Central/Unified Table

There were no real surprises at the Central/Unified table when the employer tabled their proposal for the new OPS collective agreement. The team expected to see cuts, and that's exactly what they were given.

The employer has continued its agenda to attack the rights and entitlements of the collective agreement.

The employer's position includes:

- A pay freeze for the first two years of the agreement.
- No wage increases after the first two years, unless offset by savings elsewhere.
- Creation of a new step on the wage grid five per cent lower than the lowest step.
- All classifications will now take 11 years to reach the maximum step. The maximum step is still unchanged.
- Eliminate Transition Exit Initiative (TEI).
- Restructure sick leave.
- Reduction of entitlements while on Workplace Safety and Insurance.
- Eliminate the employee-paid $3.00 drug deductible. Instead, employees will have to pay drug dispensing fees (a much higher cost).
- Introduce a tiered prescription drug formulary (though at this point the Team has no further information as to what that entails).
- Termination entitlements for retirement will accrue only up to December 31, 2015 and eliminate termination pay thereafter.
- Probationary period to be 12 months (currently 9 months)
- Shorten the notice of shift change from 96 hours in advance to 24 hours.
- Increase full-time conversion of fixed term employees from 18 months to 24 months.

The restructuring of the Short Term Sickness Plan and Long Term Income Protection is particularly nasty.

The employer has proposed that LTIP benefits be increased to 70% from 66 2/3%.

BUT…this is contingent on OPSEU agreeing to:

- Mandatory rehabilitation plan when returning to work (the Team is not sure who is making these plans or even if they're qualified to make these plans)

- Employees to pay their portion of pension contributions including when supplementing a WSIB Award (currently the Employer pays the employee portion)
- Pension contributions and pension credits to be based on LTIP earnings (currently based on your regular wages)
- LTIP benefits and coverage cease when an employee reaches their earliest unreduced pension (i.e. Factor 90, 60/20 and age 65)
- LTIP benefits to be calculated at the date of disability
- LTIP qualifying period shortened to 17 weeks from 26 weeks with a corresponding adjustment to Short Term Sickness Plan (STSP) credits available after the initial six days from 120 to 79

This proposal is an outright attack on the OPS agreement adding insult to injury.

OPSEU's proposal includes comprehensive language to protect public services from privatization, improved job security provisions, improvements to Fixed Term, Seasonal and Student language, health and safety, posting and filling of vacancies, improved vacation language, and improved benefit language. Monetary issues will be tabled later during bargaining.