

Name of Presenter: George Walker- Individual Steelworker
Date Received: May 5th 2004
Handwritten submission

May 2nd 2004

Workers Compensation
C/O of Review Committee
P.O. Box 1770 Station Main
Winnipeg, MB
R3C 2Z9

Re: Submission hearing

Dear Review Committee

Years ago I hurt my right shoulder at work. At that time I was married and had three small children. After approximately eight weeks I had not heard form compensation. At the time – I started phoning three times a week, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, as I was not given a toll free number I had to call long distance each time. I was put on hold listening to elevator music, after forty minutes I had to hang up as I had no income and could not afford all the long distance charges. This went on for several weeks, not being able to speak to anyone.

Later I had won tickets for my family to a local outdoor music festival. We walked three and a half miles to get there as I had no money for gas. We left I had to talk to my children that “I had no money and just wanted to watch the entertainment” and maybe forget my problems for a while. With that, I reached into my pocket pulled out sixteen cents, all the money I had at the time. I told them that I know that they were going to want treats, but please don’t ask as I had no money. Being as they were just children and didn’t understand, we were out the door to the festival.

The following week I went to see my M.L.A. His words were “first of all, we have to get food on your table” and gave me a contact name for welfare. Secondly, I was to apply to Unemployment Insurance Disability. I received that before I received compensation.

At that time, a person had driven into workers comp. parking lot in Winnipeg and committed suicide. I can remember thinking “I can see that happening “ a person

hurt, frustrated and not being able to trust his employer or workers comp. As you can tell I was very angry.

Well, I went back to work- I would not say my shoulder was right, But I lived with it. Until this year as I am having problems. I never heard from workers comp. for twenty-one days as I that is when my employer finally sent my claim. The adjudicator never looked at my claim for over 6 (six) weeks. My employer had some concerns it was tied up.

As all this was going on I was paying for physio out of my own pocket as well as pills and braces. Had I not done this, I believe I would have been seized right up.

After I was finally awarded compensation, my employer protested and sent a letter with several points why I should not be given compensation. They had the right to appeal, it was just a letter of concern. I believe this was to make a stronger appeal as it went on my file. I object to this as some things said in the letter were not true, or out of context.

Workers Comp told me that I have to attend Disability Management meetings. My first one was about an hour and a half. There was twenty minutes alone on what pills I was taking for illness prior to my injury. The meeting was only gathering information for their appeal. Something came up at the meeting when the adjudicator asked for the minutes. The company nurse said there were not any as it was just a brief meeting to see what modified duty I could do. The nurse and personal director were taking notes – the letter of concern that the company sent to compensation stated several points that were said at that meeting. On one hand they said nothing really was discussed, but then turned around and said the opposite.

What position does this put me in? Workers comp says I have to participate and yet they enter a letter of concern into my file which is not entirely accurate.

As of this time, my employer is filing an appeal. I am at a loss to see how I have any rights.

- No income for several weeks
- Disability management meetings, where they gather info to fight the claim
- The company nurse –her brother is the company lawyer
- Appealing just because it's there right
- Employer hires a firm to appeal and the firm in ex-workers comp people
- As I am just a simple worker that got hurt, how am I supposed to deal with all this and be expected to return to health.

I would like someone to tell me what I have done wrong!!

If the company spent as much time and effort on improvement as they do obstructing, I might not be in this situation.

Another employee made a comment about safety. They don't seem to like to do anything unless it becomes a confrontation.

Thank you for your time and certainly hope this helps.

Sincerely,

signed

George Walker