

NEGOTIATORS STILL AT ODDS OVER WHAT TO DO WITH INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

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There still hasn't been any definitive progress between labor and management representatives over the State Industrial Commission's functions being in or out of the new Department of Workforce Services.

After Thursday's meeting, which ended abruptly when labor representatives said they would meet quickly to further discuss various proposals regarding placement of the commission functions, it appears the sides are still far apart. Robert Gross, executive director of the new Department of Work-force Services, which won't become effective until July 1, 1997, said the Industrial Commission Work Group, a group equally divided between labor and management, will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday.

However, he left the door open to canceling the meeting if no progress is made toward reaching a compromise on where to place the current functions of the commission.

Shortly before Thursday's meeting, the labor representatives huddled and delayed the start of the meeting. Sen. Ed Mayne, D-West Valley City, who is president of the AFL-CIO, said his group was leaving in 10 minutes to discuss several proposals because labor representatives haven't made up their mind yet.

He noted that a report from the work group was accepted several days ago by a legislative interim committee, and those members suggested that the work group continue to meet.

In passing the measure that created the Department of Workforce Services earlier this year, the Legislature also created several work groups to study whether the Industrial Commission should be part of the new department or if the functions should be split up among existing agencies.

Gov. Mike Leavitt favors not creating any new agencies, so work group members are faced with several proposals that would have all of the commission's functions in the new department or splitting them up. But, so far, nobody can agree on what to do.

Meanwhile, at Thursday's meeting, Dennis Lloyd, attorney for the Workers Compensation Fund of Utah, the largest workers' compensation insurance provider in the state, presented another proposal that is designed as a compromise between the labor and management factions.

He is suggesting that Industrial Commission functions be divided among the Departments of Workforce Services, Commerce, Insurance and Administrative Services.

For example, the Industrial Commission's Anti-Discrimination and Labor divisions would go to Workforce Services along with the Administrative Services, Employment Service and Field Operations, Labor Market Information and Research, Legal Services and Unemployment Insurance division of the Utah Department of Employment Security.

He proposes to send the Utah Occupational Safety and Health and Safety divisions of the Industrial Commission to the Utah Department of Commerce. Lloyd is proposing to send the Industrial Commission's Adjudication and Industrial Accidents divisions, the Employer's Reinsurance Fund and Uninsured Employer's Fund to the Utah Insurance Department.

His proposal would send the Workforce Appeals Board to the Utah Department of Administrative Services. In other proposals being studied by the work group, the appeals board could consist of the three present industrial commissioners.