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# Maine Labor Relations Board Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1983

Maine Labor Relations Board

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## ANNUAL REPORT

### MAINE LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

Fiscal Year 1983

Submitted by

Parker A. Denaco, Executive Director - July 1, 1983

The following report is submitted herewith pursuant to Section 968, paragraph 7, and Section 979-J, of Title 26, Maine Revised Statutes.

This report will indicate that the Maine Labor Relations Board has maintained a high level of participation in the formulation, resolution, and administration of collective bargaining units in all facets of the public sector during the past fiscal year. Dispute resolution procedures involving both mediation and fact finding have been active, most notably in the third and fourth fiscal quarters. As the Board enters the reporting period for Fiscal Year 1984, several areas of challenge are apparent. Not to be understated are the problems associated with the resolution of contracts for the majority of state employees commencing on or about July 1, 1983. In addition to this large segment of employees requiring services from the Board, the Board anticipates that there will be relatively strong levels of activity in the remaining segments of the public sector.

Virtually all public employees in the State of Maine come under the umbrella of the Maine Labor Relations Board through either the Municipal Public Employees Labor Relations Act, the State Employees Labor Relations Act, or the University of Maine Labor Relations Act. Conversely, collective bargaining rights have never been extended to employees of the State's Judicial Department. While the recently adjourned session of the 111th Legislature did not extend collective bargaining rights to Judicial Department employees by enacting legislation for this purpose, it did pass L.D. 1660 as Chapter 412 of the Public Laws of 1983 relative to "An Act to Authorize the Supreme Judicial Court to Provide for Collective Bargaining for Judicial Department Employees." This legislation declares it to be the public policy of the State to support collective bargaining for Judicial Department employees and authorizes the Supreme Judicial Court to propose appropriate procedures for defining and implementing collective bargaining rights for those employees. Depending on the actions of the Supreme Judicial Court, the Maine Labor Relations Board, as an agency, may or may not be involved in that

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process.

The current primary and alternate members of the Maine Labor Relations Board are as follows:

Chairman

Edward H. Keith

Alternate Chairmen

Donald W. Webber  
Gary F. Thorne\*\*

Employee Representative

Harold S. Noddin

Employer Representative

Don R. Ziebenbein\*

Alt. Employee Representatives

Russell A. Webb

Alt. Employer Representatives

Kenneth T. Winters\*  
Thacher E. Turner\*\*

\* Continuing to serve under terms expired on September 30, 1982.

\*\* Resigned July 20, 1982.

One of the notable accomplishments of the Board during Fiscal Year 1982 was the record breaking percentage of cases settled through mediation. During this past fiscal year, Fiscal Year 1983, the number of mediation cases filed with the Maine Labor Relations Board increased, being up by 14%, with the settlement rate at 73% which breaks all settlement records since we have maintained statistics. The increased reliance on mediation not only indicates that the parties have confidence in mediation as a process but also in the skills of the personnel serving on the State Panel of Mediators.

As noted in the annual report for the prior fiscal year, the success of mediation has again produced the collateral benefit of avoiding strikes, work stoppages and disruptions in the Maine public sector during the past year. During the first six months of the past fiscal year, there were only 8 fact finding requests filed. Thus, virtually all activity in the fact finding sector has been during the last two fiscal quarters of this reporting period. Compared to Fiscal Year 1982, fact findings decreased by 6.6%. Compared to Fiscal Year 1981, there was a combined decrease of 44%. Presently, five bargaining units

involving more than 10,000 state employees are facing fact finding proceedings relative to the settlement of their contracts for the period commencing July 1, 1983. Hearings in this matter are scheduled to start July 6, 1983, with a strong anticipation that the fewer number of issues proceeding to fact finding at this time will accelerate those proceedings so that they might be completed in a lesser amount of time than was required to complete the extremely long proceedings involving the state employees' fact finding for the last group of comprehensive collective bargaining agreements.

One cannot consider the area of state employee fact finding without commenting upon L.D. 1671, "An Act to Amend the State Employees Labor Relations Act." That legislation proposed that the fact finding process, for state employees only, be limited to a period of 90 days and that it would only involve "cost items" as defined by the fact finders. All non-cost items would either have to be settled by the parties during negotiations, through mediation, or proceed to interest arbitration. This legislation passed both the Maine House of Representatives and Maine Senate and was forwarded to the Governor who, on June 14, 1983, returned it without his signature. In conveying his message to the members of the Legislature, Governor Brennan stated, inter alia, that he "must object to this restriction on the jurisdiction of fact finding panels for the following reasons:

- (1) . . . two of the three contracts which have been settled with the largest state employee union were achieved shortly after fact finding, and in both cases fact finders' recommendations on non-cost items were incorporated verbatim into the final contracts. So I am extremely reluctant to give up the availability of a mechanism that may help, and indeed has helped, in resolving impasses in collective bargaining.
- (2) It also appears that the very existence of the fact finding process is useful in weeding out frivolous and non-meritorious demands. . . .
- (3) In addition to these virtues, fact finding on the whole range of issues presented can provide a useful forum for reporting to the people of Maine on the status of labor negotiations. . . . modest and opening though it is, the final fact-finders' report constitutes the window through which the public may glimpse the conduct of public sector negotiations. . . . It would be short-sighted and counter-productive to strip away any of the procedures now available for resolving disputes . . ."

In addition to the legislative developments already noted, the 111th Legislature made other changes in the labor laws affecting the administration of public sector labor relations through the Maine Labor Relations Board. In L.D. 546, "An Act to Require Participation in Good Faith in Fact Finding," the University of Maine Labor Relations Act was amended in Section 1026, Subsection 1(E) to insert the requirement for good faith participation in fact finding as well as mediation and arbitration. This provision was enacted as Chapter 127 of the Public Laws of 1983.

In L.D. 597, "An Act to Provide for Leaves of Absence for Employees Elected to the Legislature, Excluding Employees Covered Under Provisions Dealing with Teachers," the Maine Board of Arbitration and Conciliation was given authority to decide appeals involving the granting of leave for members elected to the Legislature. This legislation, enacted as Chapter 128 of the Public Laws of 1983, will subsequently be inserted in Title 26, MRSA, Section 821, et seq.

"An Act to Provide for the Negotiation of Seniority Provision for Teachers," L.D. 1350, was enacted in emergency status as Chapter 147 of the Public Laws of 1983. This bill removed any ambiguity relative to the negotiability of seniority provisions as they affect teachers. Also included in the bill were items involving the order of layoffs and recall; however, even though seniority becomes a mandatory subject for bargaining under this legislation, it may not be the exclusive criterion in matters of layoff and recall. These amendments may be found at Title 20, MRSA, Section 161(5) and Title 20-A, MRSA, Section 13201. Since the subject matter of this legislation impacts contracts already in being, it contains a transition clause which validates existing collective bargaining agreements containing seniority provisions from the date of its emergency enactment on April 15, 1983 until the expiration of those collective bargaining agreements which were in effect on the date of enactment.

Chapter 153 of the Public Laws of 1983, otherwise known as L.D. 1319, "An Act to Revise the University of Maine Arbitration Procedures," inserts a new methodology for the cross striking of names in order to determine an interest arbitrator under Section 1026, Subsection 4(A) of the University of Maine Labor Relations Act. This legislation permits the Executive Director or his designee to determine administratively if an impasse exists. If so, when the parties reach the point of having to strike names in order to arrive at the identity of

an arbitrator, "when the list is reduced to four names, the second from the last party to strike shall be entitled to strike two names simultaneously, after which the last party to strike shall so strike one name from the then two remaining names, such that the then remaining name shall identify the person who shall then be appointed by the Executive Director as the neutral arbitrator." This legislative modification may be considered to be technical in nature since it has little impact on the purposes and objectives of the University of Maine Labor Relations Act as a whole.

Collateral to the functions of the Maine Labor Relations Board, it should be noted that L.D. 167, "An Act to Prohibit Residency Requirements for Municipal Employees," was enacted as Chapter 406 of the Public Laws of 1983. While not a part of the laws administered by the Maine Labor Relations Board, this new statutory provision may be found at Title 30, MRSA, Section 2152-B. It applies only to public employees as defined in Title 26, Section 962(6). The legislation prohibits residency requirements as a condition of employment; however, a municipality may negotiate collective bargaining agreements to require employees to reside within a specified distance or response time of a facility where those provisions represent a legitimate job requirement. The legislation contains a "grandfather clause" in it providing that its provisions shall not apply to employees already employed at the time its provisions become effective.

L.D. 1608, "An Act Concerning the Negotiation of Just Cause Provisions for Teachers," was enacted as Chapter 371 of the Public Laws of 1983. It establishes that just cause for dismissal or non-renewals shall be a negotiable subject in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Municipal Public Employees Labor Relations Act. This particular legislative amendment is not found in the Municipal Public Employees Labor Relations Act; instead, it may be located by making reference to Title 20-A, MRSA, Section 13201, third paragraph.

During the past year, the Board has not only continued its policy of providing information to persons and organizations covered by the various acts it administers, but also of insuring that its professional staff is familiar and up-to-date with recent developments in labor relations matters. One of the more momentous accomplishments in the outreach program involves the appointment of the Board's Dispute Resolution Specialist, Robert Goldman, to be the Executive Director of the New England Consortium of State Labor Relations Agencies. Mr. Goldman assumes his

responsibilities in this position, as an additional duty, at the conclusion of very competent service rendered by Martha Farmer of the Vermont State Labor Relations Board. Adding the executive directorship of the New England Consortium of State Labor Relations Agencies to other functions now coordinated through the aegis of the Maine Labor Relations Board is particularly fortuitous since the Association of Labor Relations Agencies is scheduled to hold its annual convention in Portland during July of 1985. The combination of both the New England Consortium and the Association of Labor Relations Agencies activities may be particularly advantageous, especially as their respective activities can be coordinated and/or consolidated.

Members of the professional staff have been involved in training as well as being trained during the past year. One of the Attorney/Examiners taught an introductory course in labor relations for two semesters at Central Maine Vocational Technical Institute. All members of the professional staff of the agency have attended training either through the Association of Labor Relations Agencies, the Maine Bar Association, the American Bar Association, the Maine Trial Lawyers Association, or the American Arbitration Association during the past year. By way of specialized training, one Attorney/Examiner attended the Maine Council of School Board Attorneys School Law Seminar in May of 1983 while another attended the Boston Bar Association seminar on recent developments in labor law and a conference sponsored by the Maine Trial Lawyers Association in Portland. Members of the professional staff have also served as guest lecturers at the University of Maine in Augusta and have attended meetings of both the American Society of Public Administrators and, in the case of the Executive Director, the American Arbitration Association Advisory Council.

The Executive Director maintained an act of affiliation with the Committee on Public Sector Bargaining of the Labor Law Section of the American Bar Association. He continues as one of the few public members of that committee and attended their annual meeting in February. He also serves as Co-Chair of the Maine Bar Association's Labor and Employment Law Section. In conjunction with these responsibilities, he assisted in planning for a Labor and Employment Law Seminar held in Portland last March and presided at the summer meeting of the section held in Kennebunkport last June.

On the national scene, the Maine Labor Relations Board maintained contact with counterpart agencies both within and outside New England as well as with organizations

which serve labor relations agencies. In particular, the agency continued its active affiliation with the Association of Labor Relations Agencies which plays an important role with respect to member agencies such as the Maine Labor Relations Board. Continuation of this active affiliation is particularly important since Portland has been designated as the location for the 1985 annual meeting of the Association of Labor Relations Agencies. This Association serves as a coordinator between the composite of labor relations and mediation agencies from the Federal sectors, states and subdivisions, and the national and provincial governments of the United States and Canada, respectively.

The agency was also asked to conduct, as a courtesy, an internal union election for a private sector union during the past year. The staff responded affirmatively to this request since it possesses the skills and expertise required when such a proceeding is either lengthy or contested. The Board's participation in this matter was prudent since those election proceedings were subject to recount procedures which required careful scrutiny and certification.

The remainder of this report is devoted to statistics generated through the public sector functions of the Maine Labor Relations Board. During Fiscal Year 1983 (the eleventh year of its operations), the Maine Labor Relations Board received and accepted twenty-five (25) voluntary agreements on the establishment of, or accretion to, collective bargaining units throughout the public sector jurisdiction of the Board. This represents a decline to the normal level of such filings and is contrasted with the abnormal and historically high figure of thirty-four (34) filed in the prior fiscal year, FY 1982. That unusually high level was a consequence of the organizing among county employees who became enfranchised under the labor relations statutes early in FY 1982. In FY 1982, voluntary agreements on the composition and scope of bargaining units were filed during the year in a total of eight counties (including, in some, multiple unit recognitions), whereas only three counties were involved in voluntary agreements in FY 1983.

Voluntary agreements as to bargaining units involved the following public entities in FY 1983:

Albion	Kennebunk
Bradley	Limestone
Brooklin/Sedgwick	Milford
Deer Isle - Stonington	Ogunquit
Dover-Foxcroft	Orono



Farmington  
Greenbush  
Hodgdon  
Houlton

Shirley  
South Berwick  
Southwest Harbor

Aroostook County  
Franklin County

Where parties do not initially agree on the scope or composition of the bargaining unit, petitions are filed with the Maine Labor Relations Board for unit determination or unit clarification proceedings. Forty (40) such petitions were filed in FY 1983 as of the time statistics were compiled for this report in mid-June 1983. This approximates the number filed in the prior fiscal year, forty-three (43). However, this figure does not include the thirty-four (34) separate petitions which were filed by the State Office of Employee Relations in November and December, 1982, which request the Maine Labor Relations Board to exclude some 550 positions from collective bargaining in thirty-four (34) separate departments or agencies of state government. These petitions are now before a hearing examiner and are predicated largely upon amendments to the State Employees Labor Relations Act enacted by the 110th Legislature, L.D. 1582 (Chapter 381, P.L. 1981). When these petitions are added to the other unit filings, the total of seventy-four (74) far and away establishes the largest number of unit filings in any single year since the creation of the Maine Labor Relations Board.

In addition to the foregoing, there was an earlier effort by the State to remove various positions from three of the state bargaining units as confidential employees, a process which began before a hearing examiner in June, 1980. A hearing officer issued a report in December, 1981, which was the subject of an appellate decision by the full Board in the last weeks of FY 1983. In addition to the foregoing numbers, three (3) matters were carried over from Fiscal Year 1982.

Unit determinations or clarifications filed during FY 1983 involved the following communities and entities:

Alexander  
Auburn  
Bangor  
Biddeford  
Boothbay/Boothbay Harbor  
Calais  
Danforth/East Grand

Dover-Foxcroft  
Gorham  
Hodgdon  
Kittery  
Kennebunk  
Kennebunkport  
Limestone

Lubec  
Ogunquit  
Old Town  
Orono  
Rangeley  
Saco  
Southwest Harbor

Aroostook County  
Franklin County  
Hancock County

Northern Aroostook  
Vocational Board  
State of Maine

After the scope and composition of the bargaining unit is established - by agreement or after hearing - the process of determining the desire of the employees on the question of representation takes place. During Fiscal Year 1983, there were nine (9) instances in which the employer voluntarily recognized a bargaining agent upon having satisfied itself that the employee organization represented a majority of the employees in the bargaining unit. There were seven (7) such recognitions in FY 1982 and sixteen (16) in FY 1981. Public employers voluntarily recognizing employee organizations as the bargaining representative for the employees in the unit involved the communities of:

Alton  
Bradley  
Brooklin/Sedgwick  
Deer Isle/Stonington  
Dover-Foxcroft

Greenbush  
Milford  
Ogunquit  
Shirley

Where the parties do not agree and there is no voluntary recognition by the public employer, the Executive Director conducts an election to determine the desires of the employees on the question of representation. Thirty-one (31) such requests were received in FY 1983 as of the date of compilation, as compared with forty-five (45) requests in FY 1982, and forty (40) in FY 1981. There were four (4) holdovers from FY 1982 for a total of thirty-six (36) election requests requiring attention during the fiscal year. It should be noted that the height of organizational activity among county employees took place during FY 1982, the year in which county employees won legislative enfranchisement under the public employee labor laws, resulting in nineteen (19) separate elections among county employees in that fiscal year.

Of note among the election petitions received in FY 1983 are petitions challenging the status of the existing bargaining agent for one of the major State bargaining units. In this matter, two organizations are seeking to challenge the bargaining status of the incumbent union. This is notable since it is the first time since the original organization of state employees into bargaining units that a challenging petition has survived the initial scrutiny to determine whether the petitions of the insurgent groups have met the threshold requirements of the Board's Rules and Procedures. Although such petitions have been filed in the past, they have been dismissed for failure to meet the threshold requirements. In the current filings, the Executive

Director has informed the parties that the threshold requirements have been satisfied and the Board is prepared to process the petitions further.

In addition to the thirty-one (31) election requests received by the Board in FY 1983, the Board received sixteen (16) requests for decertification/certification which involved challenges by a petitioning organization to unseat the incumbent organization as bargaining agent for the employees in the unit.

The Board also processed eight (8) straight decertification petitions in FY 1983 where no "new" union sought bargaining agent status. These petitions do not involve one labor organization seeking to unseat another but are merely attempts by a group of employees to deprive an incumbent organization of its standing as bargaining agent for the employees in the unit. Thus, the total election requests processed by the Board during FY 1983 was fifty-seven (57): thirty-one (31) election requests, sixteen (16) certification/decertification petitions, and eight (8) straight decertification petitions. Communities and public entities involved with representation requests during Fiscal Year 1983 were:

Auburn	Houlton	Orono
Bangor	Kennebunk	Saco
Boothbay/Boothbay Harbor	Kittery	South Berwick
Dover-Foxcroft	Lewiston	Southwest Harbor
East Millinocket	Limestone	South Portland
Falmouth	Lincoln	Turner
Farmington	Lisbon	Van Buren
Frenchville	Madison	Waterville
Hallowell	Ogunquit	Winthrop
Hodgdon		
Aroostook County	Northern Aroostook	
Franklin County	Vocational Board	
Hancock County	State of Maine	

The activities of the Panel of Mediators, more fully reviewed in the Annual Report of the Panel of Mediators submitted to the Governor pursuant to Section 965, paragraph 2, of Title 26, Maine Revised Statutes, is summarized for purposes of this report. The number of new requests received in FY 1983 totaled ninety-five (95). This compares with the eighty-three (83) requests for mediation services received in each of the prior two fiscal years, FY 1982 and FY 1981. However, the level of services provided by the Panel of Mediators is more fully appreciated when it is explained that the ninety-five (95) requests in actuality involved requests for mediation services for 119 separate bargaining units, several of the requests being

from bargaining agents that represent more than one group of employees, each of which have separate contracts and bargain separately. These figures for FY 1983 emphasize what has been happening over the past several years: the public sector collective bargaining community has broadly accepted and recognized the high level of skills acquired over the years by the dedicated members of the Panel of Mediators. This broad acceptance is reflected in the level of requests for the services of the Panel over the years and in the success rate of their efforts. In FY 1983, the Panel received 95 requests (119 separate units involved); in FY 1982, 83 requests; FY 1981, 83 requests; FY 1980, 98 requests; and FY 1979, 81 requests. In addition to the 95 new requests in Fiscal Year 1983, there were fifteen (15) carry-over requests from the prior fiscal year for a grand total of 110 requests requiring attention during the year.

In Fiscal Year 1983, the number of mediation-man-days expended on matters which had completed the mediation process was 138, compared with 144 in FY 1982. Comparison of the average mediation-man-days expended per case (of those matters which had completed the mediation process) was 1.74 for FY 1983 compared with a figure of 2.00 for FY 1982 and 1.83 for FY 1981. The slight differences are not considered to have statistical importance. The slight decline in average days expended per case is due in part to a few filings where separate petitions were filed for each of several bargaining units of the same employer, but the assigned mediator performed consolidated services for the several units rather than mediation for each unit separately. The same factor helps to explain somewhat the extraordinary success rate for the Panel of Mediators during Fiscal Year 1983. The success rate for matters which had completed the mediation process (matters still in mediation or settled prior to actual mediation are not counted in calculating the success ratio) reached a record 73%, surpassing the extraordinary success rate of 69% reached in FY 1982. It cannot be expected that these extraordinary ratios will always be maintained, although, in large measure, the successes achieved by the Panel of Mediators over the past few years is clear evidence of the high degree of competence and levels of experience represented by the individual members of the Panel.

Fact-finding is the second step in the typical dispute resolution sequence as set forth in the various labor relations statutes. In FY 1983, the number of requests for fact-finding decreased slightly from FY 1982. In each of these years, the filings were significantly below the record number reached in FY 1981. In FY

1983, the number of requests received was 28, down slightly from the 30 filed in FY 1982 and well below the record level of 49 in FY 1981. It is important to note that the extraordinary success rate of the mediation process in both FY 1983 and FY 1982 undoubtedly accounts for the reduction in fact-finding requests since matters not resolved in mediation very often go on to the fact-finding process. In addition to the 28 requests for fact-finding received in FY 1983, 7 requests entered in the prior fiscal year were scheduled and heard in the first months of Fiscal Year 1983. The entities involved in fact-finding requests during FY 1983 were:

Ashland	Gorham	Presque Isle
Augusta	Gray-New Gloucester	Raymond
Bangor	Hampden	Sanford
Bar Mills	Jay	South Paris
Biddeford	Lewiston	South Portland
Dixfield	Portland	Waterville
Frenchville		

Portland Water District  
State of Maine

The number of prohibited practice complaints filed with the Board during FY 1983 declined somewhat from the filings in FY 1982; there were thirty (30) new filings in FY 1983 as compared with thirty-five (35) in Fiscal Year 1982. Each is down from the near record level of 60 new complaints filed in FY 1981. There were thirteen (13) carry-over matters from the prior fiscal year which required the attention of Board personnel during Fiscal Year 1983, making a total of forty-three (43) complaint matters pending during the year. The Board devoted a total of thirty-three (33) days in hearing contested prohibited practice complaints during the fiscal year. This figure is entirely separate from days devoted to deliberation of cases and other matters which come before the full Board. A total of sixteen (16) cases were decided by the Board by formal decision during the year. Nine matters were settled or withdrawn, including carry-overs from the prior fiscal year. Cases not disposed of were in some phase of the pre-hearing or hearing process and a number had completed the full hearing stage and were waiting briefs, deliberation by the Board, or decision drafting and formal approval by the Board members.

As has been stated in past reports of the activities of this Board, the workload imposed on the Board's personnel and resources is not reflected in the base numbers. Each case which goes through the hearing and decision process requires, in addition to the complexities of processing, scheduling, and case management efforts,

considerable effort on the part of the staff attorney/examiners in case and issue analysis, legal research, and decision writing. Additional demands have been placed on this personnel commitment as the result of an increase in appellate activity from prior reporting periods.

Staff attorneys often are required to appear in either the Superior or Law Court to argue in support of Board decisions or policy. In FY 1983, Board attorneys appeared before the Superior or Law Court in a number of important matters. As an example of the importance of appellate cases, the Board has been confronted with issues involving the dismissal without hearing of a prohibited practice complaint alleging a violation of duty of fair representation by the bargaining agent, the question of whether the Portland Public Library is a "public employer" subject to the jurisdiction of the Maine Labor Relations Board, and whether reclassification and reallocation are negotiable matters under the State Employees Labor Relations Act. These issues are typical not only of cases which are the subject of appeal of Board decisions, but also typical of the broad range of issues brought before the Maine Labor Relations Board for resolution. The communities and entities involved in prohibited practice complaints filed with the Board during Fiscal Year 1983 were:

Auburn	Sanford
Bangor	Washburn
Hampden	Waterville
Lewiston	Winthrop
Limestone	Yarmouth
Portland	
Aroostook County	State of Maine
Cumberland County	University of Maine
Penobscot County	

The report may be summarized by the following chart which makes comparisons rated in terms of percentile changes in each category from one succeeding year to the next:

	<u>FY</u> <u>1978</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>1979</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>1981</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>1982</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>1983</u>
Unit Determination/ Clarification Requests Filed	+124%	-33%	+64%	-48%	+54%	+72%
Bargaining Agent Election Requests	+86%	+9%	+19%	-28.5%	+10%	-31%
Decertification Election Requests	-14%	+14%	-21%	+4%	+10%	+71%
Mediation Requests	-11%	unchg.	+21%	-15%	unchg.	+14.5%

Fact Finding Requests	unchg.	-25%	+12%	+29%	-38%	-6.6%
Prohibited Practice Complaints	-22%	+97%	-22%	+9%	-41%	-14%

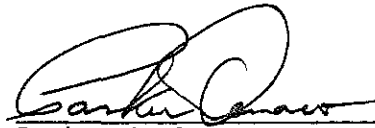
As suggested in the annual report for prior fiscal years, the above comparative review suggests the possibility that the Board has been in a period of either stabilization or manageable growth in terms of the overall demand for its services. The past few years have seen steady, and on occasion, remarkable, growth in the demand for services provided by the Board. Whether the trend toward the leveling off of the demand for services is the result of a relative "saturation" of the public sector community in organizational and representation terms is difficult to discern. The demand for services has reached cyclical levels in each segment of the Board's activity that placed severe pressure on the Board's limited staff and resources which has not been expended since the last position authorization in 1978. This high level of activity continues and, with the introduction of county employees into the stream of public sector collective bargaining, it is certainly reasonable to expect that the level of activity, taken as a whole, will remain at the levels established in the past three or four years, although records may not be set in any single area. As indicated in the report for FY 1982, this also requires us to consider the long-term eventuality of adding professional position(s) to the staff.

As has been expressed in prior annual reports, we are pleased to state that the Maine Labor Relations Board, through the processes established in the public sector labor relations statutes, is offering, and will continue to offer, effective and expeditious means for protecting employee rights, insuring compliance with the statutory mandates, and settling disputes through the prohibited practice and/or the dispute resolution processes provided under the statutes. We are pleased to observe once again that, contrary to trends elsewhere in the United States, public sector work stoppages or strikes have been insignificant during the past year, with none occurring involving any employees covered by any of the labor relations acts administered by the Board. It is apparent that the statutory scheme which is designed to provide a methodology for the peaceful and orderly resolution of labor disputes is working. We trust that a substantial part of this success may be attributable to high levels of confidence generated by the Board's clientele which

continues to place increasing reliance on the Board and the skills, competence, dedication, and professionalism of its staff.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this 1st day of July, 1983.

MAINE LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Parker A. Denaco", is written over a horizontal line.

Parker A. Denaco  
Executive Director