

Canadian comment



The entire First District staff wishes you and your family a safe and happy Holiday Season and a successful New Year.

Fall 2003



Vice President Don Lounds Retires



INTERNATIONAL
BROTHERHOOD
OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS
FIRST DISTRICT

PHIL FLEMMING
International Vice President

EDWIN D. HILL
International President

JERRY J. O'CONNOR
International
Secretary-Treasurer

JOE FASHION
International Executive
Council Member
8th District



During the All Canada Progress Meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland, a special gathering was held to salute Don for his 44 years of devotion to the IBEW. Many local unions presented Don with retirement gifts and accolades for his dedication to the union movement and commitment to the IBEW.

Don delivered a heart-felt thank you to everyone in attendance.

We all wish Don best of luck and good health in his retirement.

editorial



Phil Flemming, Vice President for the IBEW in Canada



Phil Flemming
International Vice President

It is with great pride and pleasure that I am able to take on the responsibility of being the Vice President for the IBEW in Canada. Publicly, I want to recognize President Hill and the IEC for placing their confidence in me and appointing me to manage this awesome task.

Currently, I am preparing new goals and objectives for us in the First District. We have a capable, hard working staff of International Representatives in Canada, and I have complete faith in each and every one and am assured that they will provide a 100% effort to assist us in achieving the objectives that I will set over my term of office.

We, in North America, are encountering some of the most challenging times ever realized in labour history. I am per-

sonally motivated to move the IBEW forward to face these challenges over the remainder of the next three years; leading to the International Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, where I will seek the support of the delegates to continue on as an elected officer of the IBEW.

It will take work to gain the trust and confidence of the Canadian IBEW local union leadership and membership and, I assure you Brothers and Sisters that I will work on your behalf as a dedicated trade unionist.

Yours in solidarity,

International Vice President

A Letter from Don Lounds Retired Vice President for the IBEW in Canada



Don Lounds
Retired International Vice President

It is with humble reflection that I write this final article for the *Canadian Comment*. Over my 44 years with the IBEW, I have witnessed many changes both positive and occasionally negative. One of the most influencing factors for the labour movement is provincial legislation. Although the IBEW in Canada has historically not really been politically active I would

leave you with my last request for all of our local union officers and members to become active in both the political arena and to recommit themselves to organizing.

It is with great pride and respect that I am able to transfer the operations of the First District Office to International Representative Phil Flemming. Phil worked as an inside wireman before becoming the business manager of Local 1432 in Prince Edward Island in 1975. In 1981 Phil accepted an appointment as an International Representative and resided in Newfoundland for 11 years servicing local unions in eastern Canada before moving to Ontario in 1992. For the last 5 years Phil served as my executive assistant and it truly was wonderful news to hear that the International Executive Council supported President Hill's selection to have Phil replace me as vice president.

I know that I am leaving the First District in very able and capable hands and I wish Phil and his staff my best wishes for future success in all their endeavors.

I also wish to thank all of my friends, business managers and First District staff for their hard work and support and will always appreciate all of the good wishes and gifts that were given to me in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Thank you all for your dedication and support of the IBEW.

Fraternally,

Don Lounds

Legislative Conference

Every year the Building Trades hosts a Legislative Conference in Ottawa, Ontario, which provides an excellent opportunity for the IBEW to lobby federal politicians on important issues. This year the conference was held from September 26th to the 28th and was attended by five International Representatives along with fifteen IBEW delegates from all across Canada. Topics this year included mobility, EI, training, national standards and the underground economy. By all accounts, this conference was another tremendous success. Thank you to all the locals who participated.

Calendars

The next All Canada Progress Meeting will be held in Calgary, Alberta, August 22 – 27, 2004.

Our Winter schools will be held in Toronto, Ontario and Moncton, N.B. All local unions will be notified of the place and time once arrangements are confirmed.

IBEW Utility Conference will be held in Palm Springs, California, April 26 – 30, 2004.

IBEW Construction Conference is to be held in Washington, D.C., March 26 – 27, 2004.

VDV Conference and Expo is to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, March 11 – 13, 2004.

IBEW Manufacturing Conference is to be held May 3 – 7, 2004; (Dates are tentative)



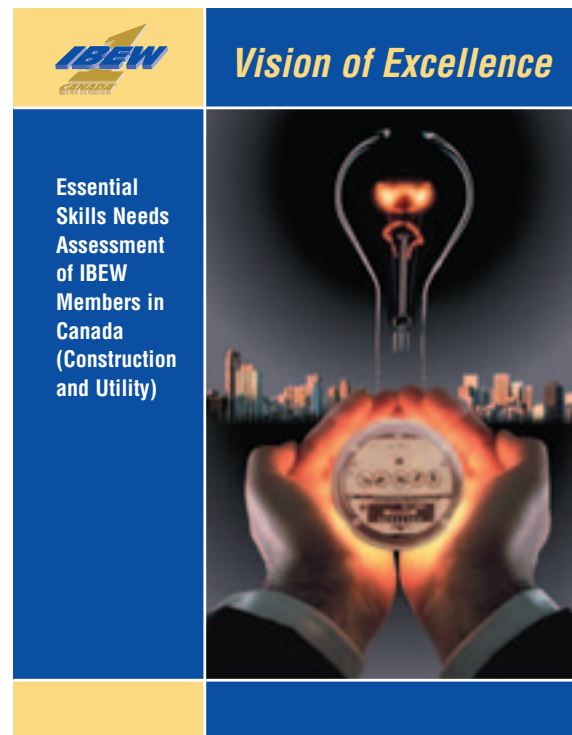
International President Hill Recognizes Don Lound's Retirement

President Hill is shown thanking Don for his contributions to the IBEW.

Essential Skills Needs Assessment of IBEW Members in Canada

Lifelong learning is at the heart of the IBEW's *Vision of Excellence*. IBEW members need to be more qualified and versatile than ever. A pivotal report that identifies barriers to lifelong learning related to essential skills was presented at the 2003 All Canada Progress Meeting. The IBEW, First District, Canada published *Essential Skills Needs Assessment of IBEW Members in Canada (Construction and Utility)* following extensive consultations with over 150 industry stakeholders across seven provinces. The report is posted at www.ibew1st.org.

Essential skills are enabling skills (e.g., reading text such as the electrical code) that workers use to learn technical skills; perform job tasks; and adapt to new technology and other workplace changes. The report links essential skills to success in apprenticeship and journeyman training. It identifies ten key issues and forwards recommendations for an IBEW National Essential Skills Strategy. International Vice President Phil Fleming is pleased that "efforts are already underway to develop innovative



new learning resources with results expected early in the New Year."

The IBEW wishes to thank the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada, for financially supporting this initiative.

Organizing Conference

This year, the Organizing Conference was held in Chicago, Illinois, from October 8 - 11th, 2003. Over 800 delegates attended this conference and took part in workshops and attended presentations focusing on increasing the membership of our local unions.

President Hill provided statistics proving that IBEW must organize in every sector of our Brotherhood or we will face a grave future. The fact is that the IBEW has not grown in parallel with the increase in population and has lost membership due to deregulation, free trade and negative political decisions.

As such, President Hill has directed that organizing become the highest priority of each and every local union. President Hill stated that, "we must remove all barriers for allowing contractors into the IBEW and there can be no reasons, no excuses for keeping people out".

Part of the IBEW's organizing plan will require a follow up program by District Staff to ensure our local unions are doing their jobs.

International Secretary-Treasurer Jerry O' Connor stated that, "All of the officers of the IBEW are fully supporting the game plan" and "local

unions will not get away with doing nothing". He explained that the consequences of not organizing will create "long term damage to the labour movement - the weakening of clout, the loss of bargaining power and the lack of a strong voice in our society".

In line with this plan, the First District is committed to organizing in every sector of our union. The support and dedication of our entire membership will certainly be a significant factor in how successful we are. Organizing is the only means of retaining long-term employment with adequate pay and benefits. Organizing...it only makes sense.

All Canada Progress Meeting

St. John's, Newfoundland was the perfect setting for the 5th Annual All Canada Progress Meeting. One hundred and seventy six delegates and almost 400 guests attended one of the most interesting and enjoyable progress meetings in our history.

As delegates attended conference meetings, guests were able to take advantage of the sites that an historic city like St. John's has to offer. In addition to these sites everyone was treated to an array of scenic tours and amazing hospitality.

President Hill and Secretary-Treasurer O'Connor not only attended the entire conference but they delivered inspiring presentations on the opening day and also attended the sector caucuses answering questions and provoking debate. Other speakers included: Hassan Yusseff from the CLC; Joe Maloney from the Building Trades, Roger Grimes the Premiere of Newfoundland, Norm Whalen, a labour lawyer from Newfoundland, and Reg Anstey from the NFLD Federation of Labour.

Jim Spellane from our own Journal Department gave a very informative presentation on communication techniques and, once again, urged our locals to provide articles for publication in our *Journal*.

Various sector caucuses were held and a brief overview of each of them follows:

Utility guest speakers and their topics included Ernest Jones (Dupont of Canada) on FR Clothing, Jim Mason on Ergonomic Tools and Ted Vandevs on the Global View of Safety. Information was exchanged on deregulation, negotiations and various labour relations issues.

The 78 **Construction** delegates held long and hard debates on issues such as jurisdiction of loop checks, pension power, dispatching procedures, reciprocal agreements, drug and alcohol testing and organizing. In addition, each local provided an update on their work picture and problems in their area.

The **Railroad** caucus was very well attended by representatives from across Canada, and they discussed issues pertinent to each railway represented.

Michael Church from the firm Caley & Wray discussed the grievance and arbitration process and reviewed the new Federal Privacy Legislation. Everyone appreciated the opportunity to attend training courses and to meet members from the different sectors of the IBEW.

The **Government and Telecommunications** caucus focused on issues such as certified standards, attendance management programs, hiring practices in the Federal Government, VDV and the shortages of workers. In addition, a labour lawyer spoke to these delegates in regards to Personal Information Protection and the Electronic Protection Act.

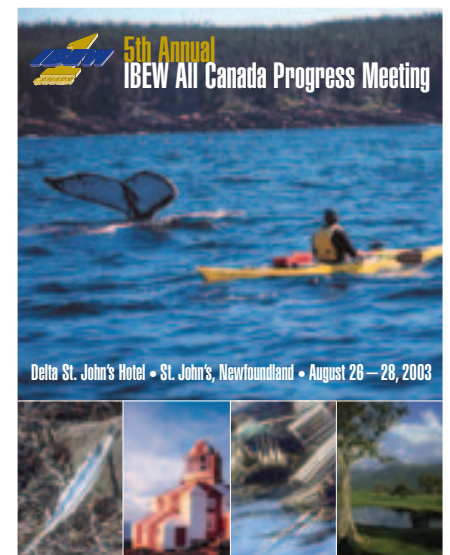
The **Papermill/Manufacturing** caucus discussed issues and concerns raised in the various local union reports covering issues from grievances and contracting out to hiring practices and future expectations. General discussions were held regarding collective bargaining, pensions and problems with WSIB.

In addition, 106 delegates took advantage of the training programs offered prior to the progress meeting. These courses were the Business Managers Orientation Course and How To Run Effective Meetings. Both of these courses were designed and presented based on the needs of our local unions and with their input on the courses required.

Thank you to the host Locals 2351, 2330, 1620, 1615 and 512 for all of their time, effort and hard work to ensure that this was a wonderful and successful progress meeting.



Pictured above from left to right: I.P. Hill, I.E.C. member Joe Fashion, and former I.V.P. Don Lounds



Pictures from the All Canada Progress Meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland, August 2003.



Organizing is a very basic function of any union organization. Not only does belonging to a union improve the quality of life for workers and their families but it also reduces the "non-union factor" when our contractors bid on work or when we attempt to negotiate improvements to our collective agreements. Organizing is necessary and it is also very challenging, as there are many hurdles that an organizer faces in his/her role.

Consider the following:

- 25% of employers illegally fire at least one worker during an organizing drive.
- 75% of employers hire union busters to fight organizing drives.
- 78% force employees to attend meetings (usually one-on-one meetings with their own supervisor) to talk to them against voting for the union.
- 51% threaten to close the plant if a union is formed; less than 1% actually ever do.

In addition to this, provincial legislation can make it difficult to organize workers. For example: Did you know that in some provinces the Labour Relations Board has the power to certify a group of employees without a vote if the employer has been found to be interfering in the unions organizing drive?

“Remember, working people have a legal right to organize into unions ...”

In Manitoba, the labour board has recently used this right and ordered the immediate certification of employees where the employer was shown to have grossly interfered in an organizing drive while in Ontario, there is no effective process to protect employees and prevent employer interference. The anti-worker conservative government in Ontario changed the legislation in 1998 to disallow the board to certify workers

under these circumstances.

Remember, working people have a legal right to organize into unions and it is important for you to let your provincial politicians know that your province needs to have strongly worded legislation to protect workers who wish to join a union. Leveling the playing field only confirms the governments' commitment to enforce the rights given under our Canadian constitution.

Did You Know?

Did you know that Wal-Mart is considered to be the most anti-union corporation in all of North America? There have been a number of attempts by different unions to organize workers at Wal-Mart and time and again this company has been found guilty of unethical practices. One recent example is in British Columbia where the Labour Relations Board found that Wal-Mart was taking illegal action against their employees just because these workers were exer-

cising their legal right to organize. In fact, the board found that Wal-Mart had not only fired a worker but also had a "hit list" of other employees to fire simply because they wanted to bring a union into their workplace. Please remember that the profit that you provide to this company will go to financing their anti-union strategy. Did you know that thousands of union members refuse to purchase anything at Wal-Mart just for this reason?

Skills Competition

The Ontario Skills Competition is held every year and provides an opportunity for students and the public to learn more about various skilled trades work. Approximately 1,000 students learned that selecting a trade, as an occupation, could be a rewarding decision. Not only do various trade groups staff information booths but competitions are held between apprentices challenging their skill and ability. This year Dave Powell from Local 586 won the gold medal in the electrical wiring test and went on to win another gold medal at the Skills National Competition.

**Congratulations
Dave for winning
this prestigious
award!**