

March 24, 2011

## BARGAINING UPDATE

### NUNAVUT EMPLOYEES UNION and QULLIQ ENERGY CORPORATION

The employer has tabled three different options to the Union. Each option contains a minimal wage increase and to get the money, the Union has to allow the employer to take things out of the collective agreement. We have been told that the wage increase they are offering is non-negotiable – there is no point in asking for more.

It gets worse. After the Union picks one of the 3 options, the employer is still holding on to a long list of other things they want to take away from the workers. We have no idea how many of these concessions they intend to try and force the Union to accept, but because they won't drop any of them, we have to assume that they want them all.

We first sat down to bargain at the start of the month. We then had a two week break before coming back to the table. In that two week period, the employer fired a member of the bargaining team – a 15 year employee with a completely clean record. They gave him ten days to move his wife and family out of their home. They also tried (illegally) to cut the hours of another bargaining team member in half. They say they have no money to give Union members a wage increase that even comes close to keeping up with the cost of living, yet they have a ratio of almost 1 manager for every 3 unionized workers. What do all these people do?

The options the employer is offering the Union are not serious. They do not give the Union any confidence that the employer actually wants to negotiate a new collective agreement. All the employer is offering us is the opportunity to pick how we want to be hurt. Today, we told them "NO" and we walked away from the table.

**It is time to fight back.**

## OPTION #1

### What They Offered:

- 2% increase in 2011, 2% increase in 2012, 2% increase in 2013
- Increase the shift premium from \$2.10 to \$2.50 (very few people actually get this premium)
- Increase stand-by pay by approximately \$945 per year, and it would go up by the same percentage as wage increases in the future (now based on hourly wage rather than flat annual amount – BUT the wage it is based on is the lowest step in grade “H”)
- Clothing allowance increased by \$65 a year BUT no more receipts (which may have negative tax implications) and no more grandfathering – just because you receive it now doesn’t mean you will continue to receive it in the future.

### What They Said You Would Have to Give Up:

- The wage grid will no longer list what everyone in the company is being paid, only union members. This means managers could get pay raises much higher than yours and you will never know about it.
- No increase to the Location Allowance, even though we all know that the cost of living is going through the roof, especially now that the food mail subsidies have been scrapped.
- Nobody will receive acting pay if they do not have signing authority (and the employer hardly gives anyone signing authority anymore). Instead, they will receive a \$2 an hour Lead Hand Allowance.
- No meal allowance unless you work 3 or more hours of overtime in your home community (nothing if you are travelling that day, even if you are not on per diem).
- Unless the employer orders you to attend a training course, you will not receive any overtime for attending a course or seminar, or for your travel. If you ask for training, even if it is directly related to your ability to do your job, you will not receive any overtime.
- Elimination of the Telephone Services Allowance.
- No more transportation to and from work in Iqaluit.
- No other monetary increases of any kind for 3 years.

### What You May Also Have Had to Give Up (option #1)

- You can only accumulate 75 hours of comp leave per year, and if you spend some of it during the year, you can't put any back again.
- Employer can hire contract operators to do the work of part-time employees.
- Employer can deny granting vacation leave based on operational requirements. No longer has to be because of an emergency or something unusual and temporary.
- Employer will only make an effort to grant vacation for up to 4 weeks. Anything longer than that is entirely up to them.
- All overtime has to be pre-approved. If you don't get pre-approval, you won't get paid.
- Part-time employees lose grandfathering for benefits.
- Casual employees and summer students no longer get travel expenses if they or their dependants require medical treatment.
- Employer will no longer distribute Union membership cards.
- Deletion of the reference to the Great West Life Benefits Plan. This means the employer is free to change to another benefits provider and a different plan which could give you less coverage than you now have.
- Supplying clothing and protective equipment completely at the discretion of the Employer.
- Employees not allowed to put anything on their personnel file except certificates, diplomas and recognitions without the approval of management and HR.
- Employer no longer has to share its draft policies and procedures with the Union.
- Casual employees have to immediately pay back any money they received as vacation pay if their term exceeds 4 months and they become entitled to the vacation provisions of the collective agreement.
- No more joint union management committee to look at the travel and relocation policies.
- No more contributions to the Union Social Justice Fund.

...along with various other "administrative" changes.

## OPTION #2

### What They Offered:

- 2% increase in 2011, 2% increase in 2012, 2.5% increase in 2013

### What They Said You Would Have to Give Up:

- The wage grid will no longer list what everyone in the company is being paid, only union members. This means managers could get pay raises much higher than yours and you will never know about it.
- No increase to the Location Allowance, even though we all know that the cost of living is going through the roof, especially now that the food mail subsidies have been scrapped.
- No meal allowance unless you work 3 or more hours of overtime in your home community (nothing if you are travelling that day, even if you are not on per diem).
- Unless the employer orders you to attend a training course, you will not receive any overtime for attending a course or seminar, or for your travel. If you ask for training, even if it is directly related to your ability to do your job, you will not receive any overtime.
- Elimination of the Telephone Services Allowance.
- No more transportation to and from work in Iqaluit.
- No other monetary increases of any kind for 3 years.

### What You May Also Have Had to Give Up (option #2)

- You can only accumulate 75 hours of comp leave per year, and if you spend some of it during the year, you can't put any back again.
- Nobody will receive acting pay if they do not have signing authority (and the employer hardly gives anyone signing authority anymore). Instead, they will receive a \$2 an hour Lead Hand Allowance.
- Employer can hire contract operators to do the work of part-time employees.
- Employer can deny granting vacation leave based on operational requirements. No longer has to be because of an emergency or something unusual and temporary.
- Employer will only make an effort to grant vacation for up to 4 weeks. Anything longer than that is entirely up to them.
- All overtime has to be pre-approved. If you don't get pre-approval, you won't get paid.
- Part-time employees lose grandfathering for benefits.
- Casual employees and summer students no longer get travel expenses if they or their dependants require medical treatment.
- Employer will no longer distribute Union membership cards.
- Deletion of the reference to the Great West Life Benefits Plan. This means the employer is free to change to another benefits provider and a different plan which could give you less coverage than you now have.
- Supplying clothing and protective equipment completely at the discretion of the Employer.
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- Casual employees have to immediately pay back any money they received as vacation pay if their term exceeds 4 months and they become entitled to the vacation provisions of the collective agreement.
- No more joint union management committee to look at the travel and relocation policies.
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...along with various other "administrative" changes.

### OPTION #3

#### What You Get:

- 2% increase in 2011, 2% increase in 2012, 2.5% increase in 2013
- Increase the shift premium from \$2.10 to \$2.50  
(very few people actually get this premium)
- Increase stand-by pay by approximately \$945 per year, and it would go up by the same percentage as wage increases in the future (now based on hourly wage rather than flat annual amount – BUT the wage it is based on is the lowest step in grade “H”)
- Clothing allowance increased by \$65 a year BUT no more receipts (which may have negative tax implications) and no more grandfathering – just because you receive it now doesn’t mean you will continue to receive it in the future.

#### What They Said You Would Have to Give Up:

- The wage grid will no longer list what everyone in the company is being paid, only union members. This means managers could get pay raises much higher than yours and you will never know about it.
- No increase to the Location Allowance, even though we all know that the cost of living is going through the roof, especially now that the food mail subsidies have been scrapped.
- Reduce age of dependants from 21 to 19. This means that once your kids are 19, you can’t claim any benefits for them.
- Must use Special leave days for Bereavement leave.
- Dependents under 2 years of age only get \$25 a day for medical travel with no incidentals.
- Training that the employer must provide when there is a technological change shall be capped at 1 year and \$10,000. Currently, there are no limits.
- Nobody will receive acting pay if they do not have signing authority (and the employer hardly gives anyone signing authority anymore). Instead, they will receive a \$2 an hour Lead Hand Allowance.
- No meal allowance unless you work 3 or more hours of overtime in your home community (nothing if you are travelling that day, even if you are not on per diem).
- Unless the employer orders you to attend a training course, you will not receive any overtime for attending a course or seminar, or for your travel. If you ask for training, even if it is directly related to your ability to do your job, you will not receive any overtime.
- Elimination of the Telephone Services Allowance.

- No more transportation to and from work in Iqaluit.
- No other monetary increases of any kind for 3 years.

### What You May Also Have Had to Give Up (option #3)

- You can only accumulate 75 hours of comp leave per year, and if you spend some of it during the year, you can't put any back again.
- Employer can hire contract operators to do the work of part-time employees.
- Employer can deny granting vacation leave based on operational requirements. No longer has to be because of an emergency or something unusual and temporary.
- Employer will only make an effort to grant vacation for up to 4 weeks. Anything longer than that is entirely up to them.
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