



**COAST TO COAST UPDATE**  
**AU COURANT D'UN OcéAN À L'AUTRE**  
 INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS  
 FRATERNITÉ INTERNATIONALE DES OUVRIERS EN ÉLECTRICITÉ



**PHIL FLEMMING**

International Vice President / Vice-président international  
 First District, CANADA / Premier District, CANADA



**July/August 2008**

Greetings:

The much anticipated Federal Election was called only a few days ago and already the rhetoric has started. But you know as working families we have a lot at stake in this election so we have to separate the nonsense from the reality.

The candidates that we should be listening to will be talking about jobs, the quality of life for our families and the future of our communities within the Canadian landscape.

We want politicians that stand up in the House of Commons and represent the interests of Canadian workers. We need a government that has a vision for our future, the future of our children and our grandchildren.

Over the next few weeks and up until October 14 we have to put the tough questions to the candidates of all political stripes about the issues that matter to our IBEW members and their families. We have to ask questions about the future of Health Care in Canada, Apprenticeship, Training, Employment Insurance, Foreign Workers, Worker Mobility Assistance and the Environment.

We need politicians that care about these issues, about working families' jobs and pay cheques and not about corporate profits.

Most of all we should encourage all of our members to get out the vote on October 14 armed with the information they need so when they vote, they elect the candidates who are truly on our side.

In solidarity,

Phil Flemming  
 International Vice President



**10<sup>th</sup> Annual All Canada Progress Meeting – Toronto, ON**

August 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> were the dates of another successful IBEW 1<sup>st</sup> District All Canada Progress Meeting (ACPM) in Toronto, Ontario with 191 Sister and Brother Delegates, and guests, attending the 10<sup>th</sup> annual 3 day event.

This year marked the inaugural Local Union Joint Apprenticeship Council Trainer's Conference on the Saturday before and in conjunction with the Progress Meeting with 41 Local Union Trainers and Local Union training activists in attendance.

*Political Action* was the theme of our All Canada Progress Meeting this year and 117 participants discussed the IBEW involvement and their commitment to Political Action at the Canadian Labour Congress Training Session on Monday prior to the opening of the Progress Meeting.

Thanks to our Trade Show professional partners that again this year added to the success of our Progress Meeting:

- Belyea & Associates
- Canadian Benefits
- Canadian Union Promotions
- Communications Training Centre
- CSA
- DuPont Canada
- FR-Safety Apparel
- Goldstein Financial
- Green Shield
- HUB International
- IBEW Local 353/JAC
- IBEW Local 353/Education Dept.
- Industrial Info
- MIXTO
- MPH Graphics
- MWG Apparel
- NETCO
- Ontario Construction Secretariat
- PEFCO Ontario
- Save-RX
- Union Savings
- ULLICO
- Wilson Dunn Promotions

On *DAY ONE*, IVP Flemming welcomed all in attendance followed by the colour guard presentation, lead by Piper Calum MacDonald, a member of IBEW Local Union 804, the National Anthems sung by Mr. Charlie Paul, who is a retired Millwright Business Agent, and Deacon Thomas Liam to conduct the invocation.

The Progress Meeting's general session presented an array of presenters touching on topics that offered critical information to the IBEW delegates; mainly the impact of *Political Action*. Business Manager Joe Fashion introduced Councilor Joe Mihevc who welcomed the delegates to the city of Toronto.

During the morning session IVP Phil Flemming reported on the activities of the 1<sup>st</sup> District Office during the past 12 months, thanked the 1<sup>st</sup> District Local Unions for their support and emphasized the importance of *Political Action* by all of our members in Canada.

The delegates expressed their thanks and recognized the significance of the contribution many of our presenters brought to the All Canada Progress Meeting for future reference and the benefit of our membership.

**Alex Lolua**, the Director of Government Relations for the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, who spoke on 'Political Action' and shared some success stories as a result of being politically active.

**Gerry Phillips**, MPP representing Scarborough-Agincourt in the provincial legislature since 1987, is responsible for providing constituents with information on services offered by the federal, provincial and municipal government as well as community organizations. He also reported on the large amount of money committed to spending on infrastructure.

**Steven Richards**, Senior Vice-President Infrastructure Ontario and the Nuclear Procurement Project, is involved in the assignment of more than 40 major infrastructure projects by the Government of Ontario. To deliver these projects on time and on budget, Infrastructure Ontario uses a model called Alternative Financing and Procurement (AFP), which leverages the strengths of both the private and public sectors. Steve also provided details on the Darlington nuclear expansion.

**Rick Dowling**, Business Manager Local Union 213 and Member of the I.E.C. gave a report on behalf of the I.E.C.

**Linda Silas, RN, BScN**, President Canadian Federation of Nurses which represents more than 158,000 members and associate members in nine provinces.

**Rob Ellis**, President/Speaker Our Youth at Work (OYAW), has become an outspoken advocate for health, safety and wellness in the workplace since the death of his son David in 1999. Rob has developed international partnerships with companies dedicated to becoming champion employers. His work with young people, parents, unions and businesses has been widely publicized across Canada and the United States, and he's regularly sought after to participate in international events as a keynote speaker. Rob extends an invitation to the IBEW to become OYAW champion.

**Sean Strickland**, Business Manager for Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin-Grey Building Trades and Waterloo Regional Councilor spoke on political action and what he has been able to accomplish with the relationships he has developed as a Municipal politician.

**Christy Piti, Walter Hoff and David Yochel**, representatives of SAV-RX, explained how this company can save millions of dollars on prescription drugs.

**Eryl Roberts**, Executive Vice-President of the Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario (ECAO), has almost 30 years of experience in construction industry labour relations and association management. Eryl spoke about NETCO.

**Alan Minsky**, one of the original founders of Koskie Minsky law firm, practices extensively in the labour relations and broader employment fields and has appeared on numerous occasions before the various labour relations and employment law tribunals in Ontario and in other provinces across Canada.

**Dr. Joel Fish** is a plastic surgeon at Sunnybrook Hospital and has been treating victims of electrical burns and contact injuries. His research has found a surprising similarity in the symptoms experienced by workers involved in electrical contact accidents. Dr. Fish is attempting to raise \$5,000,000 to fund sustainable research to find answers to the questions raised by his research and find solutions to the suffering of injured working people who have had electrical contacts.

*DAY TWO* opened with **Lindell Lee**, International Secretary-Treasurer of the IBEW, again communicating to the topic of 'political action' and was followed by the subsequent speakers:

**Duncan Hawthorne**, President and Chief Executive Officer of Bruce Power, was responsible for the acquisition of the Bruce nuclear facility and the formation

of Bruce Power, the largest independent power generator in Ontario.

This morning session ended with a presentation by **Marcia Lopez**, from United Way, and **Michelle Laurie**, President Local Union 258 and an United Way Board member accepted the award on behalf of the IBEW.

Often the highlight of the All Canada Progress Meeting for many of the delegates is when they get the opportunity to discuss, debate and exchange ideas in their particular sector caucuses. Sector caucuses continued and completed the day on Wednesday with participation from the delegates in the Utility, Construction, Railroad, Paper Mill, Manufacturing, Government and Telecommunications sectors.

DAY THREE opened by announcing the winner of the Harley Davidson draw (held the previous night at the banquet sponsored by Local Union 353)...and the winner is:

**Eric Hill of Local Union 914 - Thorold, ON**  
Holding ticket number 333 for the  
2008 Harley Davidson "Road King Classic" FLHRC

IVP Flemming thanked everyone who purchased and/or helped sell tickets for making these draws a resounding success.

Following that announcement various International Representatives introduced the lineup of keynote speakers:

**Dr. Linda Duxbury**, is a Professor at the Sprott School of Business, Carleton University and presented demographics in the workplace, that held the audience captive for almost 2 hours.

**Ken Georgetti** is the President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), whose vision of labour activism is rooted in a passionate commitment to social justice that seeks to empower individuals and involves communities in tackling social and economic problems.

**Angela Splinter** with the Electricity Sector Council (ESC), showed a PowerPoint presentation on the framework of ESC and the projects they are currently involved in and the committees with IBEW members participating.

**Bob Blakely**, the Director of Canadian Affairs for the Building and Construction Trades Dept., AFL-CIO – also known as the Canadian Building Trades, is a respected voice in Ottawa for the 14 unions affiliated to the Canadian Building Trades which represents over

400,000 skilled tradespeople across Canada and he has an in-depth understanding of the Canadian mosaic and the unique challenges facing construction industry stakeholders in various provinces and trades.

In addition to our three days of deliberation, discussions and exchange of ideas, there was time for relaxation and of course more shop talk at events hosted by the IBEW Construction Council of Ontario, Local Union 353, Local Union 636, Local Union 2228 and the 1<sup>st</sup> District Office; thanks from the delegates and their guests.

### Poor No More

At the All Canada Progress Meeting, there was a presentation from a documentary team (**Bert Deveaux and Suzanne Babin**) who are producing a film called "Poor No More". This film will shine a light on poverty and inequality in Canada. Among other things, this film demonstrates the importance of a strong union creating a more caring and prosperous country.

The following information is taken from a "Poor No More" flyer which also provides their web-site. You are encouraged to support this film in any way possible.

*'Poor No More' will appeal to the millions of working Canadians who are finding it harder to make ends meet, and are having to work longer for less.*

*The concept for 'Poor No More' is somewhat similar to what Michael Moore did in the movie Sicko. 'Poor No More' will take several struggling Canadians to countries such as Ireland and Sweden where they have really helped out the working poor. Canadian comedian and actor Mary Walsh will be leading the trip, and British singer Billy Bragg (who wrote "There's Power in a Union" many years ago) is available to host our group in London.*

*We live in a rich country, yet 5.3 million Canadians live in poverty, and Canada ranks 17th out of 27 wealthy countries in terms of overall poverty levels. Eighteen per cent of Canadian children live in poverty (almost 1 in 5).*

*Fortunately, there is a growing interest across Canada in the possibility of reducing poverty and inequality, including inequality among the working poor. The federal government and many of the provinces are developing poverty reduction strategies for the first time -- something England and Ireland did over ten years ago. Our documentary will contribute to the growing debate on this issue.*

*When the film is completed next spring, it will be available to the widest possible audience -- on television, in local theatres, at conventions, in schools and universities, and in training facilities. Our audience is the millions of Canadians who are struggling to get by. More than a film, this documentary will become an effective organizing tool that labour and social justice advocates can use to educate and mobilize working people across the country.*

*We have had enthusiastic support from a wide variety of groups across the country -- including the IBEW – 1<sup>st</sup> District leadership and Local 353, the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, the Canadian Council on Social Development, Canadian Federation of Students, Canadian Teachers' Federation, Canadian Nurses Association, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Make Poverty History, National Union of Public and General Employees, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, Ontario Federation of Labour, Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Public Service Alliance of Canada, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, United Church of Canada, the United Steelworkers, and many others.*

*This film is for Main Street, not Bay Street, and it is being paid for by the working people of Canada.*

*We are eager to show our appreciation to all of our supporters by offering credit on the film, credit on our website, a special screening of the film, and invitations to the official opening.*

*For more information, please visit [www.poornomore.ca](http://www.poornomore.ca) or email Associate Producer Julia Morgan ([julia.morgan@sympatico.ca](mailto:julia.morgan@sympatico.ca)).*

### **Workers Being Taken Advantage Of**

*Article taken from the Edmonton Journal – June 21, 2008- written by Norman Tardif, Alberta Beach*

A Chinese worker takes home \$600 per month, while his co-workers earn \$4,800. Who gets the other \$4,200? A labour contractor?

The labour contractor is entitled to recover airfare and a fair profit, which should be adequately covered in the first three weeks. After that, the salary discrepancy points to money that was skimmed or has gone missing.

Subsidized camp housing seems to be more of an attraction and benefit to our domestic skilled workers, who are away from home for a few days or a week. Surely accommodation costs would not account for the missing \$4,200 per month for the Chinese workers.

Who is in charge of investigating this? The provincial cabinet, which rewards itself with big raises behind closed doors simply for being elected?

We will have a new license plate. Some want the words "strong and free" on it. If so, we had better earn it and we won't do it by reverting to 1860's America, when slavery was still legal.

I'd like to see the words "strong and fair".

### **Too Many Apprentices**

*Article taken from the Edmonton Journal – June 21, 2008- written by Robin Duke, IBEW Electrician, Spruce Grove*

One of the reasons some unions and their members agreed to a small, hourly payroll deduction (called MERF funds) was to put union contractors on a level playing field with their non-union competitors, who are allowed to ignore the Alberta government's own legislation on apprenticeship ratios and overtime law. For years, these two items have been sore points with unionized contractors.

The Apprenticeship Act specifies that, in electrical construction, there be two apprentices for every journeyman on the jobsite. This ratio was set for good reasons.

First, as a safety factor, particularly in the industrial sector, workers deal with high voltages, heights and close proximity to heavy equipment. Journeymen are responsible for keeping an eye on the relatively inexperienced apprentices.

The other reason is to give the journeyman time to teach the apprentices the many hands-on field skills of their craft.

Many non-union electrical employers abuse the apprentice ratio – often with 12 to 15 apprentices per journeyman. The government does not give the apprenticeship board the manpower or resources to enforce the act.

The second piece of legislation that is ignored in many cases is the Employment Fair Standards Act, which says overtime should be paid at 1 ½ times the hourly rate after a 44-hour work week. As a union, we cannot be seen as ignoring or flaunting the law consequently apprenticeship ratios and overtime have been "enshrined" in collective bargaining agreements.

The real reason for the recent labour code amendments is that Merit shops and other non-union contractors finally had some competition and didn't like it.

## **Local Union 424 – Edmonton, AB – Electrical Workers Win Landmark Decision in Oil Sands**

*Article taken from Local Union 424's Media Release – July 8, 2008*

After many months of legal maneuvering by CNRL and Company management workers at Basilian Industrial Services Ltd. workers in Fort McMurray were today finally able to count their ballots on a vote to be represented by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 424.

This union certification vote, won by over 60%, was the first vote ever permitted by the Alberta Labour Relations Board under the Division 8 status enjoyed by Canadian Natural Resources Limited at their Fort McMurray site.

“We won the right to represent these workers despite Division 8 which was awarded to the project by a government that favour profit first and worker’s rights second.” said Tim Brower, Business Manager of IBEW Local 424.

“This victory is the result of a long and hard fought battle. It is the first successful change of worker representation in CNRL’s history and it is the largest representation win the IBEW has had in Canada”, Brower continued. “I am extremely proud of our efforts and hope it serves as a rarely seen beacon of light in an otherwise dark landscape of labour relations in Alberta.”

The vote today means that the almost 500 present Basilian employees will become IBEW members as of August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 receiving improved pension, health and welfare benefits as of that date. The agreement is in place until the end of 2009.

## **Apprenticeships Come Under Scrutiny**

*Article taken from Canada Labour Views Report (CLV) publication – July 21, 2008*

The apprenticeship system in Canada needs improving – and soon – if the looming shortage of skilled trades is to be met with Canadian-made solutions. At least that is the conclusion of many of the 500 participants representing both labour and management at the June 2008 Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) held in Victoria, British Columbia.

The results of the 2007 National Apprenticeship Survey, conducted by Statistics Canada and the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeships were presented and according to the one participant, quoted in the *Daily Commercial News and Construction Record*, provided a “very rich basis of data.” From

January to May 2007, 67,000 surveys were distributed. About 90 per cent of the 30,000 respondents were male. Only five per cent were aboriginal and just seven per cent were visible minorities.

Terry Weymouth, a skilled tradeswoman with the Canadian Auto Workers, says the number of women in the skilled trades should increase. According to the survey, family issues, like having reliable childcare, limited their ability to continue to participate.

According to 35 per cent of the respondents, insufficient income or funding delays hampered their efforts to continue with the program; a quarter of the respondents said lack of work was a barrier and nearly as many said the cost of tools, tuition and books made pursuing an apprenticeship difficult.

Jim Sinclair, President of the British Columbia Federation of Labour, says the costs of training are far outweighed by the benefits and noted that Canada lags far behind other countries in per-capita spending on training. He objected strenuously to the B.C. government’s decision in 2003 to replace the *Industry Training and Apprenticeship Act* with legislation that reduced the number of staff dedicated to moving apprentices through the training system.

Encouraging high school students to join the trades was another of the conference’s themes. This involves making sure they have the necessary literacy and numeracy skills. As well, having an employer willing to hire them is essential. Jim Sinclair has stressed the need for tax credits for training to be available to both employers and apprentices. He has also suggested that his province consider the training model used in Quebec where employers must invest one per cent of their payroll in training. According to the CAF, the cost-benefit to an employer is an average of \$1.38 for every \$1.00 invested and this rises to \$1.44 if tax credits are included.

According to a report in the *Journal of Commerce*, the benefits for trained apprentices can be significant as well. The median wage for those who finished their apprenticeships was cited as \$27 per hour in the survey compared to the \$20 per hour earned by those who fell by the wayside.

## **Manitoba Adopts Legislation Protecting Foreign Workers**

*Excerpts taken and modified from the Lancaster's Weekly Labour Law E-Bulletin – September 3, 2008 - Issue No. 219*

Manitoba has enacted legislation to provide better legal protection for foreign workers recruited to work in the province.

Bill 22, the *Worker Recruitment and Protection Act*, was passed by the Manitoba legislature and received Royal Assent on June 12, 2008, and comes into force on a date to be fixed by proclamation. The Act replaces the former *Employment Services Act*.

The new Act regulates the activities of employment agencies and recruiters of foreign workers by requiring them to be licensed, with limited exemptions, e.g. for government agencies and persons engaged in activities to find employment for a foreign worker who is a family member. The Director of Employment Standards has the authority to refuse a license where the applicant fails to meet a requirement of the Act (and its subordinate regulations) or the terms of the license, where the applicant's past conduct provides reasonable grounds to believe that the applicant will not act in accordance with the law or in the public interest, or where the applicant provides insufficient or misleading information in support of the application. The Director may cancel or suspend a license for similar reasons.

Employers are required to register with the Director before recruiting foreign workers, and the Director may refuse to register an employer, and cancel or suspend an employer's registration, for reasons parallel to those applicable to the issuance of licenses.

The Director has the power to recover for workers money they have paid to be recruited or represented by an employment agency, an employer, or a recruiter of foreign workers. The provincial Cabinet is authorized to make regulations under the Act, including regulations relating to licensing requirements and exemptions to specified parts of the Act.

The Act is also aimed at protecting foreign workers. In this regard, while Manitoba has become "a destination of choice for new immigrants through our immigration programs [and] settlement services," the government "must demonstrate [that] there are strong protections in place" in order to "continue to attract and retain new workers."

The President of the United Food and Commercial Workers Canada, Wayne Hanley, called the new legislation "a good move" that "should be followed by all other jurisdictions," declaring that "if a province needs temporary workers, it also needs to make sure [that] those workers have the same protections and rights as their Canadian counterparts," including "protection from unscrupulous recruiters." The Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants likewise praised the new Act as "a model that should be im-

plemented nationally," noting that foreign workers are sometimes given "false promises of employment, high wages and permanent resident status in return for exorbitant fees." The government of Prince Edward Island is examining the Manitoba legislation, and is planning to adopt legislation of its own that will prevent recruiters from charging foreign workers for the chance to work in the province.

### **OFL 2008 Labour Honour Roll**

Each year the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) recognizes the contribution of five (5) retired or deceased trade unionists through the awarding, in their names, of two scholarships. This year's award includes **Walter "Wally" Majesky of IBEW Local Union 353**.

The OFL is pleased to have this opportunity to highlight Wally's service to the working people of Ontario and his name is added to the Labour Honour Roll Scholarship plaque in the OFL's office.

### **2008 Projected Meetings**

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|---------------------|---|
| <b>9/15 - 19/08</b> | <b>Business Managers Training<br/>(Week One)<br/>Delta Toronto Airport West Hotel<br/>Toronto, Ontario</b>  |
| <b>9/15 - 18/08</b> | <b>Gas Conference<br/>Royal York Hotel<br/>Toronto, Ontario</b>   |
| <b>9/16 - 18/08</b> | <b>Canadian Building Trades<br/>Organizing Conference<br/>United Assoc. Local 787<br/>Brampton, Ontario</b> |
| <b>12/1 - 5/08</b>  | <b>IBEW Nuclear Conference<br/>Golden Nugget<br/>Las Vegas, Nevada</b>                                      |

### **A Quote to Think About from Coast to Coast**

"The past cannot be changed; the future is still in your power."

— Author Unknown