

Press Release - October 20, 2005

Rowe's Construction dumps Ferry contract and abandons citizens in Fort Simpson and Wrigley

Fort Simpson, NWT – Late today the PSAC/UNW received notification through a CBC news broadcast that Rowe's Construction is abandoning the contract to provide Ferry service across the Liard River. They have indicated that they cannot run the Ferry during a labour dispute even through the use of scab replacement workers.

The Government has made a vague response of somehow coming up with a strategy to maintain the service citing short notice from Rowe's to blame for their lack of preparation. Todd Parsons, President of the Union of Northern Workers says, "If the GNWT wants the Ferry to run, all they have to do is phone me and I will send our negotiator to them now; the GNWT has in effect took over the Ferry and these workers are now, in our view, seasonal workers of the GNWT".

There are rumors of another entity taking the contract but Jean Francois Des Lauriers, Regional Executive Vice President of PSAC North, warns, "If anyone thinks they can come in and take up the running of the Ferry using Rowe's despicable labour relations, I tell them to think again; we are willing to sign an agreement that is on the table right now with them and then we will send our members back to work otherwise we will maintain our lines! We are obligated and determined to protect the rights of our members".

Both Union Leaders cannot believe the callous disregard Rowe's, the GNWT, and the Federal Government have shown to citizens in their efforts to resolve this dispute; the Union has decreased their demands in an attempt to resolve but to no avail. Parsons says, "We cannot bend any further without betraying our members and we are not prepared to go there; sign a decent agreement now and we will have the Ferry running in the morning".

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