



Labour Relations Update

April 2008

Although we will be all gathering at the OASIS conference in beautiful Niagara Falls on May 7-9th, the Labour Relations Committee wanted to provide a quick update to the membership on a few items and projects that we have been involved in.

Meeting with the Assistant Deputy Minister March 2008

The OASIS Labour Relations Committee met with both David Carter-Whitney and Colette Kent in March. Committee members were pleased with the meeting, and impressed with the level of understanding and awareness demonstrated by both of the MCSS representatives participating. The focus of the discussion was on the history of the Committee, its activities, and labour relations issues relevant to the ds sector.

Meeting with the Ministry of Labour March 2008

The OASIS Labour Relations Committee met representatives from the Ministry of Labour. In attendance with the LR Committee were:

- John Vander Doelen (Director),
- Julie Garner (Senior Advisor Policy and Outreach)
- Scott Cavalier (Special Assistant to the Minister)

During this meeting the LR Committee took the time to re-introduce themselves, explain the work of OASIS (past and present) and discussed key topics of interest for the DS Sector. The strikes of the summer of 2007, coordinated bargaining, and the pressures that government and agencies could anticipate when future Collective Agreements are to be renegotiated in 2011 were the main topics of discussion. Although the representatives of the MOL were unable to commit to anything for the future, they were aware of the imposition strikes had on the individuals that were supported by the various striking agencies and they were looking into this concern. There was also a discussion concerning Asbestos Regulation 278/05. The LR Committee anticipates further information will be forthcoming on this item.

Meeting with the WSIB

March 2008

In early March the LR Committee had a follow up meeting with representatives with WSIB. As shared in earlier Bulletins, the concerns that have been discussed are the inconsistencies in fees being charged to agencies supporting individuals with a developmental disability. Although this is still a 'work in progress' and the LR committee will continue to meet with WSIB on these issues, it is clear that the staff at WSIB had listened to our concerns and had spent considerable time and effort in researching the issues. WSIB is in the process of finalizing recommendations to the Committee. A "sector rate" was discussed as a solution to the inconsistencies, but it was determined that the rate would be too costly for all agencies.

Update from the Provincial Network DS Human Resource Strategy Meetings March 2008

The Human Resources Committee of the Provincial Network was pleased with the turnout for the Forum held on March 3rd & 4th, 2008. All the feedback we have received has been positive and there is enthusiasm for the Strategy. With great representation from across the province, the various committees have been struck and work will be underway soon. There will be an in-depth update at the OASIS Conference provided by the two co-Chairs (Steve Finlay & Colette Kent) on the Friday morning.

Information to Ponder...

1. In early April, a notice was sent out President Smokey Thomas inviting OPSEU local presidents and activists in Regions 1, 2, and 5 to meet with him informally to discuss preparations for the upcoming rounds of negotiations. More than 90,000 members will be bargaining within the next year, creating a so-called "perfect storm" that represents a unique opportunity for pan-union solidarity.

Meetings will also be scheduled in Regions 3, 4, 6 and 7, after the OPSEU Convention.

2. On April 23rd, a news bulletin was released stating that local Tory MPP's in the Smith Falls area want to revisit a five year old union proposal from the local OPSEU union

It is reported that OPSEU included in its 2003 Centers of Excellence proposal the idea that the soon-to-be-closed Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls be used as a transitional ALC (Alternative Level of Care) facility for eastern Ontario. More than 400 "hospital acute care beds" are reportedly being used by individuals labeled ALC. Rideau Regional Centre is targeted to be closed by 2009.

Labour Relations Committee members:

Dave Ferguson, Don Seymour, Andy Rotsma, Judy Pryde