



# TEAMSTERS CANADA RAIL CONFERENCE DIVISION 320



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October 2, 2009

**Subject: TCRC/CN Contract talks**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Here is an update on TCRC/CN contract talks.

In Solidarity,

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## TCRC/CN optimistic about talks

**Published:** September 24th 2009

**Source:** Resource News International via COMTEX

Officials with Canadian National Railway and the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference Union, or TCRC, which is representing roughly 1,700 locomotive engineers, are both optimistic about reaching a new labour pact that would avoid a work disruption.

Meetings between the two sides, including two federal government mediators, began Wednesday and are scheduled to carry on through the remainder of the week, Daniel J. Shewchuk, president of the TCRC, said.

Another week of negotiations, beginning October 5, 2009, have also been set aside, he said.

"Hopefully we can reach a successful conclusion to the negotiations during this time," Shewchuk said. "We seem to be moving forward on a number of fronts, but there are a number of issues on both sides that still need to be addressed."

But having said that, Shewchuk was still optimistic that the talks will result in a new pact that both sides can be happy with.

"I can tell you that CN continues negotiations with the TCRC and remains optimistic that talks

with the union will produce a settlement on a new collective agreement," Mark Hallman, Director of CN's Communications and Public Affairs department, said.

Shewchuk acknowledged that there have been a lot of rumours circulating from both sides, including talk of a strike vote as well as reports the company was planning lockout action.

He confirmed that a strike vote was being taken in response to rumours about the lockout action being considered by the company.

"As a precautionary measure and in a worst case scenario, a strike vote is being taken in the event that a lockout should occur and if the mediated negotiation process is terminated unexpectedly," Shewchuk said. "But there is no intention of going on strike at this time."

He said the members of the locomotive engineers have until October 2 to return the mail-in strike ballot vote.

Hallman would not comment on the lockout rumours.

"CN's policy is not to comment on rumours or speculative questions," Hallman said, stressing that CN hopes to reach a settlement with the TCRC without labour disruption.

Before any kind of strike/lockout can occur, a process must be followed by all parties involved, both Shewchuk and Hallman said.

As required by the Canada Labour Code, the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB), a federal tribunal, will review the TCRC's application as to whether any of CN's services are essential and must be maintained by TCRC represented employees in the event of a disruption.

The CIRB will hold a conference call with the two parties October 2, 2009, to discuss the issue further.

A rail labour dispute would come at a critical time, as the harvest in Canada is in full gear and the need to meet export commitments at Canada's export facilities is the heaviest.

"We are certainly monitoring the situation very closely," Maureen Fitzhenry, Canadian Wheat Board media relations manager, said.

***[www.teamstersrail.ca](http://www.teamstersrail.ca)***