

Strikers Brewing trouble: Labatt

Officials denounce acts of vandalism. Union boss admits members visited homes of managers but says protests were passive

MIKE KING

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Eggs and beer go together in taverns - but don't mix well in a labour dispute between a brewery and its unionized workers.

Labatt Brewing Co. officials yesterday denounced acts of vandalism they claim were committed against their private property Thursday evening by striking employees, including having eggs thrown at their houses and picket signs with objectionable messages planted in their yards.

That, plus threatening phone calls to some of their homes during the past week, "are totally unacceptable gestures that won't be tolerated," Paul Wilson, Labatt vice-president of public affairs, told reporters at the LaSalle plant idled by the June 16 walkout.

Wilson noted that his own home was visited during the dinner hour Thursday by more than 200 striking Labatt employees who belong to the commercial wing of the Confédération des syndicats nationaux.



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Striking Labatt workers walking the picket line encourage motorists to show

Luckily, he and his family were out of town, but Wilson said the strikers left behind a mess and worried his neighbours - as was the case at another company official's house where a similar incident occurred.

He also said that a Labatt manager's 13-year-old daughter received a phone call Thursday night in which someone menacingly said "it's very dangerous for your daddy to work at Labatt" before hanging up.

Wilson said the incidents were reported to police and stressed that management "won't yield to such strong-arm tactics of the 1950s."

Union president Robert Daneau admitted that busloads of his members have visited the homes of some management personnel to hold what he called "very passive demonstrations."

He denied any knowledge, however, of egg tossing or property damage.

"If eggs were thrown, it wasn't by union members," Daneau said, adding that had there been any vandalism or threats there would have been arrests by the police on hand. "If there are individual acts (of vandalism or threats), we're against it."

Montreal police confirmed there weren't any arrests.

Contract talks with a government conciliator - which Wilson described as progressing at a tortoise's pace - were postponed yesterday until next week because of the incidents.

Wilson warned that "there will be no negotiations" if there are more similar incidents.

The 950 workers, whose last deal expired Dec. 31, have overwhelmingly rejected the company's last offers.

They are seeking 5-per-cent wage increases in each of the next three years (full-time employees are now paid about \$27 an hour, while part-time workers average about \$14 an hour), job security and an improved pension fund.

mking@thegazette.canwest.com