

INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

*Bruce Aldridge
Workplace Information Directorate
Labour Program, Human Resources Development Canada*

This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 100 collective agreement settlements ratified during the first quarter of 2002. Of these, close to one half (47 settlements) contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

Of all settlements reviewed for the quarter, slightly more than one-half (53 collective agreements) had a duration of 36 months. Twenty-two collective agreements had terms ranging from between 20 and 24 months, while seven had a duration of 12 months. Of those remaining, 18 had durations of more than 40 months. The longest duration was between National Grocers Co. Ltd, Southern Ontario and various locations in Quebec, and International Brotherhood of Teamsters, with a collective agreement of 96 months. In Quebec, another two agreements, Association des transporteurs de la région de Montréal with International Brotherhood of Teamsters and Alcan Smelters and Chemicals Limited with the Fédération des syndicats du secteur de l'aluminium inc., settled 60-month contract terms.

Compensation

A **performance pay** plan continues at Hydro One, province-wide, Ontario, with Society of Energy Professionals with a minimum payout of 1.0 per cent and a cap of 4.0 per cent of base payroll for the year 2002. The plan is based on corporate and line of business results. Telus Communications (Quebec) Inc. and Telus Solutions (Quebec) Inc. with Canadian Union of Public Employees have introduced **performance-based bonuses** for consultants linked to a sales program, with an 8.0 per cent target bonus and a 16 per cent maximum bonus. Boeing Toronto Ltd., and Canadian Autoworkers have also introduced a **performance incentive** plan, calculated to include wages that would have normally been earned during a mandatory temporary shut-down, providing that the shut-down does not exceed 52 weeks. Employees

aged 49 years and over would be eligible for a maximum of \$1,000 per month. Canada Post Corporation and Public Service Alliance of Canada have a **corporate team incentive** plan whereby full- and part-time employees will be eligible for a potential of 3.0 per cent of salary per fiscal year for meeting corporate financial, service performance, and customer satisfaction targets. There is also a possibility of earning more than the 3.0 per cent should the corporation exceed the targets it sets or less if the targets are not reached. Télébec ltée., Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Québec, and International Brotherhood of Teamsters have a **company performance bonus** program with a possible target set at 4.0 per cent of the maximum wage step for each grade during the year when the company's performance is assessed.

A **profit sharing** provision exists with Algoma Steel Inc., Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and United Steelworkers of America which contributes to company restructuring. Employees are to receive \$10 million of the savings for 2002, payable in 2004 and an additional \$10 million of the savings for 2003, payable in 2005. Also, employees will receive an option of a 20 per cent ownership in the newly structured company.

Effective January 1, 2005, a **market-based wage positioning** will be established with Alcan Smelters and Chemical Limited, Jonquière and other centres, Québec, and Fédération des syndicats du secteur de l'aluminium inc. There is a guarantee of a 1.0 per cent wage adjustment more than the highest weighted average wage in the aluminium industry; on January 1, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006, respectively, unless this is prevented by general economic conditions or the Company's financial situation. The adjustment will be determined on the basis of a wage survey of 12 major companies and if Alcan's wage position, including the 1.0 per cent guarantee differs from the general market by more than 3.0 per cent, employees will receive 50 per cent of the difference in the form of quarterly lump-sum payments. Also, wage adjustments on the above dates will be determined as a result of **parity**

committee negotiations that will take into account the following factors: Consumer Price Index for the coming year, wage forecasts, overall economy, wages paid in the general economy and the Company's financial situation.

The University of Manitoba and University of Manitoba Faculty Association have set up a **retention fund** of \$250,000 to be used to increase a faculty member's base salary in situations where the member is being pursued for employment by other institutions.

A unique **wage security account** has been initiated between the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc. and United Steelworkers of America. Upon reaching 120 hours of unused time off with pay, the excess time will be converted to cash and deposited into the account. During lay-offs of one week or more, employees may draw out \$250 per week. The retained hours will be paid out upon retirement or death.

Montréal Airports and Centrale des syndicats démocratiques have introduced a **deferred salary** plan to enable employees with five years service to take self-funded leave which cannot be less than three months or more than 12 months. The leave can be financed over a maximum period of six years.

Working Conditions

The District of Saanich in British Columbia, and Canadian Union of Public Employees have implemented a **voluntary self-directed hours of work** plan for certain classifications. The purpose of the plan is to provide employees with the flexibility to self-determine their hours of work, yet still provide management with an alert tracking system to aid an employee with managing their workload when needed.

Ontario Power Generation and Canadian Union of Public Employees have negotiated a new **reduced hours** provision. Employees currently working 40 hours per week will have the option of having their hours reduced to 39. Should the employee opt to remain at 40 hours, they will receive an increase of 2.5 per cent on wages, which will be used for pensionable time. Should they opt to move to 39 hours per week, the pensionable earnings will be calculated at 39 hours per week while banking one hour to be used for future time off.

A **financial assistance fund** has been created by the University of Toronto and Canadian Union of Pub-

lic Employees to provide \$250,000 per year to the union which is to be used solely to make available financial assistance to employees.

New Dominion Stores, province-wide, excluding Northern Ontario, and Canadian Autoworkers introduces a **legal assistance fund** with the employer contributing between three and five cents per hour to provide assistance to both full- and part-time employees.

Pratt and Whitney Canada Inc., Longueuil, Québec, and Canadian Autoworkers have negotiated a new provision within their health and welfare plans to cover **gambling addiction treatment** for any employee.

Job Security

A **plant closure** provision is included in the agreement with Smurfit-MBI, Edmonton, Alberta, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. On a permanent closure, an employee is entitled to severance payment equal to 12 weeks' pay for each of the first 15 years of service plus one weeks' pay for each year thereafter. New Dominion Stores and Canadian Autoworkers also have a new closure provision whereby employees with at least five years service and who opt to sever employment will receive an amount equal to one week payable at twice the employee's regular weekly rate of pay for each year of service to a maximum of 26 weeks.

Training

Ontario Power Generation Inc. and Canadian Union of Public Employees have initiated a **skill broadening program**. The program will enable employees to voluntarily perform work outside of their traditional roles. Skill broadening would be achieved by providing employees with the training and opportunities to perform additional work safely. Employees who choose to participate in the program would be eligible for the following:

- December 31, 2001, \$1,000 lump-sum payment;
- January 1, 2002, a 5.0 per cent increase in base wages, and an additional 2.0 per cent if the 5.0 per cent and the 2.0 per cent increases applied takes the employee above the top band wage step;
- April 1, 2003, employee would be placed on the salary band at one step above their current rate;

- Employees currently working 35 or 37½ hours per week may move to 40 hours permanently.

A **career development** provision exists with the Vancouver Community College and Canadian Union of Public Employees. The college will provide \$40,000 per year for permanent and temporary employees to cover the costs of courses, seminars, and workshops related to their duties and career aspirations. They can receive up to five paid days of leave per year.

The Government of New Brunswick and New Brunswick Public Employees Association are developing a more strategic approach to the **training and development** of employees with a view to enhancing their ability to successfully compete in the future market place. The parties will examine the future market place, skill sets required for future positions, options for acquiring those skills, and potential joint funding models.

A first-time agreement for aircraft maintenance employees with Air Canada Regional Inc. and Canadian Autoworkers introduced a **work training** provision. The employer will provide training, in order of classification seniority, to employees affected by new equipment, changes to equipment, new work processes, or changed licensing requirements. Any employee who enrolls in a course outside of working hours at any recognized educational institution to upgrade current skills or provide useful training for their career with the employer, will be reimbursed one half of the cost of tuition and text books. The parties also negotiated a **union education** provision whereby the employer will contribute \$3,000 per month to a special union trust fund for upgrading employee's skills in all aspects of trade union functions. Employees, selected by the union to attend such courses, may be granted up to 23 days of class time plus travel time.

Labour-Management Committees

During this first quarter, close to a quarter (12) of the 47 agreements with innovative practices contained provisions for establishing committees examining a wide variety of concerns.

A **joint education/orientation session** committee with IMC Esterhazy Canada Limited Partnership, Esterhazy, Saskatchewan, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada has been established to present to all stewards, chief stewards, supervisors, and superintendents the highlights of the negotiated changes to the current collective agreement.

The University of Manitoba and Association of Employees Supporting Education Services have established a **classification review** committee to conduct a survey of all bargaining unit classifications. A sum of \$150,000 has been contributed by the university to finance necessary adjustments identified by the committee. The parties also introduced a **job sharing** committee to examine possible arrangements for implementation.

Bruce Power LP/Bruce Power Inc., Tiverton, Ontario, and Canadian Union of Public Employees have integrated many committees to their agreement. A **job rating system** committee is to review all additional duties added to existing classifications due to restructuring. A **health and safety** committee will review any changes to safety-related legislation and provide direction to the corporate executive to ensure that safety policies, programs, and processes meet legislative requirements. Other committees include shift scheduling, training, vacation and security issues.

A **quality customer service** committee has been established by the Saskatchewan Transportation Company and Amalgamated Transit Union which will meet at least biannually to review and resolve concerns and to plan future developments and mutual solutions.

A number of other agreements include provisions to discuss such issues as pension plan, insurance plans, clothing allowance and an anomaly fund.

Innovative Workplace Practices

Previously published innovative workplace practices from past issues of the Workplace Gazette are available on the Workplace Information Directorate Web site at:

<http://labour.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca>