

An Open Letter to Ivan Strang

Dear Mr Strang:

In early 1982, Mr. Grant McLean left his career with the Regular Force in the military to take up a position with the Alberta Solicitor General. A key consideration in his decision to leave the military, was the promise both verbally during the recruiting/interview process and in his official offer of employment letter that his military pension contributions were transferable.

The individuals involved in the hiring process made commitments, on behalf of the Government of Alberta, that were not consistent with the government policy. Mr. McLean was not advised that his pension contributions were not transferable until well after he had irrevocably left the Canadian Forces and had taken up his employment with the Alberta Government. Because he was not able to transfer his pension contributions, Mr McLean has been deprived of a considerable financial benefit through an error by a representative of the Alberta Government.

The Government of Alberta has procedures in place for recruitment of new employees and the transfer or non-transfer of pension contributions funds for new employees who are hired. Very clear directives are issued to guide the government's human resource personnel who oversee this hiring process. The government's own procedures and directives state that employees responsible for hiring are responsible for ensuring that applicants receive correct pension information. The employee's supervisors within the Government of Alberta are responsible for ensuring that she is/they are trained and capable of carrying out the duties competently.

The Alberta government employee responsible for Mr. McLean's hiring was new to the Alberta government. She was not aware of the pension directives and procedures that were in place within the Government of Alberta. Consequently, she did not follow the proper procedures and negligently/ mistakenly/improperly misrepresented the issue of pension during the interview process and in Mr. McLean's employment offer letter. She was not aware that there was no provision for the transferring pension funds from the military and RCMP pension plans which are different than those of the federal civil service.

Since then she has stated under oath that the information that she provided Mr. McLean with incorrect information. Relying on this incorrect advice from the government employee and assuming that his pension was transferable, Mr. McLean resigned from the military and thus forfeited 14 - years of pensionable service. This constitutes a significant financial penalty to him- the loss of almost 30% of his pension.

Over the years, Mr. McLean has attempted to address the problem through the government chain of command who stated that there was no mechanism for them to do so. In 1999 he launched a legal action against the employee and the Alberta government. The matter has still not come to trial.

Mr. Strang, you were one of the MLA's who restored the generous MLA severance package. Since you were able to look out for yourselves so well how about helping this fellow out? After all, he isn't asking for a handout merely to transfer pension rights which he had already earned and your government assured him that he could transfer when he was offered a job!

Do you think it is right that provincial employees have to sue their own government in order to resolve a matter that appears to be patently unfair and unjust? Alberta's courts are already backlogged. Matters like this will bog them down even further. Why is this issue dragging on and not being settled?

Last summer we buried Master Corporal Raymond Arndt a former member of this community who died serving our country in Afghanistan. Do you think that your government's actions are fair treatment for this former Canadian soldier who served his country on military, NATO and United Nations Peacekeeping duty for nearly 15 years? Not to mention his service to the province of Alberta for nearly 25 years? Forty years of service!!

Please take a look at the facts for yourself at www.friendsofgrant.com . Please do this before the government's lawyers and spin doctors tell you what to say. Where do you stand on this? We look forward to hearing your response soon in this newspaper and via e-mail at friendsofgrant@telus.net.

Signed The Friends of Grant McLean