

January 5, 2011

TO: Locals - DFO
National Executive
National and Regional E.O. Representatives

RE: **DFO National Union-Management Consultation Committee**

The DFO National Union-Management Consultation Committee met on November 23, 2010 with Brother William Pynn, National President, and Sister Paula Dignan, Service Officer, attending. The following is a synopsis of the discussions held.

The Deputy Minister's opening remarks primarily highlighted the changes in senior management and DFO's focus on completing its strategic review.

Time-Off For Union Business

DFO has developed Guidelines regarding time associated with union-management consultation which provide both management and union representatives with the ability to work collaboratively to address and resolve issues of mutual interest. The Guidelines will be finalized in the very near future and will assist those members who are engaged in union representation and act as both a designated union representative and as departmental employees.

UEW supports the Guidelines and we believe they can be used as an education and communication tool when discussing the need for union representatives to have time to do their union work with management.

Strategic Review

The Department is preparing for a Strategic Review and noted its requirement to cut five percent of its overall departmental budget over the next three years. UEW noted the importance of having a communications' plan in place to clearly identify to employees the impact of the Review cuts and where an employee can assess information relating to the Review.

National Labour Relations' Symposium

A working group is being created to plan, organize and propose a theme for the 2011 National Labour Relations' Symposium.

UEW noted that all the surveys relating to the Symposia highlighted that the most important aspect of the Symposium was the opportunity for senior bargaining agent representatives and management to network with each other and discuss workplace issues in a collaborative environment. UEW suggested that the agenda/theme for the Symposium should be agreed to with full consultation between both management and bargaining agent participants.

DFO Values and Ethics/Communications from VICR

The Director of VICR tabled a document that outlined why a departmental Code was to be implemented and indicated that steps were taken to ensure that employees had an opportunity to provide input into its development.

UEW expressed its concerns about the recent release of a memorandum from the department to some Regions across DFO; i.e., DFO Employees and Petitions. UEW also inquired as to why no consultation was undertaken prior to the distribution of the memorandum. The Department indicated that the memorandum was intended as a guideline to managers to facilitate discussions with employees regarding the signing of petitions in the workplace as it relates to the TB's Code on Values and Ethics for Public Servants.

UEW also expressed concern with communications sent to DFO employees restricting their participation into public meetings held in conjunction with the Cohen Commission Inquiry into the decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River. Management in the B.C. Region responded that they believed that it was appropriate to restrict employees' attendance at the public meetings simply to ensure that they were not misinterpreted or singled out as DFO employees which may have placed employees in conflict of interest with respect to their positions in the department. UEW advised that this action was perceived by employees to be an infringement on their democratic rights as Canadians and prior to any communication of this nature being distributed, consultation would have been appropriate.

Transfer of Pay Administration

The Department advised that no decisions with respect to timelines have been made regarding the transfer of pay administration. The project will be phased in and the first phase would address the implementation of the new systems followed by the centralization of the work.

Parking

The Department advised that parking fees have been implemented throughout all its Regions and efforts were made to ensure that the market rate values were accurate with special consideration being given to employees who work shifts to ensure they were provided fair options. Because the implementation of parking fees resulted in a financial burden to those affected employees, grievances have been filed.

Should you have any questions or concerns relating to the issues noted above, please do not hesitate to communicate with the national office.

Yours fraternally,

William Pynn,
National President,
Union of Environment Workers.