

July 23, 2008

Company Makes First Offer!

In the face of increasing Union Pressure and the possibility of strike votes, Superstore and Liquorstore Management have put their first offers of settlement on the table in Union negotiations.

Obviously rattled by thousands of employees wearing "I'm on strike alert" buttons, the Company, for the first time in collective bargaining, started to bargain.

But for all of the positives the Company said it is prepared to add to your employment terms and conditions, at this time, the bad outweighs the good. Even a quick read of the Company's documents reveals the following.

The offers contemplate an agreement **seven years** in duration!

There is more money for some - and less or little for others. 80 cents retro pay is offered for some – there is 60 cents for others. There are wage increases in some years, **and no wage increases in other years.** The deal is in no way as valuable to Superstore employees as the recent Safeway deal is to employees there.

But the mixed bag has a lining that is just plain rotten. The offer maintains the \$1.00 per hour Sunday premium and a 75 cents per hour lead hand premium. Night premiums however are guaranteed at only \$2.00 per hour. Current night premiums paid in some stores at \$4.00 and \$5.00 per hour are not in the offer. Nor are available anytime premiums of \$2.00 or \$3.00 per hour, weekend premiums of \$1.00 or \$2.00 per hour, nor daytime premiums of \$1.00 per hour.

The potential loss of these premiums would mean, even with wage increases, **an overall pay check rollback for many employees.**

Lowlights of the offer also include a new wage scale for new employees with a start rate of \$9.25 per hour and a top rate of \$13.75 per hour. It could be introduced to deal with Wal-Mart's "competitive effect" if necessary.

The offers reduce rights for Assistant Supervisors, have inadequate pension contributions, and do not provide with any clarity, protections from being forced to work 24 hour store openings. Payroll problems are not solved and store front-ends will be blended to put customer service jobs and seniority rights for front-end employees in jeopardy.

Your Union is studying and preparing a response to the Company offers. The meaning and impact of the offers is not yet completely clear. More mediated negotiations are scheduled in August.

Obviously, our “strike alert” has become a “high level strike alert” a “code purple alert”, “defcon five” Whatever you want to call it. The Company says their offer is a “final offer”. Such arrogance and bullying will only provoke a strike. It certainly does not represent an effort to bargain in good faith with the hard working employees of Superstores and Liquor Stores, without whom the business would not operate.

As a point of interest, Manitoba Superstore and Extra Food employees will conduct a strike vote on August 24th, 2008.

Remember, in the past the Company has been found guilty by the Labour Relations Board of misrepresenting Labour Law, and making false statements and trying to sow the seeds of dissent among employees. Union questions should be directed to the Union. Get a fair and accurate answer!