

LBED Bargaining



News & Information for OPSEU members of the Liquor Board Employees Division

Issue 3 - March 1, 2013

OUTRAGEOUS!

LCBO management seeks to gut our next contract

On Feb. 13 your bargaining team sat down with the employer and exchanged proposals for the renewal of our contract which expires on Mar. 31.

The offer we received from management can only be described in one word: Outrageous!

Despite its very healthy financial position, billions in profits and its ability to improve wages, benefits and job security, the LCBO has chosen to take the exact opposite approach. It wants to freeze our wages, cut our benefits and make working conditions even more precarious for all of us.

This is totally unacceptable to your bargaining team. We've made that crystal clear to the employer. Two days after the employer tabled its so-called "proposals" we filed an application to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for a conciliator to step in and assist with this round of negotiations.

Let's take a close look at what the LCBO wants to take away from you and how your bargaining team has responded.

LCBO wants to freeze our wages until 2017

The LCBO is seeking a four-year wage freeze on us, regardless of our classification. The employer has indicated its intent is to replicate and follow settlement patterns similar to the Ontario Public Service. The employer's vision is to reduce the provincial government's \$11.4 billion deficit austerity agenda at the cost to our members.

What we say

What this really means is an eight-per cent cut in your wage, based on an annual two-per cent increase in inflation. This proposal is entirely unacceptable. The LCBO is the world's largest retailer of beer, wines and spirits. In its last fiscal year the LCBO returned a dividend of \$1.6 billion to the province of Ontario on revenues of \$4.3 billion. That amounts to \$200,000 per employee. No other large retail corporation – not even Walmart – comes even close to this sort of return-per-employee than the LCBO.

LCBO wants to freeze wage progression

This proposal, in addition to the 'zeroes' offered above, would stop all progression through the grid for new and existing employees.

LCBO wants to promote employees based on 'merit' not seniority

The LCBO wants to eliminate seniority provisions currently in our contract and replace it with "promotion on merit to promote the most qualified employees."

LCBO wants to impose another level on the wage grid

In its contract proposal the LCBO is demanding to "amend the wage grid for new permanent full-time, casual and seasonal employees hired after (contract) ratification."

What we say

What this proposal means is that if you have not reached the top level of your wage grid (even if you were close to it) you will **Not!** You will remain at the current hourly rate you are at now for the life of the collective agreement.

What we say

This proposal is nothing more than a divide-and-conquer measure by the LCBO. Equality means that seniority matters when it comes to promotions at the LCBO. The employer wants to override seniority and promote employees on 'merit' which is a five-letter word for 'favouritism.' We will not accept this.

What we say

The LCBO already has a horrible track record when it comes to paying its employees "equal work for equal pay." It contravenes the United Nations declaration on equal pay for equal work. This proposal from our employer would only add another layer to a wage grid that can only be described as a dog's breakfast. It will lower wage and benefit levels and will continue to promote wage discrimination. We have put the employer on notice that we intend to eliminate the wage disparity that currently exists. We will not accept this.

The LCBO wants to make cuts to our attendance credits

The employer's proposal is to reduce the attendance credits from 15 to 12 per year to "align with the other public sector settlements"

LCBO will cease filling the existing 270 assistant manager positions from A and B stores

"Subject to the outcome of promotion on merit proposals," the LCBO wants to eliminate 270 assistant manager positions in A and B retail stores through the process of attrition.

LCBO wants to weaken our benefits package

In its proposal to the union the LCBO says it wants to "review for discussion current costs related to existing benefit plans." Why? "To maximize returns to the people of Ontario."

What we say

We say 'No!' Credits are a bargained benefit and we are not entertaining concessions to our benefit package.

What we say

The employer argued that it was seeking the elimination of this position as currently assistant managers were not applying for managerial positions. However, sure enough, the employer's true concerns were that this position should be abolished in order to maximize returns to the public treasury. This is simply a 'cost reduction' measure.

What we say

This proposal is outrageous. What the LCBO is really demanding is that liquor board employees take cuts to our wages and benefits to help the province eliminate its deficit. We did not create the deficit but now the LCBO and its political masters expect us to help eliminate it. This is atrocious. The LCBO transferred more than \$2 billion to the provincial treasury in the last fiscal year through its dividend and provincial taxes but that's still not good enough. It wants to squeeze your wages and benefits even more. For the LCBO "review" is really a four-letter code word for "cuts."

LCBO wants to impose a radical change in hours of operations for Logistics

“To enhance the scheduling process,” the LCBO is proposing a major overhaul of how the work week will be structured for Logistics by adding Saturdays to the regular shift schedule. It claims this will give the employer greater “flexibility.” The employer wants to “compress the work week schedule” in Logistics.

What we say

This proposal is problematic as it would increase stressors on full time, seasonal and casual employees. This opens the door for creative scheduling, leading to a reduction in hours for casual and seasonal employees. Another real impact is that this will dramatically reduce the amount of overtime currently available to this classified employees.

LCBO wants to eliminate attendance bonus system and freeze termination payments

In its contract proposal the LCBO is demanding to “amend the wage grid for new permanent full-time, casual and seasonal employees hired after (contract) ratification.”

What we say

The LCBO sees itself as a warrior in the government’s battle on the provincial deficit and it wants us to pay the price for it through their wallet. We must never lose sight that the LCBO returned a dividend of more than \$1.6 billion to the people of Ontario. We did not create the deficit and neither we nor our families are prepared to take any form of concessions so that the government can balance its books.



LBED asks for conciliation in contract talks

The ink was scarcely dry on management's contract proposal when your bargaining team made the unanimous decision that it would seek the assistance of a conciliator through the Ontario Ministry of Labour.

"We were outraged when we read the amount of concessions the LCBO was demanding from us," said bargaining team chair Denise Davis. "It immediately became apparent how far apart the two sides are and therefore the decision to apply for a conciliator was inevitable."

Either side in contract negotiations can request the assistance of a specially-trained conciliator. The role of a conciliator is that of a neutral third party working with the union and employer to reach a deal. The conciliator will join negotiations in the near future.

"As long as both sides are making progress the conciliator will continue to work with both sides to achieve a deal," said Davis. "The goal of the bargaining team remains to get the best collective agreement we can for all our members."

LBED local presidents to meet Mar. 6-7 to discuss strategy

Forty-two local LBED presidents and high-ranking officers, plus OPSEU staff and mobilizers, will meet Mar. 6-7 in Toronto to discuss the next steps to mobilize our members.

"These sorts of meetings are great opportunities to get all our local leaders together under one roof to hammer out the details of how we get everyone mobilized behind their bargaining team," said Mirla Alvarado, LBED negotiator. "Our local presidents and their executives are our eyes-and-ears on the frontlines with the members and we need their input to ensure that we end up with a good contract that guarantees good jobs for all LBED members."

Those attending next week's meeting will receive an update on the status of precarious employment in Ontario, and in particular its impact on our casual workforce at the LCBO. More than 60 per cent of the LCBO's unionized workforce are classified as casual or fixed term and more than 60 per cent of this group are women who earn, on average, about \$22,000 annually.

Communications and media relations will also be a prominent part of the meeting, with local leaders getting briefed on the best methods of getting our message of "Our communities need good jobs" out to the media and communities.

Show your St. Patrick's Day solidarity!



As important as the work your bargaining team is doing at the table, they need to know at the same time that they have the unanimous support of the 7,000 LBED members for whom they have negotiating a new collective agreement.

“Good Jobs Don’t Rely On Good Luck” sticker on Monday Mar. 15-17.

The good jobs theme is deliberate. What’s at stake in this year’s negotiations with the LCBO is improving wages, benefits and job security on behalf of all our members, including the 60 per cent of our members whose jobs are precarious. This means they earn less than others doing the same work, or that they can’t get the hours of weekly employment which many of them seek.

It’s our way of reminding our members and the public that good jobs means preserving a quality of life, opportunities for our children and the ability to retire in dignity.

To demonstrate that solidarity in this round of bargaining all LBED members are asked to wear a special

Bargaining dates

Negotiating dates between the LCBO and OPSEU bargaining team for the Liquor Board Employees Division are scheduled for the following dates:

- **March 20-22**
- **March 26-28**
- **April 3-5**
- **April 10-12**
- **April 16-19**
- **More dates will be scheduled if necessary.**

Dedicated bargaining web site goes effective Mar. 1

Effective Friday Mar. 1, LBED members can keep up-to-date on the latest developments at the bargaining table and in mobilization activities at a special web site.

www.lbedbargaining.org

This url is also available off the OPSEU web site at www.opseu.org



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