



Union UPDATE



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Collective agreements signed for Tables 1, 2, 3 and 5

The new three-year collective agreements for Treasury Board Tables 1, 2, 3 and 5 were signed November 20.

The results of the voting on the tentative agreements for Tables 2 and 5 and the employer's proposed terms of settlement for Tables 1 and 3 were released at a press conference on November 6. The Program and Administrative Services Group (Table 1) and Technical Services Group (Table 3) ratified their proposed terms of settlement by 80% and 79% respectively. The Operational Services Group (Table 2) and the Education and Library Science Group (Table 5) voted 83% and 87% respectively in favour of the tentative agreements reached on their behalf.

"Despite the inadequacy of the general economic increase, 64,000 of our 87,000 Treasury Board members ratified the new collective agreements that will be in place until the summer of 2003," PSAC National President Nycole Turmel said at the press conference. "This is the largest voter turnout that we have ever achieved for these bargaining groups," she added.

"These agreements provide our members with stability in an unstable world. And, they also provide the government and the people of Canada with stability in an unstable world."

Table 1, 2, 3 and 5 members will receive economic increases of 3.2%, 2.8% and 2.5% in each year respectively of the three-year agreements, in addition to other wage and benefit adjustments.

PSAC National Executive Vice-President John Gordon said that while these agreements are a good start, more needs to be done to improve morale and working conditions in the federal workplace.

"The agreements provide two opportunities for the PSAC and Treasury Board to do just that," he added. "We are committed to improving the employment security and working conditions of term employees through a joint study that will document their situation and result in concrete recommendations for change."

"We also plan to implement the \$7-million joint training program as quickly as possible to ensure that our members get training in areas such as labour management rela-

tions, employment equity, the Universal Classification Standard (UCS), human rights and collective agreement interpretation."

Under the new collective agreements, Table 1, 2, 3 and 5 members will have an opportunity to dedicate one day per year to volunteer in their communities. "This is a significant benefit for our members and a \$14-million dollar contribution to communities, organizations and families across the country."

PSAC National Conferences

The PSAC National Conferences have been rescheduled and the dates and locations are:

National Health and Safety Conference: March 14-17, 2002, Chateau Frontenac, Quebec City

Access Conference: May 9-12, 2002, Delta Chelsea Hotel, Toronto

National Women's Conference: September 12-15, 2002, Marriott Hotel, Ottawa

Unity Conference: October 17-20, 2002, Fairmont Winnipeg Hotel, Winnipeg

For further information please check www.psc.com



Bargaining Update

Agreement for House of Commons members

The ratification meeting for the tentative agreement reached on behalf of House of Commons Reporting and Text Processing Bargaining Unit members was held the week of November 19. The tentative agreement reached as a result of mediated arbitration provides for a 2.5% economic increase effective July 1, 2000; one-half (1/2) increment (minimum 2%) added to the top of all levels effective July 1, 2001; a 3% and 2.5% economic increase effective July 1, 2001 and July 1, 2002 respectively.

In addition to the economic increases there were improvements in various leave articles, hours of work and overtime, and, a new Memorandum of Agreement regarding Part-Time employees.

New members at the National Gallery

The PSAC welcomes the Educator Guides at the National Gallery of Canada who have joined the union as a result of a recent organizing drive. In light of the fact that the Public Service Staff Relations Board recognized this newly-unionized group of employees as part of the existing bargaining unit, the PSAC has approached Gallery management to discuss the negotiation of their terms and conditions of employment. The employer has indicated its willingness to discuss language that would reflect their terms and conditions in the existing collective agreement. This matter will be a priority for the new Director of Employee/Employer Relations who is expected to be hired at the Gallery within the next few weeks.

SSO Field Interviewers

Negotiations on behalf of PSAC members working as Statistical Survey Operations (SSO) Field Interviewers were held November 5 to 9 and are scheduled to continue the week of December 3. The Field Interviewers and Regional Office Inter-

viewers bargaining teams will meet together on Sunday, December 2, to discuss issues of mutual concern.

SSO Regional Office Interviewers



In preparation for their upcoming round of negotiations, the Regional Office Interviewers held a Bargaining Conference from October 12 to 14. In attendance were: (back row) Anna Goldfeld, Martin Jean-Baptiste, Alaine Hemming, Joyce Hendy (National Component RVP), Jennifer Martin, Derek Norris; (middle row) Barbara Willman, Rashada Khan, Jean Baker, Marian Sinclair, Georgette Philippot, Betty Mackenzie, Susan Jones (PSAC negotiator), Trudy Hisson, Serge Descarreaux; (front row) Glenn Clark, Ed Cashman (President, National Component), Marie Novotni, Debra Gyde, Denis Vachon.

The team will hold a caucus meeting on November 30 to finalize their bargaining package and Notice to Bargain will be filed on November 26. The current contract expires November 30.

GNWT bargaining committee meeting

The PSAC bargaining committee, representing members working for the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), met October 28 to 30 to review the bargaining proposals submitted

by the members for the upcoming round of negotiations. The bargaining team was also elected: Dan Doncaster, Todd Parsons, George Hibbs, Darlene Powder, Kelvin Yee, Maureen Johnston, Georgina Rolt-Kaiser (President, UNW), Tom Clairmont (PSAC negotiator).

The current contract expires March 31, 2002.

National Capital Commission bargaining continues

Negotiations on behalf of PSAC members at the National Capital Commission (NCC) will resume November 20 and continue until November 23. The team is prepared to work long hours in an attempt to finalize a new collective agreement at these meetings.

Negotiations for Canadian Institutes for Health Research resume

In light of the recent settlements for Treasury Board Table 1, 2, 3 and 5 members, negotiations will resume on November 30 for PSAC members at the CIHR.

Negotiations with Parks Canada resume at frustrating pace

The third set of negotiations on behalf of PSAC members at the Parks Canada Agency were held from November 4 to 8. And, according to the negotiating team, they resumed at the same frustrating pace as was demonstrated by the employer in October.

Despite the fact that the workers are covered under 11 contracts, for which many basic articles are either identical or very similar, the Employer is treating these negotiations as an opportunity to fundamentally restructure the contract. In addition, the Employer continued to indicate that our members shouldn't expect to receive the Treasury Board improvements because to do so would create 'grave operational and economic consequences for the Agency'.

The PSAC negotiating team says the employer's bargaining demands can only be viewed as

significant rollbacks to their working conditions. On the issue of shift premium, which many of the lowest paid members receive, the employer would like it eliminated. Even though in the Agency's mind Parks is a 24/7 operation, the employer feels there shouldn't be any additional compensation just because the 24/7 operation has been scheduled for evening or weekend work.

Another issue is overtime. And for seasonal workers the employer is seeking to have all benefits pro-rated.

Further meetings are scheduled for November 19 to 23 and December 3 to 7. More in-depth negotiation updates can be found on the PSAC website at www.psac.com

NWT Power Corporation

The bargaining committee meeting to finalize bargaining demands for the next round of bargaining for PSAC members at the Northwest Territories Power Corporation took place from November 21 to 24. The current contract will expire on December 31, 2001.

In Memoriam

The PSAC extends sincere condolences to the families of two PSAC members who passed away November 6, 2001.

Jim Williams, a long-time activist, was Regional Vice-President of the PSAC's Government Services Union (GSU) for Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition to his activities on the Local scene, Brother Williams played an important role nationally for many years. His most recent contribution was his service as a member on the Table 1 Bargaining Team.

Ross Naylor was a member of PSAC National Component Local 80384, Sydney, and worked for Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Brother Naylor was a former Local executive member and was active on the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

Bill C-36: **Amendments needed to protect rights of Canadians**

The PSAC fundamentally believes that while the events of September 11th demand a strong reaction from the government of Canada, Bill C-36 goes too far. “Ultimately, it will label some traditional forms of protest, including strike activity, as terrorist activity, chill organizations involved in charitable fundraising for international work, undermine the ability of Canadians to monitor the actions of their government, and nullify many of the rights of accused persons,” PSAC National President Nycole Turmel stated when appearing before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on Bill C-36 on November 7.

“Parts of Bill C-36, in their present format, are an affront to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that cannot, and should not, be saved by Section 1 of the Charter,” she continued.

“The September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon will go down in history as the day on which North America lost its sense of security and safety; a day when our economy and that of neighbouring states suffered one of the most significant shocks in recent memory,” continued Turmel. “If Bill C-36 is adopted in its current form, September 11th will also go down as the day when the rights of Canadians, as expressed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, were diminished; a day when the power and authority of the State was increased and consolidated at the political level.”

In its brief to the Committee, the PSAC also points out that Bill C-36 strays too far from the purpose of identifying, stopping and prosecuting those who may be responsible for activity that is identified as ‘terrorist activity’ by seeking to amend the Access to Information Act, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and the Privacy Act, so as to suspend the Acts whenever the Attorney General so determines.

“In our view, the amendments to the three Acts are unnecessary since they all currently provide the government with exemptions that allow it to prevent the release of information that would undermine security. Moreover, in our view, creating blanket exemptions, as is proposed in Bill C-36, and having the exemptions determined by executive order without any independent review or appeal, will undermine our democracy.”

Turmel pointed out that one of the most appealing aspects of the government’s response to the events of September 11th was the strong statement with regard to racial intolerance. “While Bill C-36 seeks to curtail hate propaganda on the internet, and make mischief against religious property a crime, other provisions, most notably those related to investigation and preventative arrest, raise the threat of racial profiling.”

In her concluding remarks, Turmel said that “whatever limits are placed on the freedoms and rights of Canadians in response to the changed world order, whether until Bill C-36 or other legislation, they need to be measured, sunsetted and subject to appropriate third party review.”