

For immediate release
February 7, 2008

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UPSE President claims Minister owes apology to members

Union of Public Sector Employees president, Shelley Ward is calling on Tourism Minister, Valerie Docherty to apologize to the dedicated staff employed in her department.

Ward states that in an interview aired on CBC's Compass Tuesday evening, the Minister made the following statement, "We are not interested in shortening our staff. What we want to do is make sure that we have the best people with the best skill set. If that can help us we will, but that decision hasn't been made firmly yet."

"These people who deliver services, not only to Islanders, but also to the tourists visiting PEI have certainly been very professional and well qualified to deliver these services in the past. All permanent staff have been hired through the Public Service Commission. Is the Minister implying that the Commission is not doing a good job? I feel that the Minister's comments warrant an apology to the employees of her Department, and that she needs to clarify her statement if this is not her position."

"The announcement of a possible change to the Department of Tourism has come as a big surprise. UPSE had no prior notice that the government was considering moving the whole Department to a Crown Corporation. This has set a bad example. The Premier made a promise to UPSE that if there were to be any changes regarding the employment of UPSE members, particularly those employed in the Golf Industry, that we would be informed and consulted on the matter. Reading about it in the paper is not what we consider consulting," concluded Ward.

The PEI Union of Public Sector Employees represents over 5000 members. Almost 300 of them are employed with the Department of Tourism.