



UNION INFO—February 2013

National Labour-Management Meeting February 5, 2013

In his opening remarks, the National President announced he would meet with the minister of Public Safety the following day, and hoped the latter had no news that would lead to major disruptions within CSC, as there was a lot of turmoil last year. He also mentioned the union is waiting for the EXCOM decision regarding awarding the contract for the employee assistance program. The meeting focused mainly on the annexation of minimum-security institutions to neighbouring institutions. We wanted to address the issue of the role of the correctional officer vs. Commissioner's Directives, but the employer was not ready to proceed.

For his part, the Commissioner reiterated that big changes are coming for CSC. Population growth projections correspond to reality and the deadline for the construction of new units is respected. There is a narrow fiscal margin and the budget reduction plan is well underway, but the Commissioner assured us: no further institution closures are projected in the 2013-2014 budget. Regarding the closure of three institutions, discussions continue despite some delays in Ontario. The Commissioner expressed concern about repercussions faced by GVI employees due to the Ashley Smith coroner's inquest; he offered all his support to employees during this stressful period.

Institution closures

The Quebec Regional President complained that employees transferring from Leclerc to other institutions have not yet received their offer of employment letters, and that this is causing major problems in terms of housing, family life, schooling, etc. We stressed that these employees need to know their transfer date as soon as possible in order to avoid additional sources of stress. That same afternoon, the senior manager of deployment would be having a conference call with the Regional Deputy Commissioner for the Quebec region, and would ask her to at least provide a schedule to let employees know when they would be transferred.

Population management

It appears that in the Atlantic and Quebec regions wardens are refusing to place inmates in segregation even after an incident has occurred (attacks against employees, contraband seizures, etc.). We asked the Commissioner if this was a new attitude; he expressed surprise and will follow up.

He also reiterated the government's position on this issue.

Regarding double bunking, the Prairies region has great concerns with the high number of double bunking experienced in many of the region's institutions, given the Commissioner's comments that there is a significant number of empty beds in other regions. The Prairies region wants to see the double bunking pressure relieved by transferring inmates out of the region.

Regarding double bunking, more than 600 interregional transfers took place last year, which helped to better disperse the prison population in the country. The culture within institutions has changed; populations are changing, it is therefore necessary to change how things are managed and attitudes.

Institutional clustering

The employer gave us a brief background talk on the clustering plan for minimum-security institutions. This initiative is part of the budget reduction plan, and is planned for April 2014. Given the complexity of the operation, pilot projects at Riverbend-Sask Pen Institutions and Frontenac-Collins Bay Institutions will take place in spring 2013. The employer has put a working group in place to ensure the transition goes smoothly. The employer will share its conclusions with us once its mandate is complete.

During this long discussion, we had the opportunity to express our general and specific concerns about this project. First of all, we want to state that your union stressed that it is important for institutions to remain separate entities, and to retain their identity. It is troublesome to see that more changes are coming, even after all the changes that happened last year. Management is a particular concern. Who will manage these institutions? Committees? Labour-relations committees? Schedules? Overtime? What will happen to transfers? We are convinced that these institutions need to remain two distinct entities and the global agreement needs to be respected at all costs.

We were incredibly disappointed to find that the employer has no plan, no model for these future institutions. Nothing was presented to us, apart from the fact the employer wants to hear our concerns about this project. Our comments will hopefully be taken into account this time. Your union will always be present during times of change, big or small; you can count on us to make our voices heard.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner asked us to focus on our three main concerns and indicated that a concrete plan will be established within a couple of weeks.