



PRESIDENT'S WEEK IN REVIEW

UP TO AUGUST 2, 2020



Hi All,

Despite my commitment to regain a regular rhythm on these, the unpredictability of our current times has made that difficult. That said, I've just returned from a few days' vacation and am feeling refreshed and ready to get back at it, and the past month has brought forward a range of issues, some COVID related, some not.

On COVID front, the resident first policy flowing from Ministerial Order 84 has been a major issue, particularly for our workers at the Horseshoe Bay and Langdale POAs. As the issues and abuse piled up, so did discussions with MLA Nicholas Simons and staff from the Ministry of Transport. After all the rising temperatures, tempers, and traffic, it is a relief to see this policy come to an end.

There remain many other COVID related issues, mostly around crowding and masks. Please remember, if you see something unsafe, report it. If you're asked to do something unsafe, refuse the work.

Coming up August 5-7 is the arbitration hearing for our Article 12 and Section 54 grievance regarding BC Ferries' illegal layoffs. This has drawn much attention from our staff as they work diligently to prepare for the hearing with legal counsel Steven Rogers. To this end, I'd like to make special mention and give thanks to BCFMWU Director of Labour Relations Kevin Hall for his efforts to assist and prepare for this extremely important hearing.

Also during the last month there has been several developments in our law suit against Transport Canada regarding their issuance of an unsafe Minimum Safe Manning (MSM) document for BC Ferries' Island Class ferries. This matter looks like it could be the start of a long and slippery slope for applications for crew reductions aboard BC Ferries. In my view, BC Ferries' approach to safe manning, along with Transport Canada's eagerness to keep industry happy over enforcing regulations, will lead to a dangerous erosion of BC Ferries' operational safety. What's more, while industry lobby group Canadian Ferry Association's (CFA) CEO and chief political lobbyist is railing against making safe manning "political", the official record from Transport Canada shows he and CFA personally played a role in BC Ferries attaining a MSM document for a crew of five for Island Class vessels. To make such a statement publically after lobbying for lower minimum safe manning behind the scenes is revealing of regulatory capture in Canada. Meantime, our Union will keep fighting to avoid a major disaster as a result of deregulation (e.g. Lac Megantic or Boeing 737 Max) at BC Ferries.

Finally, our preparations for bargaining are moving along well, with the final touches being made on our proposals for consideration of the Bargaining Committee before exchange with BC Ferries on August 13th. The Bargaining Committee will meet for this task August 10-14.

Next Week: Our Article 12 and Section 54 Arbitration.

Stay Safe, Healthy, and Solid.

In Solidarity,

BC FERRY & MARINE WORKERS' UNION

Brother Graeme Johnston
Provincial President