



# BULLETIN

*Kitimat Smelter and Kemano Power Operations Workers*

## BARGAINING UPDATE #5

Brothers and Sisters,

Your Bargaining Committee has been working hard in preparing for face-to-face negotiations with Rio Tinto to reach a fair collective agreement. Face-to-face negotiations will commence on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

The week of May 1<sup>st</sup> had the Union's bargaining demands package endorsed by the Executive Board and Steering Committee and culminated with the unanimous endorsement by the membership at meetings held at Christ the King church on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

A number of bargaining demand modifications were made as a result of feedback from the membership during these meetings.

During the week of May 8<sup>th</sup>, the Union and employer met to exchange Housekeeping proposals. Housekeeping is supposed to be a straightforward process as it is intended to only involve updates, corrections and restructuring of the collective agreement which does not alter the intent of any of the contract language.

Unfortunately, the employer did not agree with many of the Union's basic housekeeping proposals and as a result these proposals will have to be addressed later on in bargaining. The Union made it clear to the employer that these proposals are not just going to disappear, as the tidying up of the collective agreement, albeit what should be a relatively simple exercise, is important as it makes the collective agreement easier to follow and more accessible to the membership.

On May 15<sup>th</sup>, the Union and employer exchanged bargaining demands. The Union, as per long standing practice, presented its demands in a format which clearly identifies which contract language is proposed to be either deleted, amended, or new language added. The Union has tabled approximately 350 bargaining demands (non-monetary and monetary).

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The employer has tabled what can only be described as concepts or “speaking points” – technically not bargaining demands at all as they contain no specific contract language proposals. It appears to be lost on the employer that the purpose of collective bargaining is to negotiate specific language changes to the collective agreement.

It is not up to the Union to table or write the employer’s demands for them (quite frankly, the fewer they have the better); however, through their actions and treatment of the membership over the past five years the employer has effectively written most of the Union’s demands!

It is, however, implicit in the employers “proposals” that the employer is intent upon attacking our defined benefit pension plan, seniority rights, access to earned leave, job security, benefits, and health and safety in order to have, as per the employer’s terminology, a “sustainable” operation.

In the coming weeks, the Union will be releasing bulletins to further educate the membership on the pitfalls behind the directions in which the employer is trying to head.

The Union and the employer are currently working through a process called Packaging, whereby each party’s proposals are placed into either the non-monetary or monetary packages. This process, which is almost complete, will now also have to include the packaging of approximately 140 housekeeping proposals which could not be previously signed off.

The parties have agreed that negotiating the non-monetary package should be finalized by July 3<sup>rd</sup> before moving on to monetary items.

The membership will be kept up to date throughout the bargaining process, including notification of important meetings where strong membership turnout and participation is critical to building support for your Bargaining Committee and solidarity amongst the membership as your Union seeks to conclude a successful round of negotiations ahead of the contract expiry date.

