



## **PRESIDENT'S WEEK IN REVIEW**

### **October 15 – October 21, 2018**

Hello all,

Been a while, but I'm back at it now after a couple weeks of relentless travel, illness, and (mercifully) a few days off.

Over the past three weeks, I have had an Executive Training session in Powell River, a Canadian Ferry Association [CFA] Conference in Whistler (which was an odd location for ferry operators), a meeting with legal counsel in Vancouver, and the 2018 International Transport Workers Federation [ITF] Congress in Singapore. This was on top of a nasty lung infection.

Given the scope of all of this, instead of doing a play by play I'm going to take a couple excerpts from my reports to our Provincial Executive on the importance of our Union's involvement at sessions like the ITF and CFA:

From the CFA Convention: "Of note were presentations from Transport Canada and Mark Collins... [But] the biggest takeaway for me was the ambition which automation was pitched during the Conference closing event. This discussion became even more pertinent when combined with automation discussions and presentations from the Union perspective at the ITF Congress, where it became clear automation of our industry is significantly underway in Europe. To this end, discussion among our global affiliates has begun, but it is clear a more ferry centric approach is needed."

From the ITF Congress: "On a broader level, the theme of automation weighed heavy across the regions and sectors. There was substantive discussion given to how workers of the world are affected and can face automation; to sum it up in one sentence, "no automation without negotiation." While it may be cold comfort, our Union is significantly ahead of the curve in addressing these concerns, and have already developed strong language to help us in this fight (Article 13 of the BCFMWU Collective Agreement).

On the topic of safety, it was evident that law regarding workplace manslaughter is either weak or nonexistent around the globe. To this end, direction has been given to the ITF to take action on this matter; to sum it up in one sentence, "kill a worker, go to jail." Our Union made representations in support of this motion.

Finally, there was much productive business that took place in the cafes, hallways, and social events. For Union's purposes, Seafarers Section Chair Jaqueline Smith coordinated a meeting between myself and a Norwegian ferry worker with an aim to start an ITF Ferry Worker Caucus. In our discussions, it quickly became clear that we are remiss – globally we know ferry employers meet to discuss, share, and strategize, yet Ferry Unions do not (although it sounds like the ITF will be joining the global industry association Interferry at our suggestion). A few examples from the discussion of issues that are different or unique for ferry workers are, serious injury and death from life boat operation is a global issue that ought to have a global campaign; regulation in the face of automation for Ferry Operations from the International Maritime Organization and International Labour Organization down; and global best practices for safe manning. With this in mind, it seems likely there will be a standalone event focusing on global ferry worker issues at the next ITF Seafarers Section meeting.

The presentations and stories from Congress showed me that the ITF is a Global Union Federation that drives results by leveraging global solidarity and sharing best practices. ITF participation provides resources and allies on an international level. Given ongoing global workers' issues like automation, erosion of cabotage (where crews and ships are registered for domestic trade) laws, employer collusion, etc., not participating in these sorts of discussions and campaigns means facing these issues alone and from behind the curve. By actively participating, our Union has the opportunity to see the significant resources and power of the ITF directed at our industry generally and BC Ferries specifically.

Next week: The PEO and PE meetings, a few phone calls, and mountains of paperwork and emails that have piled up over the last few weeks.

Thanks for reading, and I hope to see you soon!

In Solidarity,

**BC FERRY & MARINE WORKERS' UNION**



Brother Graeme Johnston  
Provincial President