

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT USED TO COVER UP ADVICE
GIVEN IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO
ESCORTING A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE, WHO RAISED CONCERNS
REGARDING ANALYTICAL ACTIVITIES AT BC STATS,
OFF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY
By W.W. Munroe, September 2010**

I had raised concerns about inconsistencies and irregularities in the population numbers created by BC Stats, of the Ministry of Labour and Citizen's Services, and coercion, which were described in letters I sent to the Deputy Minister, January 30, 2006, in keeping with the Master Agreement between the Public Service Agency and the Government Employee Union.

The following emails were found in the Freedom of Information package I received over four years after being ordered to vacate a government building and "escorted" off the premise where I had worked for four years as a Population Analyst and expert on migration.

These emails begin with a reference to the meeting with Don McRae, the Population Section manager, Dave O'Neil, the shop steward, Marvin Paxman, and myself, on February 13, 2006 in Don McRae's office.

At this meeting that I had requested, I asked again for mediation regarding the accusation of making a co-worker fear for her safety after I had raised concerns about problems in the Population Section. I insisted on addressing the accusation before meetings, that were said to have been the source of the accusation, were to resume. I was told something to the effect that the Master Agreement procedures were being followed. Indeed, the Employer made an effort to avoid following proper procedures, see endnote.

The next morning, Don McRae wrote ...

-----Original Message-----

From: McRae, Don LCS:EX

Sent: February 14, 2006 10:46 AM

To: Munroe, Warren LCS:EX

Cc: O'Neil, David LCS:EX; Paxman, Marvin LCS:EX; Gore, Carol PSA:EX

Subject: RE: Work Expectations

Warren, further to our meeting yesterday afternoon, during the period in which the allegations made under Article 32.15 are being investigated, I expect you to continue to perform your duties as directed by the Population Section Manager. This includes, but is not limited to, meeting with the Manager and or staff as directed, and providing regular briefings to the Manager on the progress of projects underway.

I replied

-----Original Message-----

From: Munroe, Warren LCS:EX

Sent: February 14, 2006 1:20 PM

To: McRae, Don LCS:EX

Cc: O'Neil, David LCS:EX; Paxman, Marvin LCS:EX; Gore, Carol PSA:EX
Subject: RE: Work Expectations

Hello All

My work expectations are that I not be the subject of abuse. I would like to make this perfectly clear, I will not continue to work in a negative abusive demeaning work environment where overt and subtle forms of abuse are considered acceptable. Therefore, please provide mediation or transfer me.

Also,

What does a positive work environment look like particularly for a statistical organization? There are many important characteristics for any organization to address, including those outlined in the workplace skills program provided by the BC Public Service Agency. An additional characteristic for a statistical organization revolves around analysis and therefore includes the intellectual partnership of those in the statistical office. I would suggest that being able to at least listen to differing opinions, even if they are not accepted, would be important.

The following is an excerpt (part 1 of 6) from "Analytic activities at Statistics Canada" circulated (in whole) to BC Stats by the Director [~2 year previous – author's note].

Because this article has direct relevance to BCStats, I have inserted some comments, highlighted in blue, to emphasize areas that are pertinent to our organization and in particular the population section, adding my initials, wm.

Analytic activities at Statistics Canada

Notes prepared by Ivan Fellegi presented at the CES meeting, June 14, 1999.

I. Analytic activities and their benefits

1. Every statistical agency is, or should be, engaged in analytic activities. I will outline the types of analytic activities which I believe are appropriate -- even essential -- for statistical agencies. My first two categories are clearly not controversial; the others are perhaps increasingly controversial.

- **Quality assurance.** An important tool of quality assurance is analyzing statistical data from a database to assess "internal consistencies," as well as consistencies with other "related" data. This involves looking for unexpected deviations from known or assumed relationships and is an intrinsically analytical activity. A deviation from the expected relationship *might* signal errors in the data. It can also signal some significant change in the underlying phenomena. The former requires correction, while the latter might be a highly important finding which needs to be publicized. While assessing consistencies is analysis, the differentiation between the two possible causes of *inconsistencies* involves an even more sophisticated analysis -- one with huge potential impacts on the statistical office.

- **Statistical outputs which are analytic constructs.** The best known example is the System of National Accounts. Indeed, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) itself is not an observable entity, but rather an analytic construct. The underlying system of statistical outputs is constructed through a mixture of direct measurement and analytic tools: imputation, extrapolation, interpolation, and adjustments. Other examples include the Consumer Price Index.

2. While the visible output of what we call GDP or CPI is quantitative information, this is not the case with every analytic product. For example Statistics Canada produces several so-called microsimulation products. They are based on integrated anonymized microdata from several household surveys, but an essential feature is a modeling capacity that enables external researchers to assess both the macro and the distributional impacts of alternative policy scenarios, for example: what would be the impact of a particular change in personal income or consumption taxes on the incomes of different types of family; or what would be the impact of such policy changes on the fiscal situation of the federal or provincial governments?

- **Analysis as a means to ensure continued relevance.** It is much more difficult to maintain the longer term relevance of our product lines without a strong analytic capacity within the statistical office. There are several related reasons for this.

- The **discovery of evolving gaps** (may I suggest that migration, particularly by age, from global to local, is evolving - wm) within the statistical product line is an intrinsically analytic activity. If we want to be proactive in promoting the development of important missing statistical information, we first of all must have a good understanding of *what* is missing, but even more important, *why* it matters to national (or provincial and local - wm) policy. (for BC, what of migration of the elderly? - wm) This requires analytic activity of a very high order because it calls for attempts to understand not only the current structure of our society and economy, but also their dynamics: the forces that shape their evolution and which might be beneficially impacted through policy. ***I want to emphasize that we cannot wait for others (policy departments) to gain the needed understandings and then tell us what data to collect.*** The needed development is an iterative process of conceptual work, data development, program implementation, program evaluation, followed by conceptual work, and so on. *Such work requires the active intellectual partnership of the statistical office. (my emphasis as I feel that this is an important characteristic of a positive work environment in a statistical organization-wm)*

So the analytic activity by the statistical office can and should highlight issues which new information could help to illuminate.

- **Building partnerships** with the communities of policy analysts and academics. A relationship of peers is a prerequisite for productive interactions and mutual support.

- **Analytic activity as leadership development**, particularly in subject matter areas. It is a very desirable characteristic for leaders of subject matter divisions to have an excellent ability to understand how the statistical information is used that their organization produces -- and therefore what is the real need of its clients. This kind of understanding is helped by analytic work at some time during one's career.

- **Highlighting important findings.** During a television interview I was asked how can I keep on top of the millions of pages of printed material

that we produce annually. I explained that it is not my job (nor even of Statistics Canada collectively) to keep on top of billions of data points. Rather, I try to keep on top of the main findings -- the significant information we provide to society about itself.

3. How can society intelligently participate in the setting of national priorities if the population does not understand where we are, and where we are heading on current trends. Yet a large part of society is not used to analyzing statistical data. As a consequence we are really failing to serve them well if data are all of what we produce: most people will not sift through the millions of printed pages we produce in order to find the occasional golden nuggets.

4. If we do not do the necessary analytic work, who will do it *systematically*? And if it is not done, are we not wasting the enormous opportunity we have to make a fundamental contribution to the functioning of democratic societies?

A side benefit of such regular reporting of analytic highlights that the media uses our release texts directly. This not only helps in ensuring that our findings are not misrepresented, but it also raises the prestige of Statistics Canada which, in turn, helps us in getting the cooperation of Canadians during data collection.

- Contribution to maintaining political independence. In a recent lecture I outlined in more detail the argument that a steady flow of relevant and objective analytic output makes an enormous contribution to raising the intellectual profile of the statistical agency, while at the same time differentiating this image from that of "the government." While government departments publish material that is mostly designed to justify the programs and approaches of the government, insightful non-partisan analyses by the statistical agency underscore its independence from the political direction of the current government. And the less this independence is understood, the more difficult it is to defend it should the need arise: if society, broadly speaking, assumes that there is no such independence, then it can hardly be expected to believe the leadership of the statistical office should the latter be forced to take a stand in opposing political interference.

From the FOI package, I found that there were discussions between the Public Service Agency, Michelle Charbonneau, and the Executive Director of BC Stats, Don McRae, regarding my work expectations and analytical activities at Statistical agencies....

-----Original Message-----

From: Gore, Carol PSA:EX
Sent: February 14, 2006 1:35 PM
To: Charbonneau, Michelle M PSA:EX
Subject: FW: Work Expectations

FYI

-----Original Message-----

From: Charbonneau, Michelle M PSA:EX
Sent: February 14, 2006 3:48 PM
To: Gore, Carol PSA:EX
Subject: RE: Work Expectations

Carol

Talked to Don briefly a few minutes ago.

Advised/suggested to him re the following:

s.13(1)

From the FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT Section **13** (1): The head of a public body may refuse to disclose to an applicant information that would reveal advice or recommendations developed by or for a public body or a minister.

Comment: Which head of a public body refused to disclose what was said? What public body or minister? What was the justification for refusing disclosure?

The next day, on February 15, 2006, I was ordered to attend the resumption of meetings, a month ahead of schedule, that were said to have caused my co-worker to fear for her safety. Mediation was refused and instead I was told to close the window, leave my computer on, gather my belongings, turn in my security pass, and vacate the building.

Hand written notes from a meeting between Don McRae, Dave O'Neil, Carol Gore, and Michelle Charbonneau made on February 16, 2006, one day after dismissal, found in the Freedom of Information package

February 16, 2006, Don, Dave, Carol, Michelle
Re: Warren Munroe
Don - he's been asked to leave the building
Dave told him [warren] he could take his personal items.

Comment: I was told, not asked, to leave the building. Also, I was told to gather my belongings, not that I could. Bizarre. This is called a statistical agency...ridiculous!

I contend that by doing my job as per the job description, I was discovering why there were inconsistencies and irregularities in the official population statistics, indeed the numbers were being changed outside the models.

As I dug deeper, I was met with increased antagonism.

For providing solutions, that reduced error, time, and cost, I was considered confrontational and dismissed.

Read about the use of non-statistical and sub-standard methods and models, and the racial profiling, slurs and aggressive yelling, as well as the violations of the BC Public Service Act, the Human Rights Code, the Labour Code, and the Master Agreement at www.wminfomatics.com/WP/home.html.