

June 6, 2018

No Longer a “Competitive Advantage”

In a previous round of bargaining, Canada Post Corporation’s Chief Negotiator for the RSMC unit called the RSMCs a ‘competitive advantage,’ referring to the cost savings Canada Post realized from the wage gap between RSMCs and Urban unit letter carriers. Now Canada Post must eat those words.

Arbitrator Rules RSMCs have been Paid Unequally for Work of Equal Value

Last Thursday, Arbitrator Flynn released her 176-page decision from the 21-month pay equity process for RSMCs (Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers). The pay equity process was agreed to by CUPW and Canada Post Corporation (CPC) as part of settling our last round of negotiations in 2016.

Complex Decision, with Fundamental Wins

Flynn agreed with CUPW’s methodology that gives a derived hourly rate for RSMCs, and rejected CPC’s methodology, which was based on cost per points of call. It was a key element for us to show that the RSMCs have an hourly rate, and that the wage gap can be assessed based on that.

What Happens Now

There is still work to do in implementing the various elements of the award. In her decision, the arbitrator instructs the parties (CUPW and CPC) to reach agreement on several aspects of RSMC compensation, both for the retroactive portion (back to January 1, 2016) and going forward. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement by August 31, 2018, Flynn will set aside days for arbitration during the fall of 2018.

The three major items to be addressed are:

1. Wages: Though the arbitrator determined that there is a wage gap based on Route Measurement System (RMS) hours, she has instructed the parties to assess the accuracy of RMS hours.
2. Benefits: The parties must determine how RSMCs should be compensated for the difference in benefits. The benefits include disability benefits; life insurance and death benefit; post-retirement health plan; post-retirement dental plan; post-retirement term life and death benefit; isolated post allowance; BC medical premium; annual leave; special leave; and pre-retirement leave. CUPW’s position is that the employees should be entitled to the benefits, but CPC favours cash payments.
3. The arbitrator ruled that RSMCs should be given time values for PCIs and lock changes and that time should be pensionable. The parties need to agree on the time values.

Already a Victory

For CUPW, this decision means we’re now much closer to our goal of full equality for RSMCs.

For all women working across the country, this result should help establish how a quick and effective pay equity process can be put in place. Many women have waited decades; justice delayed is justice denied.

And RSMCs will no longer be exploited as a ‘competitive advantage.’ It’s a long road to equality, but we keep moving forward.

In Solidarity,

Members of the Pay Equity Committee:



Cathy Kennedy



Nancy Beauchamp



Barb McMillan

2015-2019 Bulletin #375
/jyl-tw cope 225