



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Vancouver Island

Quarterly Newsletter

Since 1902

Fight the HST

During the last Provincial election Gordon Campbell said a harmony Tax wasn't even on the radar, and then two months after the election announced the Harmony Sales Tax (HST) for BC. HST should stand for "Holy S**t (not another) Tax (shift)!"

As you likely know, the HST is a further Income to Expenditure tax shift, the HST at this time contemplates a broad brush approach inconsiderate (with the exception of fuel, basic groceries, and the reduction of liquor) of British Columbia's state of financial being.

Essentially, it comes with considerable benefit to both Provincial and Federal Government through increased taxes and a \$1.6 Billion dollar payout from the Federal Government for adopting this merged tax structure. With growing Soup Kitchen line-ups, a faltering standard of living over-emphasized by an affordable housing problem, growing unemployment, and the prestigious recognition of having the highest provincial child poverty rate as well. The HST will create absolutely no harmony for middle to low income families in BC.

Much of the business sector will benefit from

streamlined administrative work, and will be passing on the additional (current non PST) cost to consumers.

So how will the HST affect your household? Many young families starting out will now be paying more for basic necessities for their children like clothing, bicycles and many school supplies, these families are primarily young adults trying to start out and will be paying more for their largest purchase, their home. HST will have a regressive impact on seniors as well many on reduced pensions having to pay for increased costs for prescription medications, vitamin and dietary supplements, and everyone will be paying more for their residential heating, basic cable television, some food products, and if you go out to eat restaurant meals will cost more as well.

The only way to bring true harmony with a Harmonization Sales Tax would be to allow all previous Provincial Sales Tax exemptions to continue to apply after the adoption of the Harmonized Sales Tax. If you agree that limiting the implementation of the HST to only previously provincially taxed items log on to www.fightHST.com to learn more and sign the petition to

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Inside This Quarterly

Page 1:

- Fight the HST

Page 2:

- Business Manager's Report

Page 3:

- Sector Report

Page 4:

- Take the Medicare Pledge
- Building Society AGM

News/Notes:

Shipyard Retirees Meeting
schedule for 2010 Gorge Vale
Golf Course: March 4th, June 3rd,
Sept. 2nd, Dec. 2nd

Yes 2 it!

This is a community event,
showcasing the Construction
Trades, sponsored by the ITA.

Where: Camosun College

When: March 26, 2010 9am-2pm

We're looking for volunteers
to oversee students wire up
simple branch circuitry. Please
contact Drew in the Local 230
Office.



**FIGHT FOR BC
FIGHT AGAINST HST**

Business Manager's Report



Philip M. Venoit
Business Manager/Financial Secretary

At the Vancouver Island Construction Association's 2010 Economic Outlook, economists Helmut Pastiuk, Tom Siemens, and Cam Muir basically mirrored each other's optimism going forward in that they all expect the economy will begin to rebound mid to late this year. There is also a good amount of large industrial construction projects

coming throughout western Canada, from the Alberta Oil Sands which we have already had some dispatching for, and I would like to thank Local 424 for sending us those calls, as well as Local 529 who provided us some calls to Saskatoon with work in the Potash industry, there are also energy projects coming for Saskatchewan as well, Dams and Wind Energy in Manitoba as they set out to build the largest wind farm in North America, and hints of Bechtel starting up the Kitimat project which will see 300 plus electricians on it. (For more Local work see page 3).

Our construction membership will receive their negotiated \$1.25 increase coming this April 1st, with most of it dedicated to wages, the BC Business Managers will be meeting to also discuss the need to put some money into the Medical/Dental Plan. The Medical/Dental Plan increase is in reaction to the BC Liberals increasing the cost of MSP by 18% and implementing the HST in July. We have calculated these items to add an additional fifteen cents (\$0.15) per hour burden to the Plan over the next three years. The shameful part of all of this is we will get no better services, no increased coverage, we will get nothing more in return, but we will be paying more.

We have also received word our market share fell to sixty-two percent (62%) which increases the amount of market recovery dues our construction members will be paying to three percent (3%) for 2010. Keep in mind for the last two years our market recovery program is what has kept a large number of our members working while non-union electricians sat at home unemployed, it is truly our Employment Insurance Program.

The Provincial New Democrats have asked me to sit on their Economic Policy Committee and while at this table, I will continue to lobby for changes that will benefit IBEW members, like our own Ministry for Construction. Construction makes up 12-16% of BC's GDP, comparing that to Forestry at 9%, and Mining at 6%, with no disrespect intended to good folks in mining, if we can have a Ministry for the people who dig holes in the ground, we can have a Ministry for those of us that fill them. Construction is a different and distinct industry and deserves its own Labour Code, it accounts for over 50% of all apprentices in BC, we need a Ethical Tendering Policy for all Provincial and Municipal work moving away from the low-bid, Compulsory Trade's Certification, Contractor

Licensing, and a legitimate Project Labour Agreement for all large Energy and Infrastructure work.

Private Shipyard Centre of Excellence

Along with the other Business Manager's of the Metal Trades Council we met with senior Vice-President Spiro Risvas to move our proposed procurement policy forward. The Washington Marine Group has hired their own lobbyist in Ottawa to lobby for our fair share of the \$40 Billion worth of naval work over the next 20-30 years which will ensure good employment levels for our marine sector. Although, we can be proud to have started this important initiative at this point we have to stand-back a little and allow for all other business's who depend on a strong shipbuilding and repair industry to jump on-board to really get our Federal Government's attention. Press releases and advertising were submitted into the Ottawa Hill Times newspaper, we have also created a Society, the

"Pacific Coast Shipbuilding Association", the IBEW will continue to be very involved on behalf of our marine members but, this will be the umbrella organization to drive the future of shipbuilding and repair for the west coast. We've met with Member of Parliament, Dr. Keith Martin, MLA's John Horgan and Ida Chong to explain the importance of a vibrant private shipbuilding industry on the west coast of Canada. What that means in relation to a Defense Strategy in consideration of the growing Naval Fleet of Pacific Rim Nations, and what economic impact this has to the region as well. We explained our proposed National Procurement Policy promoting Esquimalt as the Shipbuilding Centre of Excellence; we will continue to meet with balance of M.P's and MLA's on the Island in effort to continue to get political support for ship building jobs.

The International Office is in the process of merging three (3) local unions in Ontario, Toronto with Barrie, and Oshawa. Basically, the extensive report used to initiate the merger outlines the reasons why the merger should take place. It finds no fault in the two (2) smaller locals in its administration or organizing efforts, (both locals have a full-time organizer on staff) but finds that simply due to poor market share, and economies of scale too small to effect any real significant recovery of the market sectors they have lost by focusing on their sectors of strength, like Industrial they likely perform well in, while the non-union and CLAC perform the majority of the commercial and residential work.

Although, Local 230 has made several changes to help recover our work over the past few years, and get back into the residential sector, while building our membership numbers considerably (approximately 30%) over the last eight years. However, what is also very clear is the requirement to hire a full-time Organizer for our office.

This is not an easy job; it's a very challenging job that demands a constant "on-call" concept, a tenacious attitude, a loyalty to the IBEW and to the workers who we are trying to show them a better standard of living, in all reality and without any holding back, it is a sacrifice to your personal life. I know this isn't the best advertising I could come up with for the position, but it is honest. If you feel this is something you could do I would like you to contact me and we can set up a time to go over the job. I would also like to put on an Organizing Course sometime in March, if you're interested in learning more about construction organizing, please call in and ask Jen to put you on the list.

Sector Report

Appliance Repair – We wrapped up negotiations with Direct Energy with 7% over the next 3 years.

Cable vision – Shaw Cable negotiations have concluded this month. We signed off on a Memorandum of Settlement; and the members voted to accept the Settlement. This has proven to be a difficult round of bargaining as our Cablevision members in that area are recognized as the highest paid Cablevision workers in Canada, and we were faced with concessionary bargaining to bring our members closer to other Shaw union collective agreements in the Province. With a four (4) year wage freeze along with a signing bonus, hopefully that will give other locals the time to negotiate good increases in this sector. On a good note we are over 30 members working at Shaw, with more hiring to come.

Construction:

Commercial/Institutional – Canem Systems has picked up the Victoria Fire Hall, the Federal Building in Port Alberni, Huu-ay-aht multi-purpose building in Bamfield, BC Hydro Operations Facility, Church Road lift station, BC Consumer Protection Building, Coast Capital Savings in Victoria; Emery Electric has picked up the Willows School Seismic upgrade, Uvic Knowledge Infrastructure, Cornett Building; Houle Electric has picked up the BC Ferries Departure Bay Security upgrade, Victoria City Hall Security Access and Temperature Controls job, City of Nanaimo Fire Rescue, VIU Welding Shop, Port McNeil Waterfront Development, Canexus Electrolyzer, Lady Minto Hospital, and the Vancouver Island University lighting upgrade; Western Pacific has over 100 members on the Nurse Towers, they are continuing to bid work on the Island and have brought over a Service van for one of our members. Anchor Cove Electric is wiring the new Zebalos Hotel which burnt down last summer.

Industrial – We have signed a project Labour Agreement with Covanta Energy who at this point appears to have the Gold River Trash Burner Generating Plant. I will continue to sit on a small committee on behalf of all Trades to oversee the implementation of the Agreement.

Residential - Houle Electric has picked up the University of Victoria 106 Bed Residence, and Emery Electric is working in the Mill Springs Development.

Motor Winders – Beaver Electrical Machinery in Nanoose has kept employment levels steady during the economic downturn. They

are bidding the available work, and are making sure all apprentices complete the required yearly training at SAIT, helping keep the motor winding industry alive for the future.

Municipal Government – Gerry Wong long-time City of Victoria employee and Electrical Foreman has retired and after 30 years of membership in the IBEW Local 230 we wish Gerry a restful retirement. The list of replacement Foremen has been short-listed and we should know who will replace Gerry shortly.

Private Marine – Currently Victoria Shipyard has the Norwegian Star and work on-board the HMCS Vancouver. They will be crewing up for the HMCS Regina in April, and the Submarine Maintenance Program throughout the summer. Meanwhile we were notified late last year that CME closed their doors, and Victoria Shipyards has bought the assets.

Public Marine (FMF) – We met with Catherine Boies Parker to receive an update on where our Charter Challenge is sitting; We have received the Federal Governments Statement of Defence, and as their statement contains very little details, we quickly then issued a demand for discovery of the documents, as in most government cases the devil lies in the details. We will continue to keep the members informed as this case develops. We would also like to thank Brothers; Gerald Risma (163), James Mohns (163), Shane Deringer (154), Richard Koch (153), Derek Literowicz (152), and Ryan Toovey (154) for taking the Federal Civil Service Shop Steward Course held late last year.

Provincial Health Care - We spent two weeks in negotiations for our members in Provincial Health Care, we were given an extension beyond the January 15th deadline.

No public sector negotiations were supposed carry on during the Winter Olympic Games. The Provincial Government will still not provide the Facilities Bargaining Association Unions with any wage increase or a cap on lay-offs they would not exceed (last time was 700), this time the BC Liberals position seems to be the sky is the limit when it comes to lay-offs in Health Care.

Railway – We're continuing to dialog with the Island Corridor Foundation and the politicians to push for a Light Rail Transit system for the south Island to alleviate traffic and secure more IBEW jobs on the Railway.

Electrical Wholesale – We wrapped up negotiations with Westburne Electric with 6% over the next 3 years.



The new Canadian Union Made Local 230 Tee's are available now for \$12.00 call Jen in the office to order yours.

Take the Medicare Pledge

November 2009 marked the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Health Coalition. In honour of those who fight for Canada's medicare system, the CHC is asking supporters to take a medicare pledge.

By taking the pledge, thousands of Canadians are urging Prime Minister Stephen Harper to show leadership on Health care by enforcing the Canadian Health Act against privatization and starting a drug plan for all Canadians. (Keep in mind the more the government puts into our medical and drug plans the less we need to allocate to them, which means more money in your pocket, and the more competitive we are in construction.)

The Medicare Pledge

As a Canadian, I believe access to quality health care must be based on need, not ability to pay.

Our public health care reflects those values of equality and fairness.

We must improve our public health care for everyone, instead of expanding private for-profit services that benefit only a few.

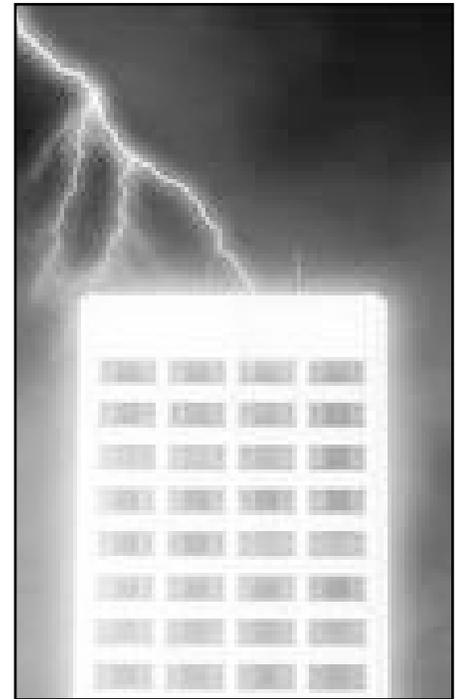
I pledge my support for the protection and improvement of public health care in Canada.

Take the pledge at <http://medicare.ca/medicare-pledge>

Building Society AGM

Attention members:
As a requirement of the BC Societies Act the IBEW Local 230 Building Society Annual General Meeting will be held shortly after the Unit Meetings in March held at:

- Marine March 10th, 5:00 PM Dockyard Legion 622 Admirals Road
- Victoria March 11th, 7:00 PM Pro Patria Legion 411 Gorge Road East
- Nanaimo March 17th, 7:00 PM Dorchester Hotel 70 Church Street
- Campbell River 18th, 7:00 PM Halbe Hall 8369 Island Highway



WHERE THE IBEW AND THE OLYMPICS MEET...

SEE THE ENTIRE STORY ON

