

**REPORT  
OF THE  
REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT  
QUEBEC  
Maryse Veilleux**

**Health and Safety**

For many years, the Health & Safety Committee has been confined to a secondary role. Our challenge is to give it the influence it deserves at every level of our organization and where it is necessary, in all situations (such as relocation).

- **Communication:** When we submit a file to the Committee, we are responsible for its follow-up, otherwise there would be little chance of success. It is not normal custom for minutes of meetings to be sent by the Employer to the Union rather than by the copresident. (It is the copresident who is uncommunicative; the Management side is not interfering.)
- **Organizational Outreach:** at the September 13 Union-Management meeting, it was requested that the copresident be present (or that he delegates someone to take his place), but no one attended.
- **Information Sharing:** I am aware that information I disseminate is not being distributed to all members. The value of generic e-mail is questionable.
- **Uneven Receptivity:** Depending upon the person you are communicating with, it is necessary at times to cite Canada Labour Code Part II, reminding them of their obligations.
- **Mental Health:** Some progress has been noted, but the role this Committee assumed is unclear.
- **Employer Attitude:** First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) does not take the OHS Committee seriously. It sends 'stop-gap' representatives who are four-month-term employees, and spends one day doing management work. Otherwise, Management Side leaves its representation in the hands of the Facility Management Manager and the Human Resources Director, these two individuals having some authority to give advice, but no hierarchical authority. At the same time, FNIHB puts too much pressure on their Wellness Committee.

### **Harassment and Organizational Health**

The number of bullying cases has diminished since the Local informed members to insist upon an agenda before meetings with their Manager and since requiring them to leave the meeting room should an item not on the agenda be raised which makes them uncomfortable. However, on several occasions employees did spontaneously leave the meeting room and requested the presence of a union representative. It also occurred several times that managers were present in higher numbers (2 or 3) and laid blame on the employee. Some of these managers did not have any hierarchical link with the employee being criticized.

It seems that FNIHB is showing signs of schizophrenia. The Executive Director addresses people according to his mood – and he does not like the RVP. We do not feel his love of people. He is very cold and distant and is considered by many members to be unfriendly and insensitive. In 20 years, he is the only director to have refused to meet one-on-one with a union representative. The tone of his e-mails is somewhat derogatory. The RVP calls him the ‘new manager’, although he has been in his position for two years so far, as he is frequently absent from the workplace.

The most recent PSES at FNIHB showed poor results. This director signed a contract with an American company (Human Synergetics) apparently to survey our work environment, however, the questions were rather odd and some members refused to respond to them. Results were shown to various teams but never to all FNIHB employees, who would have liked to have seen them. At the last Union-Management Meeting, the RVP wished to discover what link there was with the PSES, to which the Director responded, none. We wonder why such an initiative was taken, and to what point it constitutes waste of public funds. Furthermore, we wonder if one of the stakeholders might be a friend of the Director! We have not heard anything since on the matter, and are anxious to see the results of the next PSES.

These days, one specific manager is ‘in charge’ in a very authoritative manner, even towards other managers. There is a potential class action on the basis of harassment as she is also harassing employees who do not fall under her authority. Some trustworthy employees led me to believe that the Executive Director, Richard Budgell, does not make decisions, and is making working relations worse by his lack of decision making.

### **Joint Learning Program**

We have reached an agreement with Management which stipulates that any employee wanting to take a ‘Training the Trainer’ course for the JLP must submit his/her name to the Regional Union-Management Table in order that the selection of trainers has better supervision and the trainers really represent employees.

### **Reconfiguration of Office Space**

Despite the opposition from the Local, workspace in some offices have reduced in size. Since the Manager of this area has a reputation for vengefulness when his plans are not implemented, employees are afraid to speak up. Following the relocation, many employees were shocked at the appearance of the new workspace and put it down to contempt on the part of the Director. Those in 'the good books', as the boss, have roomy offices with windows. This item was discussed at a Regional Union-Management Meeting with the Executive Director who went on a rant, agreed to meet some local representatives and to set a local table. Nonetheless, he mentioned that he would no longer attend regional meetings. Such a decision seems to have made other directors uncomfortable. His reasoning was that he wanted 'to air his dirty laundry' in front of all.

### **Merger with Indian Affairs**

The RVP asked that Montreal offices not be relocated to Quebec City. As far as job cuts are concerned, I anticipate that the whole Administrative Unit of FAMS Section will be impacted.

### **Fear of Reprisals**

Some employees are afraid of reprisals when making complaints. Such an environment exists in Longueuil. Considering the large territory our members work, it is difficult for the RVP to be present as often as she would like.

### **Representatives' Development Program**

Training workshops are required to develop new union representatives.

### **Phoenix Pay System**

Members are extremely unhappy with the present situation regarding Phoenix. They feel PSAC, at the National level, does not take sufficient measures and action. They also feel they are expected to endure the situation and to keep quiet. We are presenting grievances at 3rd level, but we are still in a dead-end.