

November 12, 2024

**Dear leaders of Unifor Locals of Bell Canada and its subsidiaries,**

On Thursday, November 7, we met with the officials of Bell and its subsidiaries in Ottawa, with a delegation composed of Chris Santos, Robin Dudley, Clayton Nunn, Jean-Stéphane Mayer, Hugues Perreault, Charles Saumure and I met to address urgent and ongoing issues in labour relations.

These discussions, which Bell agreed to hold only after the events during our Telco Council in Montreal on September 26, were meant to tackle pressing concerns that we have repeatedly raised with them. The meeting lasted more than four hours, and, while the exchanges were constructive, they left several important questions unanswered.

We immediately raised Bell's lack of transparency regarding future plans, particularly for our bargaining units. We demanded more information about the company's annual report to shareholders, titled "Telco to Techno," and especially its implications for our members.

The recent acquisition of Zply Fiber was discussed, including its operation as a separate business entity. The company said it sees this purchase as beneficial, as it allows Bell to diversify its operations as a purely fiber-optic service provider.

We also addressed Bell's previous job cuts and exchanged on the need for more effective mechanisms to inform the Union of decisions that impact our members. Such a measure could help alleviate future frustrations and spare us from sudden and arbitrary announcements.

The company shared their view regarding its “transition” process, which they characterize by two main themes: restructuring and the shift from “Telco” to “Techno.” According to Bell, this includes a mantra of “Low Cost, Low Touch and Simplicity” – described, unsurprisingly, as an effort in cost reductions.

Union representatives pointed out that Bell’s decision to cut over 4,800 jobs in the last 18 months is alarming, especially given the company’s lack of disclosure about the future of our members.

We reiterated that we are committed to protecting our members and that it is crucial to collaborate on exploring viable alternatives, rather than accepting these cuts as inevitable. We will continue to demand those opportunities.

We spoke specifically about Expertech. The company officials were somewhat reassuring, stating that, outside of the current initiative of VSP, the company does not have additional workforce reductions planned. There are no talks of amalgamation with Bell, or a sale at this time.

Another major item of discussion was the lack of agreement in place on Terms of Reference in the Corporate Health and Safety Committee for Technicians (a.k.a. CHSC Craft), which also affects the functioning of other CHSCs. After a series of frank and direct exchanges, both parties acknowledged the need to reach a compromise on this issue by November 15.

The third topic discussed centered on grievance processes. We told the company the current systems are inefficient and unproductive. Both parties recognize that a review is necessary, as our local presidents feel it is increasingly difficult to find solutions to resolve our grievances. The current approach creates a deadlock, with grievances passed along without any meaningful resolution.

We also discussed grievances which identify problems that are detrimental to good labour relations. These have been noted by the company and work has already begun to

try to resolve these issues. National representatives will be passing on updates to the locals and councils concerned.

Both sides committed to increasing efforts to transform working relationships, which is essential for an effective grievance resolution process.

We concluded the meeting with a call for concrete measures. We insisted that this discussion should not remain mere words: tangible results for our members must be the top priority.

We remain realistic but this meeting was constructive nonetheless, and we are carefully optimistic that we will continue to forge a better relationship with your employer to resolve your issues.

In solidarity,



**ROCH LEBLANC**

Director of Telecommunications

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