



Upfront and Inside this Edition:

- **Run times and Driver Stress**
- **C-257 Heads Toward Third Reading**
- **1374 Stages Information Picket**



- **Bus Driver Wannabe Steals Another Bus**
- **Guelph Contract Settled**

What Makes Bus Driving Stressful? UK Report

High levels of stress and ill health among bus drivers have been revealed in a survey published by the Transport & General Workers Union in Britain.

More than half those questioned gave long hours behind the wheel as the main cause of stress in the job.

Drivers are often at the wheel for over five hours without a break and 83 per cent said they often or sometimes feel excessively tired at work, especially halfway through a shift.

Over 100 drivers working in Sheffield took part in the survey, which was jointly conducted by the local T&G branch and the Sheffield Occupational Health Project.

It showed that most drivers on the early morning shift get only five hours or less sleep. One in five drivers said tight running times or running late are the most stressful part of the job. 66 per cent found running times at peak hours too fast or unachievable.

Graham Stevenson, T&G national secretary said excessive driving hours would increase stress levels and cause health problems. It may also be putting the safety of passengers at risk, he said.

"The transport white paper has given buses a key role in persuading motorists out of their cars. If the bus industry is going to deliver the quality of service that the travelling public want, the working conditions of bus drivers must be improved."

The union has circulated a summary of the survey, "What Makes Bus Driving Stressful?", with guidance on how local reps can reduce stress.

Recommendations include reducing hours behind the wheel, more breaks, improved cab design, and more say for drivers in setting schedules and timetables.

(See story on Guelph contract settlement on page 2 where run times were prominent in contract negotiations. This is a universal problem across transit systems and continents.)

"One in five drivers said tight running times or running late are the most stressful part of the job."

Federal Anti-Scab Bill C-257 Passes Second Reading

"This vote is the victory of thousands of workers and their families who contacted their MPs to let them know that they expected them to vote yes. We congratulate them for bringing life to our democracy," said CLC President Ken Georgetti. "This decisive parliamentary victory will also be rewarding to all the local labour councils who worked hard to familiarize their MPs on this issue."

The breakdown of the vote in the House of Commons (Wednesday evening, October 25) for the second reading vote on Bill C-257 – the legislation to prohibit the use of scabs during lockouts or strike in the federal jurisdiction – was 167 Yes/101 No.

As encouraging as the results of this vote are, Bill C-257 will not be the law of the land until after a

third reading vote in the House of Commons, three votes in the Senate and then royal assent. Removing the ability to use scabs and replacement workers results in smoother labour relations and shorter labour disputes with less risk to everyone involved.

Quebec and British Columbia have anti-scab laws in effect today and the results are clear. The year after BC changed its labour code, the province realized a 50% drop in the amount of work time lost to strikes. Under the Quebec labour code, the average number of work days lost each year to labour disputes is about 15, compared to an average of 31 days lost each year under the Canada Labour Code.

To see how your MP voted on this issue and to read the debate transcript please visit the CLC's webpage: <http://canadianlabour.ca/>

[updir/october18en.pdf](#)

"With 167 MPs voting yes, we can be optimistic but not complacent," says Georgetti. "As we celebrate this important step closer, we must also keep the pressure on to make sure this Bill becomes the law."

Keep the pressure on!

- Email, phone or visit your MP. Tell them you want them to vote for Bill C-257 at its third reading.
- Get your local union executive officers to call your MPs. Get them to write a letter to your MP representing your local union membership. (It's free!)
- Get friends and family involved in the above actions.



The Information Picket: 1374's Textbook Example

Despite claims that the media has a 'liberal' bias there is a consistent anti-union ideology at work. The media will often focus on the sensational such as picket line confrontations, threatening language or ill-prepared union members. This focus can, however, be countered with clear and succinct media messages.

Being succinct aids in the prevention of your message being taken out of context through the editing (print, radio or television) process or simple misquotation.

One of the best ways to get your message out is to use an information picket. An information picket is first and foremost an activity designed to share information with the public in order to win public support and to win the battle in the

court of public opinion. An information picket is not officially supposed to be a slowdown, although that is normally the consequence of the activity.

On the 23rd of October, Local 1374 members, wearing placards stating "Greyhound Treats Us Like Dogs" picketed the Greyhound depot in Edmonton and handed out information sheets to let the public know what their concerns are. They received coverage in the local press not simply because of the picket but because they had sent out a press release the day before to notify local media outlets that the event was taking place.

Accurately timed press releases are crucial to garnering media attention for an event like this. 1374 sent theirs out 24 hours in advance

which meant that media outlets received it on the Sunday afternoon—a time when newspaper editors are looking for content for their Monday editions.

Both the release and the picket clearly mapped out the issues which were having a detrimental effect on their contract negotiations:

- During the last year or so some 1.5 million miles of bus routes in Manitoba, 500,000 miles in BC, and several



Members of Local 1374 picketed the Greyhound depot in Edmonton to provide the public with information on Greyhound's practices of contracting out and abandoning routes are costing jobs for Canadian workers.

(Continued on page 3)

Youth Steals Bus, Picks Up Passengers & Collects Fares!

ORLANDO—A bus passenger called police after realizing that the driver of the bus he had just boarded was a 15-year-old boy, according to media reports on Monday, the 30th of October.

Ritchie Davis stole an old bus from a lot full of retired vehicles near Orlando, Florida, according to authorities. But instead of taking the bus for a joy-ride as might have been expected, Davis took it along a valid bus route - driving on schedule, halting at valid bus stops and even picking up two passengers.

The bus, awaiting sale at an auction, belongs to the Central Florida Transportation Agency, which runs LYNX public transit services in the Orlando area.

"I drove that bus better than most of the LYNX drivers could," the teen, who is too young to drive legally, told a deputy after he was stopped and arrested. "There isn't a scratch on it. I know how to start it, drive it, lower it, raise it."

It's not the first time!

This isn't the first time Davis has had

a run-in with the law while behind the wheel. He is on probation for stealing a charter bus and driving passengers around.

His father, Archie Bell, said he didn't realize his son liked driving so much. This happened like three times, so I guess he really do like driving buses," Bell said.

Davis was charged with grand theft auto and driving without a license. He could be tried as an adult and was to appear in court on Tuesday, October 31.



"I drove that bus better than most of the LYNX drivers could," said 15 year old Ritchie Davis.

Local 1189-Guelph Transit Ratifies Contract

Guelph transit workers will get a series of three per cent salary increases as part of a new contract that runs to April 2010.

The deal ratified by both sides since includes a 3% pay hike on Oct. 1, 2006, another on Oct. 1, 2007, another on Oct. 1, 2008, another on Oct. 1, 2009 and a final 3% increase on April 1, 2010. Benefit improvements were also part of the settlement.

Local president Stephen MacNeil had said one issue in negotiations

was union concerns about bus runs being too long and drivers not having enough time to do them.

Transit manager Randall French said Wednesday that Guelph Transit's scheduling committee, which includes drivers and supervisors, will continue to work on solutions to the bus system's "growing pains."

Routes might not have got much longer, but bus drivers are having to cope with more traffic as well as more lights and other traffic control measures, he said.

Making routes shorter or adding more running time are two possible solutions, but both pose their own difficulties for Guelph Transit. "There has to be a comfortable blend of the two to see how we can come up with a system that best serves the community," French said in an interview.

"There will be changes, and they will be phased in over time and addressed in a staged approach," he said.

Local president Stephen MacNeil had said one issue in negotiations was union concerns about bus runs being too long and drivers not having enough time to do them.

Amalgamated Transit Union, Canadian Council

Robin West, Director

Phone: (416) 679-8846

Fax: (416) 679-9195

E-mail: director@atucanada.ca

Attention Canadian Locals

- **Do you have an interesting item for the ATU-Canada newsletter?**
- **Do you have photos from an event?**
- **Send them in to research@atucanada.ca for publication.**
- **Let's get your local some national attention and share your ideas and best practices with other locals.**

The ATU Canadian Council's main purpose is to represent the interests of our members and to raise their profile and the profile of the industry in which they work, be it public or private.

We provide a central forum for:

- Lobbying;
- On-going education of members;
- Exchange of information between locals;
- Research, data collection and dissemination.



(Legislation: Continued from page 2)

routes in Alberta have been contracted out or abandoned.

- In the Edmonton area alone Greyhound contracted out the runs between Edmonton and Macklin, Edmonton and Swan Hills, Edmonton and Drayton Valley.
- When Greyhound said they could no longer afford to operate between Grande Prairie and Peace River they contracted that run out. If this was such an unprofitable route then why has the contractor added schedules on this run?
- In Calgary, Greyhound contracted out the entire Canadian call center to the United States terminating 75 Canadian employees.

- In Edmonton, and many other locations across the country, the working conditions are unacceptable. Bus lanes are littered with pallets and other "junk", causing safety hazards for employees working around the buses and drivers trying to manoeuvre the obstacle course inside the depot.

- The aesthetics of the bus fleet are in a deplorable state, a condition our passengers can readily attest to.

The information picket not only directly informs the public as to what the major issues may be for the union but it also gives the public information about the company that may not present them in the best light in the court of public opinion.

The termination of jobs and the loss of service seems to fly in the face of an otherwise affluent and robust provincial economy. It raises questions then about the company's tactics possibly being

motivated by excessive profits or a desire to negatively impact the union by reducing its membership.

In addition to their press release 1374 also did a great job of publicizing the event to its members to make sure that they were out in force. A good turnout is key to showing the strength and solidarity of the local.

During negotiations the appearance of that strength and solidarity is absolutely essential. While negotiations continue on their contract the local has, due to their well organized and publicized information picket, won the initial decision in the court of public opinion.



Information pickets, done correctly, can lead to positive media coverage and public support.