



## GSO Contract Arbitration - Update # 2 August 16, 2018

### **Labour Board Arbitration Panel Continues Deliberations**

The Arbitration Panel appointed by the Federal Public Sector Labour Board continues to meet over the summer to carefully consider the lengthy presentations made by the Guild and the Treasury Board in order to reach a final and binding Award which will form a new Collective Agreement for Ship's Officers employed at Coast Guard and DND. Our previous bulletin described the background and composition of this Arbitration Panel and we indicated that they are holding meetings in private to consider this matter, and that such meetings would take place until at least the end of July, 2018. Guild Members are understandably anxious to hear the final Decision which will be issued in writing by the Chairman of the Panel, at the conclusion of their deliberations. As a further update, this week the Guild has been notified that the deliberations of this Panel are scheduled to continue until at least the end of August 2018, or later. It is important to note that the Arbitration Panel will take whatever time they deem necessary to determine the Award.

The Guild's demands to the Arbitration Panel include not only significant increases to compensation levels based on our substantial volumes of data submitted, but also a requirement for a special audit of all Officers' payroll information since the inception of the new Phoenix pay system, to determine on an individual basis the precise amount owed to each Officer. We have also filed and argued numerous payroll-related grievances on behalf of Members, many of which have had a successful outcome. The Guild continues to support the Phoenix lawsuit with all the other federal unions, and individually, the Guild has filed a very comprehensive "Unfair Labour Practice" Complaint to the Labour Board against the employer, specifically on behalf of the Ship's Officers' Group only. The Guild also continues to participate on all Committees at the Deputy-Minister level, and Assistant Deputy-Minister level in Ottawa that are working on every possible solution to this bureaucratic debacle. Political pressure from all the unions, including the Guild, resulted in an announcement in the last Federal Budget of a multi-million-dollar commitment for a new project to replace the payroll system entirely, and in the meantime to the immediate hiring of yet hundreds more additional payroll personnel who are now gradually beginning to become more familiar with the problems of the current payroll system; but frustrations continue nevertheless. The Guild will continue to work diligently at every single opportunity to assist Guild Members. Payroll errors need to be corrected on an individual, case-by-case basis. Members dealing with ongoing payroll problems should contact the staff in their Regional Guild Office to obtain assistance or to try to expedite a request for a Priority Payment.

In other news, the Commissioner of the Coast Guard recently announced that Atlantic Towing Ltd. has been awarded a 3-year contract to supply and operate two large Emergency Towing Vessels capable of towing tankers, container ships and other large vessels in British Columbia waters. During this initial 3-year period, an analysis will be conducted on Canada's long term plans, needs and funding with regard to emergency towing in coastal waters. As a result of the Guild continually advocating for our Members over a long period of time, the contract includes a significant commitment to a training component for Coast Guard Officers, even though the ships will be fully manned by Atlantic Towing Ltd. during the initial 3-year period. In order to expedite the introduction of these towing vessels and since not all Coast Guard personnel have frequent experience towing large ships often enough, a training program will take place both aboard the towing vessels and also using facilities ashore. This program is expected to commence in the latter part of this year. The opportunity for the Coast Guard to purchase the vessels may also arise at some point.

Members are reminded to ensure the Guild has their correct e-mail address. We recognize the importance of continuing to keep GSO's informed promptly of any developments and will issue an update immediately once the Chairman of the Arbitration Panel has issued his written decision on the matters that were presented during the Arbitration hearing.