

Member Reports from 1999

I was summoned to Xxxxx's office and the conversation listed below took place.

Xxxxx: Are you willing to cross the picket line and do IBEW work in case of a work stoppage to keep the network operating?

Member: I have to cross the picket line and do my job and if there is an emergency like a town isolated I would do whatever it takes to restore service to the town so no one dies, but I will not come in and do IBEW work ie. Installing equipment.

Xxxxx: We would not have you installing equipment, but the network must be maintained & customers must be provided with service or the company will suffer & jobs will be lost.

Member: I realize this but the people in IBEW are my friends and when the strike is over I have to work with these people again which would be very difficult.

Xxxxx: You realize that if we have no work for you, that you will be laid off for the duration of the strike.

Member: Yes! So!

Xxxxx wrote something down on a list that he had on the table & the interview was over.

I was asked by my manager Xxxxx if I would cross the picket line. I replied that I have no choice but to cross. But I would not do the work of the CEP/IBEW employees.

Xxxxx stated something to the effect that it would not be a very "career enhancing decision" to make. I stated to him that I was also a union member and I would respect their strike. That was pretty much it, I was not intimidated by him, but then not many people intimidate me.

Xxxxx called me and asked if I would be willing to do the work of striking employees. I can't remember if he was referring specifically to IBEW or not. He actually read from a script.

My answer was that I would do my job under the terms of our collective agreement, as our TEAM office directs us, and what is required by law under Labour Canada rules.

He thanked me for my frankness and terminated the call.

My concerns are that now that they know my position will it be held against me, or detrimental to my career.

I talked to some other members that I do think felt intimidated and/or frightened at what the company may do to them if they refuse to do another Union's work.

Myself, along with every TEAM member I'm aware of from xxxxxx was escorted to xxxxxx's office by his secretary for an interview on an individual basis. I'm sure many more employees from other areas were also given an interview.

To the best of my knowledge I will try to run through the conversation as I recall it. I was called in the mid to late afternoon time frame on Friday. My recollection of the conversation is still quite vivid in my mind, given the fact that I was disturbed by it.

Xxxxxxx: "Good afternoon, I'm xxxxx, come in" (we shake hands)

Member: (I sit down at a small round table in his office in one of two chairs directly facing each other.)

Xxxxxxx: "I assume you know what this is about the way scuttle butt travels around."

Member: "No I don't, I've been tied up in presentations and training today."

Xxxxxxx: "Well, you are aware that MTS has been in negotiations with IBEW and as of Monday at midnight MTS is in a legal lockout position and IBEW is in a legal strike position."

Member: "I was aware they were negotiating but not aware of where the parties stood."

Xxxxxxx: "Well we're asking employees should the situation arise, and we certainly hope it doesn't because I know that both sides will be working all weekend and these things usually iron themselves out at the last minute, would you cross the picket line?"

Member: "Yes, I would come in and do my job because we have a contract in place with the company."

Xxxxxxx: "Well you are aware that customer service may suffer should a lockout or strike occur and with competition we have to protect ourselves."

Member: "I can see the company's point."

Xxxxxxx: "What's your background?"

Member: [gives details of background]

Xxxxxxx: "Let me explain we will be working 12 hour shifts, naturally everything over 7.5 hours is double time. You will be called in the morning and told where to report."

Member: "Where to report?"

Xxxxxxx: "Yes we will be maintaining the equipment."

Member: "I wouldn't feel comfortable doing someone else's job."

Xxxxxxx: "Well you wouldn't be doing their job. I'm not talking installs or removals. I'm talking about just maintaining the equipment." (Pause) "Oh, I know that Lotus note [email] that TEAM sent out about responsibilities. And you know there might be a couple

of IBEW hard cases that might bug you about working, but we've got to maintain the network."

Member: "I can see the company's side but as I told you I would feel very uncomfortable doing someone else's job."

Xxxxxxx: "Well you've got to realize that if this thing goes on for any length of time your job will dry up since there is no one at the other end to do the work. I'm not saying it will happen for sure, but it may come to that if we have no place to send you, you won't be called to come into work."

Member: "Is that right." (I can feel myself getting red in the face. I am angry. I feel as though I have just been threatened and I feel pressured to make a decision. I have already told him twice how I feel about his request. I control my temper and sit for a moment in thought. I look around the room my mind racing.)

Xxxxxxx: (Says nothing, just sits across from the table looking at me.)

Member: (I would have liked to talk to the Union and my fellow employees about how they felt. I think to myself it is probably in my best interest to comply. Especially in the climate this company is in now. I'm in no hurry to lose my job. You don't need to give him a reason to get rid of you, or even have you on a 'black list' of uncooperative employees, I'm thinking to myself. But at the same time I think about how I would feel in an IBEW's employee's place, I know so many of the guys and gals, or even how would I feel should a Craft person take over my job should TEAM be in a similar position.) "Am I to assume you want a yes or no right now?"

Xxxxxxx: (In a louder tone, obviously upset.) "Yes. I need to know today, plans have to be in place."

Member: (I have to admit I was wavering, a poor Union person I'd make, but his tone and insistence on an immediate answer rubbed me the wrong way.) "If that's the case the answer is no."

Xxxxxxx: (Says nothing. Pushes his chair back and begins walking toward the door.)

Member: (I too say nothing, stand up and walk towards the door, obviously this interview is over. Myself being closer to the door reached it first and I leave. Xxxxxxx follows me to the door to greet his next interviewee.)