

*Trip Report – 2015 Canadian Nuclear Worker’s Conference Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*

September 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

From their website, the CNWC is described as follows:

The Canadian Nuclear Workers Council (CNWC), founded in 1993 is an umbrella organization of Unions representing workers in all sectors of the Canadian nuclear industry. Represented sectors include electric power utilities, uranium mining and processing, radioisotope production for medical and industrial purposes and nuclear research.

CNWC activities are focused on the following objectives:

- Ensure that the interests and perspectives of nuclear workers are heard by decision-makers;
- Strengthen the collective role of nuclear workers as a partner in their industry;
- Enhance public knowledge and understanding of nuclear issues by providing factual information, and;
- Build support for the nuclear industry and its future potential

The organization exists for the benefit of (unionized) nuclear workers and the next generation of nuclear workers.

In Canada this includes:

Folks who mine and mill uranium at Cameco and Areva

Folks who process U3O8 into fuel at Cameco and General Electric

Folks who design, build and service reactors and develop new nuclear technology to support reactor operation at Kinectrics and CEI and Canadian Nuclear Labs.

Folks who manufacture medical isotopes at CNL.

Folks who produce power and provide the infrastructure to allow power production at Darlington, Pickering, Point Lepreau and Bruce.

Folks who manage or plan to manage low and high level waste at OPG and NWMO

Many Unions represent all of these people. Union membership and the nuclear industry in Canada is the shared interest that brought all of the representatives together.

For me the conference ran as follows:

1. Social: we basically got familiar with the folks we’d be hanging out with for the next couple of days.

2. Site Updates: Contracts, issues, successes and failures. Some highlights:
  - a) Areva recently re-opened its Uranium Mill in Saskatchewan
  - b) No contracts have been really rich. Cameco got 7% over 3 years at their fuel manufacturing plant. OPG got 1% per year plus some shares in Hydro One when it privatizes.
  - c) The CNL Whiteshell site is closing down and is steadily reducing its research as funding decreases.
  - d) CEI has cut its union staff significantly since taking over. From approximately 1100 to 600-700.
  - e) Pickering will be shutdown in 2020.
  - f) Darlington refurb. if rejected will probably result in the end of nuclear power or at least CANDU in Canada. Bruce will likely not refurb. if Darlington doesn't.
  - g) Kinectrics was bought by its Executive and is now marginally profitable.
  - h) Cameco has a huge contract with India to provide unrefined U3O8.
  - i) OPG is progressing with its deep geological repository near the Bruce site. (not for Fuel)
  
3. Nuclear activities in Canada:
  - a) The Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation is a bright spot in Saskatchewan that supports developing Nuclear Energy Technology so that Saskatchewan's nuclear capacity builds beyond Uranium mining and milling.
  - b) The Radiation Safety Institute of Canada shared some of the science behind their Personal Alpha Dosimetry program. This system is in use at the Cameco McArthur River Uranium Mine.
  - c) A progress report was given that suggests KI pills are difficult to share in highly populated Ontario.
  - d) WiN reported on their activities. WiN members appreciated the hospitality and the hosts when they visited Saint John last year.
  - e) A Saskatchewan Federation of Labour spokesman suggested Organized Labour is being threatened on a few fronts. Many employers are entering collective bargaining suggesting wage rollbacks.
  - f) Uranium Mining in Saskatchewan was discussed. It is a huge and successful industry.
  - g) The uranium mining and milling industry in Saskatchewan works very hard to employ folks from the local reserves. Hundreds of workers at the sites are from these indigenous communities.
  
4. Cameco Sites - Tours were arranged at the Key Lake Mill and the McArthur River mine sites:
  - a) For personnel they are fly-in/fly-out sites. The shift schedule is week-on/week-off with 11 hour days. Non-shift personnel have some flexibility on how they put their time in. The average worker at a site earns about \$100k/year. Product, supplies and equipment are moved via truck.

- b) The sites are fully functional with many amenities. In the eating areas everything is supplied, including take-away lunch bags and snacks. The food is good and there are lots of healthy and kinda' healthy choices.
- c) Rooms are all singles, shared week on/off with comfy looking beds, TVs, desks, and personal lockable closets. There are fitness facilities and common sitting areas as well.
- d) The mill is a typical industrial site. Uranium muck is delivered from the mine, diluted (seriously) to 5%, dissolved in acid, solvent extracted from solution and the U3O8 product packaged in rugged drums for shipping. Each drum is about 450 kg at ~\$100 Canadian/kg or \$45000/drum. They have a urea based by product that is in high demand as a fertilizer. The mill is tidy and fairly clean with very few radiation or safety hazards.
- e) The mine is equally impressive. It is 200 to 300m deep. In a land of lakes, the material above the uranium deposits is frozen with a refrigerated brine solution to stabilize the ground. The very rich, concentrated uranium deposits are drilled. Extracted and their holes backfilled with concrete. The mine is Saskatchewan's largest concrete consumer. Muck and low grade tailings are shipped to the mill for production of U3O8. Common creature comforts exist at the mine and mill. At both the mill and mine I did not pass through any contamination monitors. Workers did wear TLDs and PADs (for alpha particle detection)

The CNWC is an organization that communicates our interests to governments and supports our industry by assisting in dealing with protesters and educating the public. The time spent with folks who have to deal with many of the awe deal with at Point Lepreau is refreshing. Thank you for the opportunity to attend the CNWC Conference.

Regards,  
Andrew Dykeman