
CN has brought negotiations today to an abrupt halt today.

Today, Sunday February 15, 2015 at 17:00hrs CN requested a meeting with top level Bargaining Committee members and presented us with three ultimatums.

1. Shut down negotiations and refer our differences to a third party for arbitration. Apparently in the opinion of CN this would be “in the best interest of our employees, our customers and all other interested stakeholders.”
2. A “Term Sheet” reflecting their “offer to conclude the collective agreements governing clerical, intermodal, Shopcraft, excavator-operator, and Savage Alberta Rail. The Term Sheet also made it clear that anything agreed to during negotiation were “perishable” should this offer not be accepted by 20:00hrs EST, February 15, 2015.

The economics included in the Term Sheet offered a 3% wage increase in each of the next 3 years and CN made reference to benefit improvements that they had bargained the previous day with the Engineers. An agreement that we have not seen as it has not been released to the public, the other economic item was an increase to the charge you pay for prescriptions. The Term Sheet also made it clear that anything agreed to during bargaining was “perishable” should this offer not be accepted by 20:00hrs EST, February 15, 2015

3. A “Term Sheet” that stated the Term of Contract and Compensation was “ 3 or 4 year agreement with an economic package identical to that which was granted last round of bargaining, including resolution of the safety bonus and fuel subsidy as discussed between Kennedy and Lerner”. The Term Sheet also made it clear that anything agreed to during negotiations were “perishable” should this offer not be accepted by 20:00hrs EST.

Union Response

After a brief caucus to give the employer’s offer the appropriate weight. At 17:15hrs the offer to arbitrate was rejected. The offer was offensive to the process, an insult to the Unifor membership who continue to perform their duties throughout the entire bargaining process and have worked so hard to create the massive profits this company enjoys today.

CN refuses to recognize or respect the bargaining process and has made little effort to reach an agreement between the parties. We have not concluded the non-monetary proposals and have yet to hold any main table economic discussion.

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The Term Sheets were rejected, a decision later endorsed and unanimously supported by your entire Unifor Bargaining Committee. From the commencement of negotiations the Bargaining Committee made it clear to the employer that a settlement would be bargained at this table and that they must respect the bargaining agenda that we have set. Our agenda was set with membership involvement and we must address the issues important to our membership.

We were not going to be bound by the entire terms as set by other unions. We are determined to follow a Unifor Pattern Agreement. One determined by our union and bargained by the bargaining committee you have elected.

All items agreed to during negotiations perished at 17:15hrs by CN

Employer to implement changes to the collective agreement February 19th

A brief summary of the changes to be implemented is a 2% wage increase to all workers except CNTL. In addition CN is going to alter work rules and strip union officials of their full time representation status. Your union representation is still in place and will continue to be available when called upon.

Apparently these actions are implemented by CN "in the best interest of our employees, our customers and all other interested stakeholders".

The Next Step

Your bargaining committee is prepared to bargain and will remain at the hotel in Montreal to participate in the information meeting that will detail the Unifor contract bargained at CP. We will be scheduling strike votes across the country and as always your bargaining committee members will participate in the meetings and provide you with a full account of all the contents of the employer's letters and the bargaining process.

Your Bargaining Committee is unanimous in our determination to negotiate a settlement that meets the objectives set by our Unifor membership.

We want to underscore again not to listen to rumours or innuendos. We will continue to communicate with our members on the ongoing status of bargaining. If you have not already done so, please sign up for RailLine by sending your email address to rail@unifor.org and follow us on twitter at @Unifor_RailLine.

In appreciation and solidarity,

Ken Hiatt, Local 100
Barry Kennedy, National Council 4000
Jerry Dias, Unifor National President

On behalf of:
Local 100 and National Council 4000 Bargaining Committees