

FROM ACMA TO APS

The birth of APS occurred in the midst of a series of hearings before the Canada Labour Relations Board (now the Canadian Industrial Relations Board). In 1991, the CBC had instigated the process by asking for a revision of the Corporation's bargaining units. At the time, it sought three bargaining units both for the French and English Networks¹. This type of procedure invariably brings about major changes. At the time, ACMA was an association representing a large portion of the management personnel of the Corporation. It covered all employees holding responsibilities from the first level of supervision as well as the organization's professionals. Elle couvrait toutes les personnes. ACMA, (*ASSOCIATION DES CADRES-MANAGER'S ASSOCIATION*), was a volunteer-based group encompassing over 1000 employees of both Networks. It had been created in 1978 and the Corporation had signed a protocol of recognition. Under this status, ACMA could be, at best, a pressure group to represent its membership. When the Board began hearings on the make-up of the bargaining units, it became apparent that certain categories of jobs covered by ACMA, would be would be absorbed by the bargaining units. Moreover, this was the era of giant personnel cuts where doubtful practises showed inequities in the selection of jobs to be eliminated as well as for severance payments in comparison to the unionized environment.

Employees, under this possibility, were revolted and ACMA could not represent them before the Board with the same powers as the certified bargaining unit.

The Association had succeeded to convince the Board to recognize it under its restrained possibilities and had tried unsuccessfully with all the means at its disposal, to stop the takeover. Namely, it had presented a petition signed by a vast majority of IT and administrative support personnel that opposed their inclusion in the administrative unit of the English Network. Faced with an impossible victory added to an inflexible employer, members of ACMA decided to regroup as a union. This took place in 1993.

THE CREATION OF THE UNION

To the chagrin of many members, the creation of a certified bargaining unit meant that ACMA had to be split into two distinct groups between those employees that were unionizable and those who could not belong as determined by the Labour Code. ACMA hand in its ranks internal auditors, managers, industrial relations personnel, and many other employees excluded by law. This is why the decision to create a new group entirely made up of unionizable individuals was arrived at. This is how APS was created with the specific purpose to obtain the status of a bargaining agent. The request to certify was presented to the Board with the intent to represent all of the Corporation's unionizable supervisors and professionals.

¹ A recent decision from the Council has ordered a unique certification for the English Network while a decision is expected for the French Network on the same subject.

It adopted the same rules as ACMA by making sure that the new organization met all the requirements the law provides for the existence of a recognized bargaining agent, or, to be clear, a union. The principles of representation of both Networks and independence of action are still etched as ACMA's legacy. APS also stands for equal representation whether the members work in smaller centers or at major broadcast centers in big cities. Each member is entitled to voice his or her opinion; all opinions are listened to. Each region elects its representatives to form the Executive Council of the Association, which is the governing body. APS is an autonomous union and its members, all of them employees of the CBC, are responsible for its functioning.

To ensure maximum participation, a system of personalized confidential mail-in ballots is available to each member in good standing when major decisions are examined.

APS PIONNEERS

The ultimate pioneer of both groups is JEAN-JACQUES BÉRARD, who was there as a founding member of ACMA in 1978 and in 1995 when APS was certified, long after his retirement, he was still active in supporting a new generation of employees in their quest for another type of representation. From the creation of APS to its certification in 1995, LISE THIBEAULT, from Quebec City was the President of APS. She had the honour of being the first that lead the Executive Council of APS.

It was back on January 13, 1995, that the CLRB (Canadian Labour Relations Board) had finally decided to hold a vote amongst employees sought by APS to establish if there existed a majority in favour of the creation of the new bargaining agent. Two years had gone by in a merciless battle with the employer before the Board. Amongst original tactics thrown before the Board, we remember the employer's objection to the national character of APS. It had asked the Board to deny the request for certification on the grounds that APS covered both Networks. The Corporation was fighting to stop the creation of a bilingual, cross-Canada union while APS was defending national unity. The Corporation discreetly abandoned its awkward position. Rumour has it that the decision came directly from the Corporation's board. The outcome of the vote was finally unveiled in the summer of '95. APS won representation with a majority over 70 %. Without any other means than the tenacious will of a few hundred founding members, APS became a full-fledged union with the right to negotiate a collective agreement.

RÉAL JEAN

For the first 5 years of its existence, APS developed under the presidency of REAL JEAN from Quebec City. When first elected at the initial general General Assembly of APS as a new union, Réal was in a way making a comeback. It was under his leadership as President of ACMA a few years before that the organization had decided to make way for the creation of a union. Réal was responsible for the negotiation of APS's first collective agreement and headed our union until the autumn of 2000.

STEPHEN MOORE from Toronto succeeded him for a term of 2 years. Also there at the birth of APS, Stephen first got involved as a member of Toronto's local Executive. After participating in the first negotiations for a collective agreement, he took on the challenges of presiding over the negotiation of the second collective agreement in our history. As with Réal, Stephen continues, to this day, his implication in the development of APS.

Our actual President, MARIO POUDRIER, has replaced Stephen in autumn 2002. Even if he is new at the helm, Mario has a large experience in the life of our Association. As a pioneer of APS, he has been President of the Montreal section since its creation before becoming national President. As such, he also has participated in the negotiation of the first two collective agreements of APS.