

FRONT LINE FLYER

Mine Mill Local 598/C.A.W

www.minemill598.com

February 7th, 2007

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Contract 2007

By: Rick Grylls, President

The membership gave the Bargaining Committee the mandate to bargain the collective agreement and more important, they gave the committee the right to call a strike.

When there are major issues on the table that need defending or correcting, then the call to withdraw our labour is easy, as was the case in 1997, 2000 and 2004 and the membership followed the call.

We knew there was a change in the air with new ownership direction and the profitability of the Company was at a record high. As the process unfolded in the month of January, the lure of the first Company offer of "take it or leave it" by midnight, had cash but no real changes to the workplace language.

With a Union counteroffer in that Company's short eight-hour window on the 25th, we refused to be drawn into their plan. The Company then withdrew their offer in hopes of dividing the membership and by dragging out a response to put pressure on the Committee.

The result did not change the Committee's direction. They wanted to bargain the best possible language and monetary package they could and if that was not reached by midnight on the 31st, then we would withdraw our labour. We knew the membership would strike if we called one. It was a long quiet time from the 25th to the 31st.

The process then turned to classic last-hour bargaining. The Company's first counter offer came around 4 p.m. on January 31st. At 11 p.m., we were in a strike position based on the little language there was on the table and through the mediator and Hemi Mitic, we were able to complete almost all the issues before us.

A review showed there were no major issues left that would bind the membership in a strike call and the Committee unanimously accepted a tentative agreement with the Company.

The Bargaining Committee does not have the luxury of representing their personal agenda or issues when it comes to the vote. Their mandate is for the full 1,000 members of this workplace and they chose to accept a tentative agreement with very strong language instead of going on strike.

The membership has again given them a strong mandate by accepting this package for three more years, which will see the opening of Nickel Rim South, the development of Fraser Morgan and the push for the Onaping Depth.

The Chief Stewards have received new language to deal with work place issues of job postings, training, retransfer, vacations, Nickel Rim South opening and contracting out reduction.

These Union representatives will need your support to make the new language changes happen in a smooth manner.

SAVINGS

I strongly recommend that you join the Company's Employee Savings Plan (ESP) and receive the benefits of over \$750 a year in extra savings (based on \$50,000 earnings) by banking 5% of your earnings. I also recommend that you put some of your nickel bonus into a RRSP for you or your spouse.

Whatever you may think, the Bargaining Committee has again provided the leadership needed to move forward, this time into a very positive future – the first in over 14 years.

Work Safe - Work Healthy

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the active workers from Xstrata Nickel, members of Mine Mill Local 598/CAW. Because of the unwavering support you provided the Local's Bargaining Committee, they were able to bring back to you a fair and just contract without the necessity of calling a strike.

I was presented the opportunity by our Retirees Chapter, through President Ben Robinson, to represent the pensioners and widows at these last set of negotiations. This was an assignment I took very seriously and was proud to perform.

For more than two months, I had the privilege of working side by side with the Local's Committee. I observed how well they were prepared and how dedicated they were to the task at hand. But, all this preparation and dedication would be for not, if it weren't for the support of the members.

The name of the game in negotiations is Power and when to use it. There would be no Power to the Union's Committee without a strong strike mandate. The only Power we have as a worker is our labour.



You can build a strong case for changing or not changing contract language, you can argue morals or scruples, you can argue family matters or social conscience, but the only thing that gets a corporation's attention is the effect these actions will have on the bottom line. The number one attention getter by far is a strike.

The Retirees Chapter of Local 598, thank the Union's Committee led by Rick and Richard and the Company's Committee led by Lori Horner, for remembering and keeping in mind the pioneers of this Company and this Union. They have built both.

Our Chapter, as most know, is always there when the Local needs support. We are also committed to working side by side with the Company in an effort to keep benefit costs down. And, we are also there, working to ensure retirees have a long and comfortable life.

Again congratulations to all and don't forget the less fortunate in our community.

In Solidarity,
Brian McDonald, Retirees Chapter

Smelter News

By: Dwight Harper

As your Vice-President and Strike Coordinator, I was called off the job in early January to act as interim President and to make the necessary strike preparations had negotiation talks failed to reach a collective agreement. All was in readiness, as per my directive, except for an electrical issue at the West End trailer! Fortunately, those preparations were not necessary as a tentative deal was struck, literally minutes before the deadline.

Now with the ratification vote behind us, the Sudbury Operations are poised to embark on a new three-year journey, into relatively uncharted waters. There is a positive wind of optimism that fills the sails of this ship we call Xstrata Nickel. But, her crew remains skeptical and cautious as this journey begins, because they have been disappointed before.

It will be the task of the new managers who now control the helm, to show they are committed to the new direction in order to quell that skepticism and once again, gain back the confidence of the crew.

Further, it will also be the responsibility of the crew leaders and the crew itself to ensure that this new collective agreement becomes the map that, if followed, will guide this ship for the next three years and beyond. If not, the winds of optimism will quickly calm, the waters will once again become turbulent and the crew will become disheartened with where the journey is headed.

The captains and their competent crews are in place, all is in readiness for the voyage, but just how

successful that voyage will be, remains an uncertainty.

Xstrata Nickel Unit Chair Report

By: Richard Paquin

This is a first for us. Since 1994, a Collective agreement signed without a labour dispute.

Our membership has remained united throughout this journey and has to be commended for staying strong. This allowed your bargaining committee to remain strong and firm on the main issues that our membership wanted addressed. The Company made their initial offer Thursday, January 25th. They expected your Bargaining Committee to drop all the remaining proposals and when we made a counter proposal, they withdrew their offer.

The Company made no effort to talk to the Bargaining Committee over the next five days. The Company thought the membership would turn on the Committee and force us to accept their offer. It didn't happen. The membership supported us and in the end, we were able to make gains and many improvements over their initial offer in areas of contract language, benefits and other economics.

The Bargaining Committee would like to thank our members, the Retirees Chapter of our Local, the community, our CAW sister locals, the brothers and sisters from the other Unions for their support during these negotiations.

Without the tremendous support brought forward by these groups, this settlement would not have been achieved.

This Company never ceases to amaze me. While I remained skeptical during bargaining about the Company intentions to actually "turn the corner", the actions of the Company on many issues since last week seems to indicate to me that "Yes", this Company does want to forget the past and forge ahead with new and different visions than we are used to. It seems that they believe this will lead to a more prosperous and productive Company to which each employee will benefit from.

The CEO of Xstrata Nickel stated to me, "The signing of the collective agreement without a labour dispute took having focused teams on both sides of the table. I believe it sets the scene and allows us to now turn and focus on making our business case in Sudbury more robust."

This indicates to me that they are committed to making this place work and ensuring that the past relationship with our employees is a thing of the past. Maybe, finally, we will be coming to work happy and content. Time will tell, but all indications are pointing in the right direction.

We are looking forward to the future.