

Xstrata Nickel Unit Chair Report - May 2007

By: Richard Paquin

It has been over a month since my last newsletter and we have some new faces on the bargaining committee. Jack McGrath has decided to remove himself from the Chief Steward's position, therefore, Marcel Charron has been appointed to this post. Jack will remain as a Steward in the Mill. I would like to thank Jack for his hard work during his long term. We will miss his tenacious work getting the issues resolved. Also due to the prolonged absence of Gord Lamothe from Craig Mine, Scott Rogers has been appointed as the new Chief Steward for Craig Mine on an interim basis. Please assist these new individuals in their new positions.

Some issues have been resolved from the last newsletter but many questions still remain unanswered from the latest Collective Agreement.

On a positive note, the Company and our Stewards and Chief Stewards have been working hard at resolving the issues at the sites with the grievor and the Company. It is working well since we only have a handful of grievances since January of this year

We also recently held a vote for the membership to decide if we should continue the 12 cent strike fund. The members vote overwhelmingly to continue the strike fund.

The results show that the membership wants to continue the growth of this fund that will most likely reach close to \$2 million dollars. This will surely assist the members financially in the event we have a labour dispute in 2010.

Another issue that has become reality on April 1st, 2007 is the contractor embedded on crews. Contractors are no longer allowed to be part of a crew, under our supervision or using our tools, following our shift schedule, etc., unless they meet certain criteria established under the arbitrator's ruling. We are still working on making this transition as trouble-free as possible. This will reduce the amount of contractors on our crew.

The Company is currently hiring mine and Smelter labours and Skilled Trades people.

It is also important to know that in the fall, it will be mandatory to wear seat belts on **ALL** underground and surface mobile equipment when operating. This is being implemented Company-wide.

Here is an update on all remaining outstanding issues.

Orthotics Coverage:

- Data was presented to the Company on May 7th and we are waiting to hear from them on the next step. We feel that we proved beyond a reasonable

doubt that we had coverage prior to Manulife taking over from Great West Life in January 2004.

- We would like to thank all the members that provided over 80 documents that showed the data. We are awaiting the Company response on our demand of reinstating this important benefit.

Skilled Trades Rate Review:

- Review was done on April 25th, 2007 and we are still awaiting the Company's response to our demand of a two job class increase. It surely looks like the Company does not want to give us the two job class increase. This was agreed on January 31st, 2007, so that there would be no work disruption.
- If there is no agreement, we will seek the interpretation of a third party.

Postings:

- The Company is currently placing non-posted employees from the Mine Mill Business Unit into unfilled business postings. This is preventing workers from the other business unit from applying for these unfilled jobs should they be able to do the work. It is also closing the door to our Smelter employees.
- It is against our posting process and the Company was notified that should this practice not be stopped, a Direct Difference grievance will be filed on behalf of the employees.

Training: Training by seniority; training matrix is being developed at some sites to ensure training is being done by seniority, by who normally performs the work within line of progression. This process is progressing slowly.

Benefits: Every member will very shortly receive an updated benefit and pension booklet. We are meeting the Company in mid-June on reviewing our benefit program and also on the disability management program. We will also be looking at our drug benefits.

On a closing note, I wish to offer Jerome Strickland's family our condolences on Jerome's sudden death.

If you have any questions about the last agreement or wish to communicate any issue you may have, contact your Chief Steward or this office.