

## Hebron Presentation

My name is Brian Murphy and I guess it would be appropriate to give a brief introduction.

I am an electrical Technician with the maintenance dept. on the Terra Nova FPSO. I have been in this position for the past eight years.

I also hold the position of President for CEP local 2121, which currently represents the Hibernia and Terra Nova production installations.

I have worked in the oil and gas industry since I started my apprenticeship, working on the Come By Chance Refinery during its construction.

After achieving my interprovincial journeyman ticket I travelled to Alberta to work, as so many of us Newfoundlanders have over the years, I have been working on oil and gas projects both in Alberta and Atlantic Canada.

Also, as a bit of background, I have presented at the Wells Inquiry, as well as the Standing Committee for DND response times and recently at the CNLOPB Safety Forum regarding Helicopter Safety.

I would like to say here, as I have stated at these other venues, the concerns that I present here are the concerns of all workers who travel to, and work on, the offshore installations, not just unionized workers.

No matter which installation we work on, we have many things in common, our working conditions on these platforms, our work rotations, our commonality in dealing with work life balance, as well as our travel to and from our work in helicopters.

**We would like to make presentation on the following topics:**

**Helicopter Safety**

**Worker involvement in safety committees**

**Quality of life**

**Women in the offshore workforce**

As is so often the case, these topics will meld, one into the other, as they are so closely related in regards to our offshore environment.

Let me say here that this is not going to be a long, drawn out, technical presentation, that will be reserved for greater minds than mine, but I would be remiss in my duties as a representative of the workers if I did not relay some of the concerns that we have in regards to safety and equality, in the upcoming project.

## **Helicopter safety**

One of the concerns that we have now, and which we feel will be affected by the upcoming Hebron project, is the size of the fleet which provides transportation for the offshore workers.

It is felt, even at this time that the size of the fleet should be augmented with more aircraft.

Recommendation No. 9 (flying conditions, sea states) in the Phase I Report of the Inquiry has been validated by the findings of the Transportation Safety Board.

Compliance with these recommendations from the Transportation Safety Board and from the Inquiry itself will limit, has limited, the opportunities for flights. There is no doubt that this has, and will continue, to lead to increased pressure for flights when sea states permit.

We refer to this as 'backlog'. So, to clean up the backlog is a priority objective once sea states, or other conditions, improve to allow flights.

It is our fear that there will be a tendency to 'push the limits', where as an augmented fleet will help alleviate this.

When the Commission made its interim recommendation on SAR response time, Cougar Helicopters was able to augment its helicopter fleet. Augmenting the helicopter fleet provides an opportunity to undertake flights to the installations at a higher rate, in windows of opportunity, when operational limitations on the ability to fly, prevail. Pressure to fly is a safety consideration. We submit that the installation operators require, as part of their safety plan, that the Helicopter Transportation Operator be able to augment its fleet during periods of the year when operational restrictions limit flight time availability.

**Also regarding Inquiry recommendations and something which we would like to see as a goal for the Hebron Project:**

We, CEP Local 2121, submitted to the Inquiry Commission to make recommendations to the Regulator whereby the Regulator will be advised to alter the content of the contractual relationship between helicopter operators and offshore installation operators so as to make the helicopter transportation of workers in the Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore safer than that which would arise from compliance with the “minimum standards” set by Transport Canada.

We who work in the offshore feel that the term “over and above” should be the theme of all safety related decisions that are made, that pertain to the offshore.

**Quality of Aircraft Run Dry Time**

There has been much talk of this '30 minute run dry time.

The FAA has said it will not require the existing fleet of S92's to be refitted with gearboxes that have this feature.

On a personal note I found this decision to be disappointing and, when economics was sited as a consideration, I felt this was personally offensive.

That being said, there have been ongoing modifications by Sikorsky on the mechanical issues with this aircraft and we would like to see aircraft that augment the offshore fleet to be of the most technologically advanced that are on the market today.

If there is 30 minute run dry technology, then put it in.

We feel that at all times the question must be:  
What are the appropriate steps to ensure worker safety in  
helicopter transportation in the Newfoundland and Labrador  
Offshore?

There is no logical reason why workers in the Newfoundland  
and Labrador Offshore should have less than the best  
available safety capacity in the helicopters in which they  
must ride to their work.

It is simply about preserving life in a life threatening situation.

I can say here, with all honesty, that the improvements that  
have been made and that are ongoing as a result of the  
inquiry and as a result of the actions taken by the CNLOPB  
and the operators are huge.

Looking back on it all, it is a little startling that there was that  
much to be done.

We must be ever vigilante in our strive for zero.

We must work together.

## **Worker involvement in safety committees**

**The main focus of this portion of my presentation is:**

**Worker representation to be elected and or appointed by workers**

**Worker representation on all aspects of decision-making regarding safety**

### **Worker Representation**

It was evident from submissions by the various parties at the Wells inquiry, and the subsequent forming of the implementation teams, that the placement of workers on the various safety committees was a little less than adequate. It is respectfully submitted that any organization that thinks that worker representatives are appointed by the employer simply has it all wrong. Worker representatives ought to be selected by the employees and, where there is a certified bargaining agent in place, that bargaining agent should manage the mechanism by which such worker representatives are chosen.

The JOHS and OHS committees that are formed on the installations must be given the training and the encouragement, which will permit them to effectively carry out their mandate, which is to bring forth the safety concerns of the workers and to have them addressed in a satisfactory manner.

It should be noted here that after the 491 tragedy the entire work force was asked to submit any questions on safety.

Over 350 separate questions were raised.

Taking into account that many of these separate questions were the culmination of groups of workers, then the participation in this exercise was phenomenal.

Many of these concerns were incorporated in Well's recommendations resulting from the inquiry.

Unfettered worker input and feedback is invaluable and must be encouraged to the highest degree.

### **Quality of life**

The production platforms that are currently operating offshore have been there for 14 years, 9 years and 5 years that's Hibernia, Terra Nova and White Rose respectively.

That being said, this industry is a burgeoning industry, which basically means a young and quickly growing industry. If anyone is sceptical of this statement they need just look at the number of SDL's, or Significant Discovery Licences', that CNLOPB has issued to date.

Fifty two significant discovery licences issued.

Ten production licences issued.

Our offshore industry will be ongoing well into the future.

For those of us who have been offshore for a long time now, it is becoming more and more apparent that our choice of career can extract, and has extracted, a toll on our work life balance.

The toll this current system has taken on family life is huge. This is not only seen by those of us who have been offshore for a long time but it quickly becomes evident to the younger workers now coming offshore, both single workers and those with new families, and especially those with young families. **It is tough.**

As we are a young industry we have to look elsewhere for guidance to improve in this area.

We have to learn from places where this work/life balance has been ongoing longer than ours has. Somewhere where the workforce has been through this and has found ways to deal with it.

A change from the current equal rota (rotation) of three weeks on and three weeks off, to a rota with more time off than on has been adopted in the North Sea.

**In recent years, in the British Sector of the North Sea, a work rotation of two on and three off has been adopted.**

A significant number of operators in the UK have moved to what they term - 'a rota which provides an improved work/life balance' - they see this system as a great motivator, as it reduces sickness absence; it has improved recruitment and retention of staff; it provides greater flexibility as workers are more likely to commit to work during busy periods (shutdowns) which also saves on using contract staff who are not familiar with the installation (safer and reducing costs); morale is significantly improved which has the benefit of improved all round employment relations; overall the enthusiasm and commitment to work improves, delivering a safer and more productive operation.

In Norway things are different - they actually look after their greatest assets - their people.

They have a rota of 2-weeks offshore followed by 4-weeks onshore - and that's for every worker on the Norwegian continental shelf!

There is much to be said about the benefits, for the people and Province of Newfoundland and Labrador with a more time off than on rotation.

- 1) more people in the offshore workforce**
- 2) increase in tax base**
- 3) better for family life**
- 4) incentive for women to join the offshore**

## **Women in the offshore workforce**

### **Work rotation: two on and three off Percentage of women in the offshore Current installations**

#### **I came across some interesting information while I was preparing for this presentation.**

In 1996, Women in Trades and Technology (WITT) conducted a study of women's experiences in the Hibernia Construction Project. This study was designed to examine various aspects of women's involvement in Hibernia related training programs & employment, and to evaluate how far women have been able to become full and equal members of the project's labour force.

There were a number of interesting and discouraging findings from this study but one that jumped out at me was:

- Inadequate training- of the 3,127 seats that HRDC funded for Hibernia-related training, only 4% of them went to women.

The percentage of women as apposed to men on the Terra Nova is low by any standard.

It is less than 5%.

On the Hibernia platform, although there are more women than on Terra Nova, as the POB is greater, the percentage is similar.

Of that six percent there is one female tradesperson.

There is one female technical person. (An Engineering background).

Until recently there was one female medic.

(This position is now held by a male as the previous medic took an onshore position with the operator).

The rest of the female workforce is in the accommodations or housing.

There is something wrong with this equation.

What is it? Why is it so far out of balance?

I am sure there is a combination of things that work together to discourage women from choosing the offshore as a career.

It needs to be addressed.

Another interesting find was the 'Hebron Benefits Agreement' which set out objectives.

- ***Hebron Benefits Agreement<sup>i</sup>***

- On August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the province reached an agreement to develop Hebron, the province's fourth off-shore oil project.<sup>ii</sup>

One of the objectives of the benefits agreement is:

- Set long-term goals to employ women in occupational areas where women are historically under-represented.

There is an article from Health Canada which is titled:

### **Creating the Right Work environment<sup>iii</sup>**

With many more women in the workforce than ever before, it is increasingly difficult for them to balance their career and their personal lives. Many women have various important responsibilities that can impact on their work immensely (i.e. child care or elder care). It is very important that employers realize this challenge and work toward helping them to better balance their personal and work responsibilities.

As I stated at the beginning of this presentation, these topics relate to one another, as the arguments I have made on quality of life would undoubtedly have an effect on a woman's decision to choose a career in the offshore. A rotation of more time off than on would certainly make a career in the offshore more attractive.

## CLOSING

In closing my presentation I would like to emphasize that this is a relatively new industry, especially when compared to the likes of the North Sea oil and gas industry.

This is our resource and it will not last forever.

This resource must be used for the benefit of all workers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We as workers in this industry will continue to point out ways that this resource can, and should, be used to provide the utmost in safety and the utmost in quality of life for all of the workers who are involved in harvesting this resource for the companies involved.

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<sup>i</sup> Newfoundland and Labrador Government, *Hebron Benefits Agreement, 2008*.  
<http://www.nr.gov.nl.ca/hebron/FinalExecutedBenefits.pdf>.

<sup>ii</sup> Newfoundland and Labrador Government, Department of Natural Resources, *Hebron Agreement signals New Era in Province's History, 2008*. <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2008/exec/0820n04.htm>

<sup>iii</sup> Health Canada, *Reducing Work-Life Conflict: What Works? What Doesn't?* Higgins, Dr. Chris, Dr. Linda Duxbury, and Sean Lyons, 2008. 116-123.