

Message to members. - Intimidation Tactics by Management

We are all frustrated with the intransigence of the employer and management and the complete lack of any progress with the employer. Understand that they just don't care, and they are relying on things to get stale and hope that we will soften and give up.

The employer has not communicated with us, in any way, since we finished up at the Conciliation Board. They did not even acknowledge receipt of the letter we sent to them and the departments on June 28 indicating that we accepted all of the Conciliation Board recommendations and remained available to resolve the remaining monetary issues.

There have been rumours of pay offers from the employer. The facts are that NO offers of any kind have been made to us. The last offer from the employer eliminates the R&R allowance and after adding the 2% salary increase would result in a pay cut of varying degrees to all employees.

Do not get hooked into fishing expeditions by management where suggestions of theoretical pay proposals are floated to gauge your reaction. The suggestions are purely hypothetical and have no basis in reality. They are just trying to discount any possible settlement and rob the credibility of your negotiating team. Tell them that any response will be provided by your negotiating team to real offers made by the employer at the table.

I know it seems that nothing is happening to the employer sometimes, but we need to hang in there together. The public service system is set up to avoid accountability and decisiveness. Management's strategy to handle us and our work-to-rule program is to make it appear that we are having no effect, do nothing to move towards a settlement, and wait for us to destroy our own resolve.

All indications are that some management would prefer to beat up their own employees to avoid any inconvenience to the industry, rather than communicate to senior management that we are having an effect on the output of the department and put pressure on Treasury Board to make a move. They are relying on their assumption that this work action will only be conducted by a few radicals and, if they can wait it out, the determination and cohesiveness of the group will dissipate and the ability of the CFPA membership to effect any work action will collapse.

Transport Canada management has now taken the position that they can "schedule our inspectors to work any 7.5 hours in a 24 hour period and not have to pay overtime" and they are trying to implement this interpretation to prevent members from refusing to work overtime as part of our legal strike action. It is clear from the actions of the employer since July 2 that the withdrawal of their hours of work proposals before the Conciliation Board was entirely meaningless.

Yesterday management ordered an employee to return home after they had reported to work during their normal hours, and directed them to return to work from 2000-2400. The employer cannot prevent you from working your normal hours and cannot lock out/send you home to try to get overtime done for free. They also cannot take away a day's pay when you do your work. This was a direct move by management to intimidate an employee in a legal strike position and to interfere with the work to rule program.

We have consulted our legal counsel and have confirmed that this is a clear violation of the Public Service Staff Relations Act. It is also contrary to the department's own published direction to managers in TP2301. Transport Canada has been advised of our position and if the situation is not rectified immediately the CFPA will file an immediate complaint with the PSSRB for unfair labour practices and any further attempts to send people home during normal hours will be dealt with immediately and added to the PSSRB complaint.

We need to be careful that we don't put ourselves in a bad situation. Not everyone in our group is at the same high level of awareness and willingness to participate in work action as others in our group. The executive and the strike team are trying to educate and guide the group but the support and participation of every single member is critical for us to have any type of successful outcome on your behalf.

Any sign of weakness or breach in the solidarity of the membership will destroy the effectiveness of your negotiating team when we eventually meet to settle this.

Our survival depends on more work by each and every individual to bring our peers and coworkers up to speed and keep them in formation with us. Be patient and understanding with each other but we all need to understand what is at stake here. The very core of our traditional working conditions is under attack.

Yes we're frustrated, but trust your strike team to be in touch with all the implications and make the best decisions they can to bring this thing in for a landing. Help them help you by letting them know what is going on and lending your support. It is far more to your financial advantage to maintain the work-to-rule program at your current salary level than give in to the employer and accept a pay cut and 24/7 scheduling at straight time.

Thanks again for your support, the success of our group, and the future of your working conditions depend on it.