workplace.

**If you have any questions or concerns about the new equipment or work methods, talk to your shop steward.**

**cupw•sttp**

**Our Health Our Safety**

Published quarterly in English and in French by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

377 Bank Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1Y3 Canada  
tel: 613.236.7238  
fax: 613.563.7861  
website: [www.cupw-sttp.org](http://www.cupw-sttp.org)  
ISSN: 1708-0665



**CUPE 1979**

