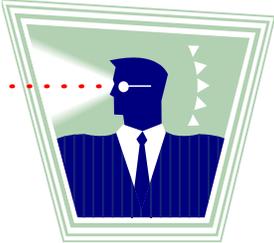
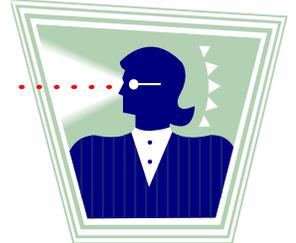


## UNW 17<sup>th</sup> Triennial Convention Information for Delegates Delegate Series #11: THE CONVENTION OBSERVERS



Most people believe that those governed in a democracy must be provided the opportunity to witness their governing bodies in session. Thus, in Canada, legislative meetings of federal, provincial or municipal governments are normally open to the public.



It is not uncommon to find the same principle practised by social organisations too, particularly unions. Union meetings, including conventions, normally are open to those in the membership who wish to observe the proceedings.

***Members who attend Convention, but who are without voice or vote, are referred to as Convention Observers.***

By observing Convention, members can see the democratic principles in which the union is based, at work. Convention observers can play an important secondary function too by reporting what they have seen and heard to the members of their Local.

***Observers attend Convention at their own or their Local's expense.*** Attending Convention, even as an observer, can be of great educational value to the member who becomes much better informed about union affairs. An observer's report might provide a view of the convention that is different from that of a delegate who necessarily becomes wrapped up in Convention proceedings and politics. An observer, on the other hand, sees Convention from the sidelines. He or she may have a different, but still valuable view of Convention procedures, the degree of participation by delegates, the view of the minority on important issues, etc.

A "reporter" is what an observer should endeavour to be: dispassionate and objective where possible, relating the what, when, where, why, who and how of Convention business. But the observer must be critical too. Convention, after all, is the supreme governing body of the Union of Northern Workers and it is an important part of the observer's task to report on the manner in which that power and authority is exercised. Justified criticism of the way the Union is being run is an integral and desirable feature of a healthy organisation. Without constructive criticism, an organisation runs the risk of getting out of touch with its membership.

Observers are permitted to attend all sittings of Convention but can be removed for cause. Observers must not attempt to interrupt, interfere with, or disrupt the business of Convention.

*This issue is the last of the series.*

***See you at Convention!***