

OPSEU ImpactT

NEWS FOR OPSEU MEMBERS AT MPAC FROM YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Adams award opens VEO, closes CSR

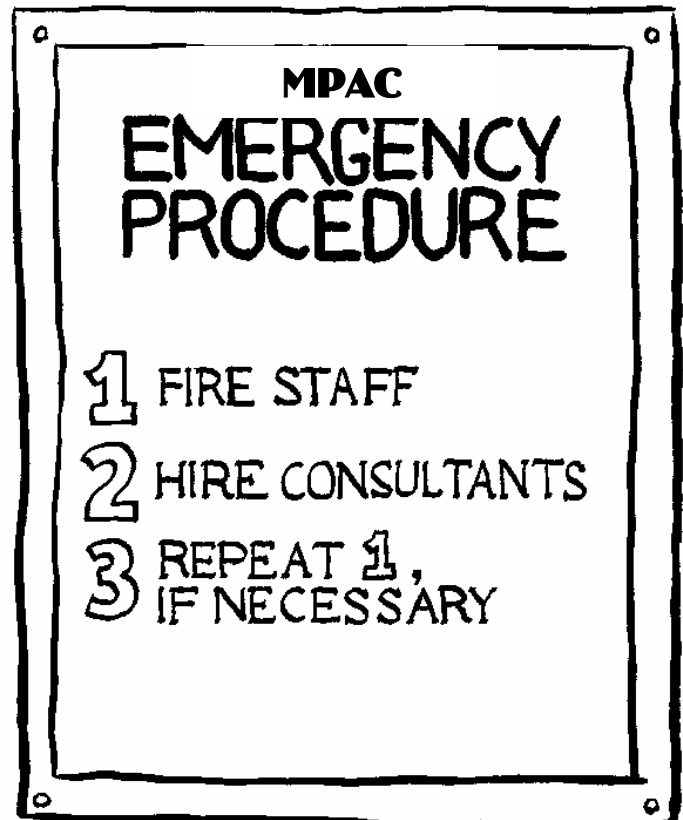
George Adams has ruled on the two issue brought before him on February 11. Our analysis was delayed as our counsel faxed the award to Will Presley's home fax on Tuesday, and Will did not get home until Friday.

On a number of issues Adam's endorsed your team's position, on one he agreed with MPAC. We are always disappointed to lose on an issue, but that is the reality of labour relations and particularly, arbitration. We had good reasons to believe that the "no vacancy" grievance for the CSR position was valid, just as Mr. Adams ruled it IS valid for every other position at MPAC.

There is never a certainty in arbitration. And it was an uphill battle to have the arbitrator endorse every single Union submission.

The following is a synopsis of the award and its effects:

- MPAC accused your team of violating the protocol by encouraging these grievances. Adams disagreed and found OPSEU was acting in good faith. He dismissed MPAC's complaint.
- On the VEO, Adams agreed with every point made on your behalf by your team. MPAC had imposed a firm window on the VEO and had denied every application made. Adams has ordered that all previous applications be approved. He has ordered that the VEO be opened immediately. The only acceptable reason for turning down qualified applicants is due to bona fide operational requirement.
- The window will stay open until 250 applications are approved or the funds disbursed reaches \$6 million.



- Adams agreed with MPAC that he has jurisdiction over the CSR "no vacancy" grievances. After establishing jurisdiction, he dismissed these grievances. They are null and void. This is based on the Article 3 in the Protocol which alludes to the CSR position and its rate of pay. While we allowed this to be included so that MPAC could not renege on their promise to increase the wage rate from PA3 to PA4, Adams found the clause had more significance than we thought it did.
- All the other "no vacancy" grievances are valid and can be processed through the normal grievance procedure.

Where does this leave us?

Members who want to access the VEO can now do so. No doubt MPAC will come up with a form, but that is not required. We warn you to proceed carefully as there are provisions in the protocol that are mandatory e.g. if approval is given there is no turning back.

We are again forwarding a copy of the protocol to our office contacts so that all members can read the details.

We expect that MPAC will continue to skew the VEO process and force us to take individual cases back to Adams. Already MPAC is denying the VEO to those members who are not eligible for an unreduced pension (and therefore ARE eligible for the VEO) because at some point in the future they WOULD qualify for an unreduced pension.

When applying for the VEO there is no rule about the exit timing. Our position is that the applicants choice should be accepted unless there are bona fide operational requirements (since all employees eligible are redundant in the eyes of MPAC, we cannot imagine how the employer could argue against the exit of a redundant employee).

Of course, they probably will...nothing is ever easy with MPAC management, not even leaving.

The arbitrator's squashing of the 500+ grievances over the CSR vacancy is unfortunate for employee relations at MPAC. These grievances were an outstanding rejection of MPAC's Futures project. As MPAC will learn over time, an outraged workforce is not as productive as one who feels valued and listened to.

Those employees who are not offered CSR positions are still able to grieve the competition process, and we expect that hundreds will.

Questions?

We work through a central team and steward system. Information flows between these two groups so that all members can be served properly. If you have a question, please put it to your steward.

We intend to have a province-wide conference call very soon, so that we can have a wide-ranging question and answer session on all issues facing us.

Workers' advantage is with unions

The Canadian Labour Congress wants to double the number of unionized women in Canada over the next three years. Nancy Riche, the CLC secretary-treasurer, unveiled the *1+1 campaign* on March 1 in downtown Ottawa. She was joined by women from the local and national labour movement, all of whom cheer the "union advantage."

About one third of Canadian workers belong to a union, a number that has remained constant for the past decade. More women belonged to unions in 2000 than in the late 1980s, bringing their membership to 32 per cent, a rate almost equal to men's membership at 34 per cent. But the benefits of union membership for women are greater.

As the twenty-first century dawned, working women still earned about a third less than working men. Median annual earnings for women stood at \$17,903, compared to \$28,656 for men—about 62 per cent. Women were more likely than men to work in temporary and part-time jobs and these jobs were more likely to fall into a low-wage bracket. By 2000, 28 per cent of working women fell into a low-wage bracket, compared to 17 per cent of working men.

Canadians who belong to unions earn better wages. This premium is largest and most dramatic for part-time workers. In 2000, a unionized woman who worked part-time earned \$17.20 an hour, compared to \$10.39 for women who were not union members. It is worth noting that 64 per cent of all non-union part-time jobs fell into a low-wage bracket, compared to only 20 per cent of unionized part-time jobs.

Unionized workers are also more likely to have excellent benefits. In 2000, 79 per cent of unionized women had a pension plan, compared to 32 per cent of non-unionized women. For medical and dental plans, unionized women were twice as likely to have access than women who were not union members.

"Everybody is better off when they belong to a union. It just so happens that women benefit more because working women have more to gain," said Riche.