

APRIL 2010 - PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On April 20th nearly 100 of our members who provide world class heavy maintenance for Air Canada in YVR will be rewarded for their hard work and dedication by being laid off. Their crime has been to consistently produce airplanes on time and under budget and for this they must pay with their jobs. They will be joined by hundreds of other IAM &AW members across the country who will also lose their jobs between now and the end of June as a result of their skill and hard work.

The irony of this unfortunate circumstance is that Air Canada could not have laid them off if they weren't as good at their jobs as they are. Because of the high quality of aircraft maintenance that our members consistently produce year in and year out, it has allowed Air Canada to lengthen the time interval between required heavy maintenance visits on the narrow body Airbus fleets. The tremendous quality and safety margins that we put into every aircraft that we maintain has provided Air Canada with the aircraft reliability necessary to stretch out these maintenance visits.

The Company continually strives for increased productivity and better work practices to achieve increased profits. This is how they reward the employees who produce all of those things for them. The deeds and actions of Air Canada's maintenance management team stands in stark contrast to the words of its Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Rovinescu has publicly stated on numerous occasions that Air Canada will not shrink its way to profitability. His preferred course for this airline is to expand and grow itself to be a world leader with the resultant higher productivity and profitability that it will bring. Apparently the people running the maintenance division didn't get that particular memo. The Maintenance Labour Relations team continues to call audibles in a hurry up offence from their trusty old play book. I think some of the pages in that book might be missing or torn. Just a hunch.

I know the Company's response will be that airline travel is down and maintenance demand is down and contracts are hard to come by and the world is a mean place. My response is that if Air Canada and Aveos spent half as much time, effort and Company resources on in-sourcing work as they do on sub contracting out work; all of our hangers and shops would be full. The same can be said for the Airports division of the airline which continually refuses to even tender bids on available work that arises such as the YVR de-icing contract in 2009. We will never know if we are competitive enough to win these contracts if we don't even choose to submit a bid.

Sadly a lot of the members who are being laid off now have only been recalled back to work in the last 12 to 18 months. They were lured back from jobs they had obtained out in the real world after this same employer laid them off in June 2007 for a different set of bogus reasons. To quote that noted orator George W. Bush; "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, um, ah, won't get fooled again." A very skilled and talented group of individuals is being let go and the Company will find it increasingly difficult to ever lure them back after this shoddy treatment. These members must now find another means of supporting their families and try and get back jobs they recently left for the sultry siren call of Air Canada. Let this be a lesson to all of our children when career day next rolls around.

We all deserve better treatment from the companies whose success is built on our labour but there is scant evidence that it will be forthcoming. Most of us remaining are lifers, trapped by our time and service in the pension plan. It is too late for us to leave in search of a fresh start and Top 50 Employer. No sushi bars, pool tables or sick leave and GDIP free from harassment to suck it up and return to work for us. Such is our lot in life. But for those of you still young enough and now being cast free from this uncaring employer I say to you only this - "Run Forrest, Run!"

Christopher Hiscock
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