



Table 1

Harassment

What are our demands?

The PSAC's proposal seeks to provide additional tools and enhanced protection against all forms of harassment to do everything possible to prevent it, or to alleviate its effects. This issue is being put before the Table 1 Conciliation Board. We propose:

- To expand the current definition of harassment and include abuse of authority in the collective agreement, in order to prevent against all sources and forms of harassment;
- To include the definition of personal harassment and abuse of authority which will educate members and management on what constitutes harassment;
- That the process of investigation be more transparent with the requirement that both the complainant and the accused person should receive a copy of the investigation/mediation report.

Why have we proposed these demands?

The current language in the collective agreement is too restrictive and is limited only to sexual harassment. The union's demand seeks to include personal harassment and abuse of authority as prohibited grounds in the collective agreement.

The right for a safe and harassment free work environment is outlined in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and in Part II of the *Canada Labour Code*. Both the union and the employer recognize the right of employees to work in an environment free of harassment. But, based on a 1987 Supreme Court decision, it is ultimately the employer who is responsible for acts of work-related harassment.

According to employee surveys, harassment continues to be a major problem in federal public service workplaces. In 1999, the *Federal Public Service Employee*



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Survey found that a fifth of all public service employees (20%) reported experiencing harassment in the workplace. The employer responded by encouraging departments and agencies to provide employees with sensitization training and tools, and revised the harassment policy.

A new survey of federal employees in 2002 found that the problem has not gone away. In fact more than one fifth of all federal public service employees (21%) said they experienced harassment in the workplace. Nearly three-quarters of those who experienced harassment said those with authority over them were the source of the problem.

What has been the employer's response?

Treasury Board acknowledged the results of the *Federal Public Service Employee Survey* which reported that 12,260 workers covered by the PSAC said that they had been the subject of harassment in the workplace during the past two years. However, our employer maintains that the current Treasury Board Harassment Policies are sufficient to maintain their commitment to a harassment free workplace, despite the evidence to the contrary contained in their own survey. In short, they said "No" to our demand.

