



CUPE participates in the 16<sup>th</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP16). Read more in our interview with National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux.

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CUPE National's quarterly publication

[cupe.ca](http://cupe.ca)

Winter 2011

# Counterpoint



## Steward Profile

CUPE 905 chief steward Nikki Sheppard says CUPE has given her many wonderful opportunities and encourages members to get involved in their union.

## The political is personal

BY WENDY FORBES

"It all started when a friend asked me to go to a young workers workshop – and I was hooked," says Nikki Sheppard, chief steward of CUPE 905, Unit 19 – Regional Municipality of York.

"I've worked for the region for 10 years and been a CUPE steward for nine years. In September of this year, I was elected chief steward of our unit," Nikki continues. "I guess I come by it honestly; my mother was a steward and a chief steward and my husband, Doug, is the unit chair – it's all in the family."

Nikki enjoys working with CUPE and, while it keeps her

busy, it's also very fulfilling.

"There's a huge payoff in knowing you're helping those who frequently think they have no voice.

"There's a wonderful sense of belonging; it feels like a big family. So many opportunities at CUPE are positive. We all have a common interest, a common mission and common values – we're all on the same page."

The main challenge Nikki and Doug deal with is time. Both have full-time jobs, are active in the union, run a home and are raising three children – Aaron, 16, Marley, 13 and Tyler who is 10.

"My union work cuts into weeknights and weekends, but

we manage," explains Nikki. "We take the kids with us as much as possible on information pickets, to workshops, conferences and conventions, and we have family who also help out if, for some reason, I can't take them with me."

Not only are the children exposed to union activities by various outings and trips, they are learning through experience about the labour movement and unionism.

The family has an "Earn Extra Money Agreement" that is a collective agreement signed by Doug as the employer and the three kids as the workers. Nikki [continued on page 6](#)

## Library workers' fight stops cuts

BY LOU ARAB

A proposal for cutbacks to the Calgary Public Library system was scrapped after workers fought to protect services.

In early fall of 2010, the Calgary Public Library was given orders to trim \$2.8 million from its annual budget. The cuts would have resulted in a dramatic reduction of service hours and the inability to open new branches. The Calgary Public Library is the second busiest public library in Canada, yet ranks 21<sup>st</sup> in funding.

CUPE 1169, which represents Calgary Public Library workers, launched an aggressive campaign, including radio ads, letter writing and social media tools to rally opposition to the cuts.

By the end of October 2010, the city announced that, in view of public opposition to the cutbacks, funding would be restored.

## Winner!

Mélissa Benoit, of Rockland, ON, has won the Flip video camera that was our prize in the Fall 2010 edition of Counterpoint. Her name was picked at random from those who entered the prize code on CUPE's national website after reading the newspaper online or getting a copy from their local.



# Counterpoint

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**National President Paul Moist presents a donation to the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 1005 strike fund. The Hamilton workers have been locked out by US Steel Canada Group since November 7, 2010.**

## Looking ahead to 2011

BY GREG TAYLOR

As Canada's economic recovery dominated the news in 2010, plans to pay down the post-stimulus deficits will be grabbing the headlines in 2011. In a year-end interview with Counterpoint, National President Paul Moist says CUPE will be front and centre in the year ahead ensuring public services aren't made the sacrificial lambs of economic recovery.

"The aftermath of the recession and stimulus spending has led some to take aim at the public sector," says Moist. "It's our responsibility to confront that sort of ideology...it should stiffen our resolve to stand up for public services."

Despite attacks, Moist says CUPE locals did relatively well at the bargaining table over the last year.

"Recession notwithstanding, CUPE continues to hold our own, especially when you look around the world at some of the attacks being waged on public service workers," says Moist. "There has been a lot of really tough bargaining, but with some really good settlements."

CUPE successes in 2010 reached beyond bargaining. Moist cites how CUPE continues to do top level research and advocacy on the perils of

privatization and CUPE members' involvement in municipal elections across Canada as highlights for 2010.

Moist also points to 2010 Year of the Steward as a big success for CUPE and a good sign for the union's future.

"Thousands of stewards, many of them new activists,

where our members deliver public services."

Moist says this advocacy work will be essential in at least five provincial elections expected in 2011, and a probable federal election. He says CUPE has a responsibility to make sure public services are key election issues, and health care

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**The aftermath of the recession and stimulus spending has led some to take aim at the public sector. It's our responsibility to confront that.**

have been through our re-vamped education program. We almost cannot keep up with the demand, which is a very good sign for the health of our union," says Moist.

2011 is shaping up to be as equally challenging a year as 2010 in some respects, but with many opportunities for progress.

Moist says CUPE must keep up its support for the broader labour movement. "If communities are going to lose pulp and paper jobs, if they are going to lose auto sector jobs, mining and other manufacturing jobs, this hurts our communities

will need to be a priority.

"Our job in every election this year is to make health care and the defense of public health care a top priority in campaigns," says Moist. "It's a fight worth fighting and we'll be calling on all sectors of CUPE to stand up for Canadians who value the public health care system."

Moist adds that a highlight of 2011 will be the 10 regional conventions, and the national convention being held October 31 to November 4 in Vancouver, B.C. "It will be a good opportunity for us to get together and take stock of the last two years."



## Manitoba virtual town hall a roaring success

By LIAM MARTIN

Twenty-four thousand Winnipeg residents experienced history as they participated in Manitoba's first ever virtual town hall meeting last fall. The topic of this conversation was the contentious move by the mayor and council to privatize Winnipeg's wastewater treatment plants.

In May 2010, the mayor and council blindly voted to enter into a secret 30-year deal with Veolia, a multinational company from France, to handle wastewater treatment plant upgrades. This decision was rushed through council despite calls for greater transparency from CUPE, community organizations and the media.

In the municipal election this past fall, it became evident that this important issue was not going to get the attention it deserved. An unconventional approach was going to be necessary in order to tell the Veolia story. CUPE and other groups united to host a virtual town hall featuring Winnipeg water experts and activists from Indianapolis and California who phoned in to speak about the problems their home cities have had with Veolia over the years.

The hour-long conversation allowed Winnipeg residents the opportunity to ask questions directly to the guests, similar to a call-in radio show. In the end, this event successfully forced the candidates for mayor and the media to discuss this issue in the final days of the campaign.

[cupe.ca/privatization](http://cupe.ca/privatization)



Angela Connors, centre, member of the CUPE Ontario Aboriginal Council, receives a City of Toronto community services award from former mayor David Miller and sitting councillor Paula Fletcher.

## CUPE 4308 member wins Aboriginal Affairs Award

By WENDY FORBES

In November, CUPE 4308 member Angela Connors, volunteer and special events coordinator at Central Neighbourhood House in Toronto, received one of the City of Toronto's prized community service awards – the Aboriginal Affairs Award.

An Ojibway from the Saugeen First Nation Beaver Clan, Angela is a member of the CUPE Ontario Aboriginal Council and is a hard

working community advocate for First Nations peoples. A Toronto-born community leader, she is passionate about helping others through building bridges between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Among her most recent work was contributing to the establishment of the Reva Jewell Aboriginal Supportive Housing complex that will open in 2011. A not-for-profit housing facility, it will include 16

tenants, who are either homeless or have precarious living spaces.

Angela attended the first Aboriginal gathering held by CUPE's National Aboriginal Council that focused on water. A self-proclaimed water-warrior, Angela has worked to raise awareness of serious water issues including the continued impact of mercury poisoning on the Grassy Narrows First Nation.

[cupe.ca/equality](http://cupe.ca/equality)



Nicholas Keller

## Report shows alarming increase in people needing food banks

Paul Moist says a new Food Banks Canada report reveals an alarming increase in food bank usage across Canada. The *HungerCount 2010* report shows a 28 per cent increase in food bank visits over the last two years – the largest increase on record.

The report also shows more than a third of people needing food bank assistance are less than 18 years old.

For more information, watch the *HungerCount 2010* video report at [foodbankscanada.ca](http://foodbankscanada.ca).



## Work bytes



**CUPE 1550 members celebrate Health Care Support Workers' Week at the Health Sciences Centre. 2010 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> year that the Manitoba government has formally recognized the valuable contribution CUPE members make in Manitoba's health care system.**

### British Columbia

Bargaining continues in the K-12, college, university and community health sectors. Community social services bargaining stalled just before the holidays. On the campaign front, CUPE's community health sector launched [howcupehelps.org](http://howcupehelps.org) and the B.C. K-12 Presidents' Council launched [bcschools.cupe.ca](http://bcschools.cupe.ca).

Bargaining is underway for some municipal locals while others prepare to bargain. Local and provincial government interest in shared services is on the increase, leading to concerns about privatization and contracting out.

CUPE BC is preparing to launch a "Ten Per Cent Shift" campaign aimed at improving local economies ([tenpercentshift.ca](http://tenpercentshift.ca)). CUPE sponsored a Local Prosperity Report by Think City ([thinkcity.ca](http://thinkcity.ca)), looking at local governments' finances and recommending new revenue streams – some of which are "local first" initiatives.

[cupe.ca/british-columbia](http://cupe.ca/british-columbia)

### Alberta

About 100 employees of St. Thomas Health Care Centre in Edmonton have voted 71 per

cent in favour of joining CUPE. The health care centre provides long-term care and general health services and serves the mainly francophone neighbourhood of Bonnie Doon on Edmonton's south side.

An Environics poll commissioned by CUPE found that two thirds of Albertans want spending on public services maintained or increased, with less than one in 10 calling for cutbacks. It also found that three times as many voters would prefer increased taxes to protect public services.

A poll commissioned for the Alberta Conservative party and leaked to the media revealed surprising results when participants were asked if government should focus on social programs or eliminating the deficit. Sixty per cent favoured increased funding for social programs, while just 29 per cent supported reducing the deficit.

[cupe.ca/alberta](http://cupe.ca/alberta)

### Saskatchewan

"What's the point in having a booming economy if everyone doesn't benefit?"

That's the question CUPE Saskatchewan President Tom Graham poses in response to a

new report, *Let's Do Something About Poverty*, which shows 45 per cent of Aboriginal children in the province live in low-income families.

CUPE Saskatchewan is demanding the SaskParty government hike the minimum wage and index it to the cost of living. The minimum wage remains frozen at \$9.25 an hour for the second year.

Theresa Lanigan and her co-workers at the Prince Albert Safe Shelter for Women see the painful effects of poverty at their workplace.

"People are getting poorer and that creates a lot of pressure on families when they can't feed their kids or pay the bills," says Lanigan, a support service worker at the shelter and president of CUPE 4568. "There's always more violence when there is no money."

Increasing the minimum wage would definitely help ease the strain, she says, "because if you're only paid \$9.25 an hour, the bills pile up."

[cupe.ca/saskatchewan](http://cupe.ca/saskatchewan)

### Manitoba

The RESPECT campaign unveiled its second video, "So

*Much with So Little: Who Cares for the Caregivers?"* It features CUPE members who work in women's shelters and sexual assault crisis units in Winnipeg. The premiere was held on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in November.

The Manitoba government has now earmarked funding for a pension plan for child care workers. And CUPE is offering child care workers and their employers an opportunity to join the union's Multi-Sector Pension Plan as a better option, than a defined contribution scheme.

[cupe.ca/manitoba](http://cupe.ca/manitoba)

### Ontario

The fall was dominated by the provincial government's so-called consultation process over the announcement of a proposed two-year wage freeze and no increase in funding to broader public sector agencies for wage increases. The provincial government imposed a wage freeze on non-union and management employees, and canvassed public sector unions for "cooperation." The government's discussions with the unions did not result in an





**National secretary-treasurer, Claude Généreux joined 60 union activists at a recent demonstration in support of two Ste-Anne-de-Madawaska, N.B., municipal employees who have been locked out since June 16, 2010.**

agreement on a proposed wage freeze. In fact, arbitrated and negotiated settlements in the province continue to be in the range of two to three per cent, in spite of the chilling effect the government's message is having on employers. CUPE continues to defend our right to free collective bargaining and our locals continue to fight concession demands.

[cupe.ca/ontario](http://cupe.ca/ontario)

#### Quebec

In September, members of the bus drivers' union of the Société de transport de Laval (STL) voted to join CUPE. In a vote involving 446 of the 497 union members, 88.5 per cent chose CUPE.

In October, Michel Parent, president of Montreal's blue-collar union CUPE 301, signed a new collective agreement for the approximately 5,000 manual workers.

White-collar workers with the City of Montreal CUPE 429 are pursuing their campaign entitled: "*Montréal, fais une ville de toi!*" (Montreal, pull yourself together). They have moved on to phase three, which includes a video and a petition calling for

amendments to the city charter. [cupe.ca/quebec](http://cupe.ca/quebec)

#### New Brunswick

In the late fall, more than 100 union and community activists attended a one-day forum about the New Brunswick economy. The forum allowed people from different backgrounds to share their views on the economy. CUPE economist Toby Sanger told the participants that contrary to what the business community says, the province's debt ratio is relatively low compared to other provinces. The participants concluded that the province should return to a progressive tax system by hiking corporate tax rates, fully tax capital gains, and invest in public services, communities and people.

[cupe.ca/new-brunswick](http://cupe.ca/new-brunswick)

#### Prince Edward Island

Following three years of working together, CUPE members at the University of Prince Edward Island, along with IBEW 1432 and the UPEI Faculty Association finally convinced the UPEI Board of Governors to change and improve the UPEI Pension Plan. The unions had to

be doggedly persistent to convince the employer that they had the right to bargain pensions in the first place. This level of cooperation for all union groups on campus was unprecedented.

[cupe.ca/pei](http://cupe.ca/pei)

#### Nova Scotia

Long-term care workers in Nova Scotia nursing homes achieved parity with their counterparts in the acute care sector during their recent round of bargaining. Following lead-table negotiations, members of CUPE 1562 voted to accept a 31-month contract, which will flow into the 36 long-term care facilities represented by CUPE across the province.

[cupe.ca/nova-scotia](http://cupe.ca/nova-scotia)

#### Newfoundland and Labrador

CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador held open and frank discussions with the province's Minister of Industry, Trade and Rural Development regarding the proposed Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

Under CETA, European companies would have rights similar to those that North American companies have under NAFTA.

At the meeting the union expressed its concerns in a number of areas, including European demands for limits on the use of provincial purchasing to support local jobs and businesses. These demands will harm job creation and public services.

[cupe.ca/newfoundland](http://cupe.ca/newfoundland)

#### HEU

More than 600 health care and social services workers gathered in Vancouver in late October to attend the 27<sup>th</sup> biennial convention of the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU).

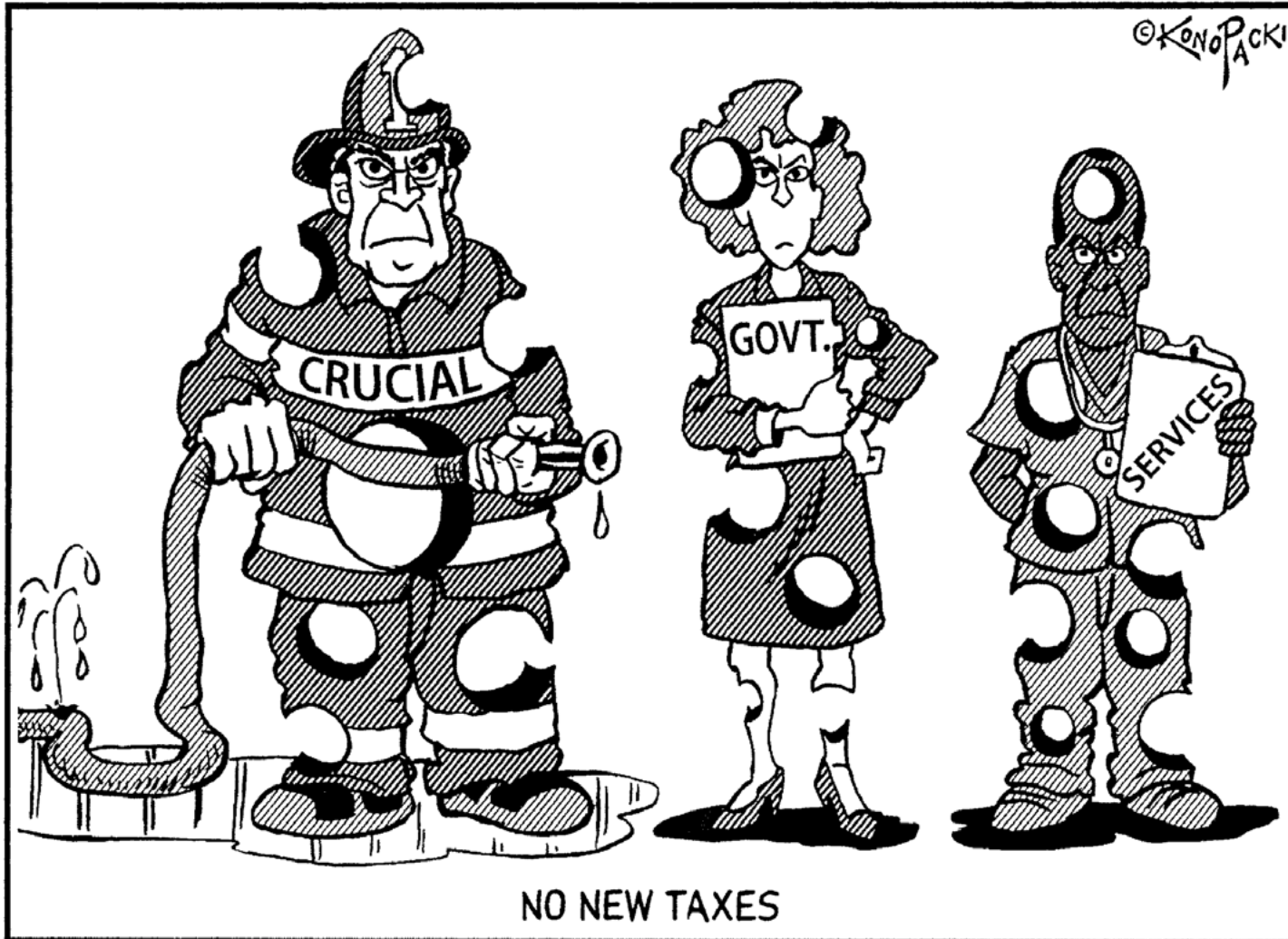
Delegates adopted a two-year strategic plan that emphasizes local building and made sweeping changes to the union's bargaining structure to accommodate the rapid growth of bargaining units and sectors where HEU members work.

The union has organized more than 2,500 members over the last two years.

Ken Robinson and Donisa Bernardo were re-elected as president and financial secretary respectively – and Judy Darcy was ratified as the union's secretary-business manager, a post she's held since 2005.

[heu.org](http://heu.org)





## Taxes – let's make them fair

**Canadians must resist being distracted by the so-called "crisis" of public deficits and debts and call for a more progressive tax system**

BY TOBY SANGER

Financial markets, the media and politicians are raising alarms about a new crisis of public deficits and pushing for cuts to public spending in upcoming budgets.

They seem to have quickly forgotten that these deficits are the result of an economic crisis caused by financial market excess, speculation, deregulation—as well as outright fraud—and an increasingly unbalanced and inequitable economic system.

Little is being done to fix what really caused the crisis. Instead we're being distracted by this new "crisis" of public deficits and debts. In reality, while Canadian government deficits certainly have increased

in the past three years, our public debt ratio as a share of our economy is still very manageable and lower than it was a decade ago.

What should be more of a concern is rising household debts, which reached a record level of almost 150 per cent of household income this year. This debt is caused primarily by real wages that have been stagnant and falling, not keeping up with the rising cost of living.

At the same time, Canadian governments are at an extreme in focusing almost entirely on spending cuts to reduce their deficits. Many other countries have more balanced deficit-fighting plans. These include tax increases on high incomes and

on the finance sector to have those who caused the crisis pay for some of the costs.

In contrast, a number of Canadian governments are doing the opposite: reducing corporate income taxes and shifting the cost to the public through higher sales taxes. This will result in a more regressive tax system and increased inequality.

Instead of further regressive changes, we need a more progressive tax system that closes loopholes and taxes different sources of income fairly. This would not only raise revenue for badly-needed public services and investments, it would also improve economic equality, stability and growth.

Just a few fair tax measures could generate well over \$20 billion a year for the federal government. These include:

### Fully tax capital gains and stock options

Executives and investors often pay tax at half the rate ordinary Canadians are charged on their wages. If this income was taxed at the regular rate, the public treasury would regain \$8 to \$12 billion more annually.

### New tax bracket on higher incomes

Canada's top federal income tax bracket of 29 per cent is below the top U.S. federal tax rate of 33 per cent—and far below the top 80 per cent tax rate the Canadian government charged on incomes of over \$250,000 in 1948. Increasing Canada's top rate to 32 per cent—still below the U.S.—would raise over \$1.6 billion a year for programs and services.

### Financial activities tax

Most financial activities are exempt from value-added taxes such as the GST and Harmonized Sales Taxes (HST). A five per cent tax on profits and remuneration of the financial sector, as suggested by the IMF, would generate about \$5 billion a year in Canada.

### Freeze or restore corporate tax

Canada now has the lowest corporate income tax rates in the G7. Freezing the federal rate at 18 per cent instead of cutting it to 15 per cent would save \$4.9 billion annually; restoring the rate to 21 per cent would generate \$9.7 billion.



## Unionism a family affair for CUPE 905 chief steward

*continued from page 1*

is the family chief steward. No job is paid less than \$10.25 per hour, the going minimum wage in Ontario.

"This doesn't take the place of their regular chores, like keeping their rooms clean and jobs that most kids do around the house," Nikki said. "I wrote this contract for jobs they can do to earn extra money."

Nikki has also written a handbook—*CUPE Union Steward Handbook*—for the stewards of CUPE 905. The 20-page manual gives a short history of unions in Canada, a description of the Ontario Labour Relations Board and the Employment Standards Act, and a guide to the role of stewards.

"CUPE has given me a wonderful opportunity to meet many,

and diverse, people from all over at various functions. I have lots of opportunity to help people and to protect the rights of our members.

"My advice to members is to get active in the union, to get involved, and don't ever hesitate to ask questions if there's something you don't know," Nikki concluded.

[cupe.ca/steward-spotlight](http://cupe.ca/steward-spotlight)



Stronger Together



# Health care sector meeting tackles common myths



Photo: Josh Berson

**Dr. Robert Woollard, vice-president of Canadian Doctors for Medicare, was among the speakers at the CUPE Health Care Sector Meeting in Victoria, B.C.**

CUPE held a national health sector conference in Victoria, British Columbia this past fall. A number of experts addressed the conference, including the former British Secretary of State for Health Frank Dobson. All of the experts agreed on the importance of debunking several myths, providing evidence that costs within the public system are not out of control, that privatized services do not cost less than public services—and may cost more—and, finally, that privatization does not shorten wait times in the public sector, but rather exacerbates them. CUPE will soon launch a series of conference videos. Watch them by visiting [cupe.ca/health-care](http://cupe.ca/health-care).

## Make your workplace bottled water free



BY HEATHER FRASER

On March 10, communities across Canada will be mobilizing to ban the bottle and reclaim public water. March 10 marks the second annual *Bottled Water Free Day* and it's never too soon to start your campaign to ban bottled water in your workplace.

As leaders in the fight against water privatization, CUPE is working with the Canadian Federation of Students, the Sierra Youth Coalition, Development & Peace and the Polaris Institute to promote **Bottled Water Free Day**.

It's increasingly difficult to access public drinking water in Canadian workplaces. Public fountains aren't being maintained – or installed in new buildings. And bottled water corporations are moving in to corner the market, replacing public infrastructure with private vending machines.

This year, CUPE and our partner organizations are pushing hard to make university and college campuses and municipal workplaces bottled water free.

Already 81 municipalities and 10 university and college campuses have taken action toward being bottled water free. But much more can be done.

Take the tap water pledge today to add your voice to the growing number of Canadians who want to protect and promote access to public drinking water.

**Get involved in Bottled Water Free Day:**

- ◆ **Encourage** your members, networks, friends and colleagues to sign the pledge and endorse the campaign by visiting [www.bottledwaterfreeday.ca](http://www.bottledwaterfreeday.ca).
- ◆ **Organize** an event in the build-up to and on Bottled Water Free Day. Materials and ideas are available on the website.
- ◆ **Contact** your city councilors, school board trustees and university/college presidents and ask them to make the Bottled Water Free Day Pledge.

**To get started visit** [www.bottledwaterfreeday.ca](http://www.bottledwaterfreeday.ca).



## CPP OR RRSPs?

### Moist says improving CPP is the best way to help Canadians save more for retirement

BY STEPHEN HOWARD

CUPE will work with the Canadian Labour Congress to keep up the pressure on the Harper government to deliver on a promise to improve Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits, says CUPE National President Paul Moist.

Moist was critical of the double dealing of Conservative Finance Minister Jim Flaherty for stalling CPP improvements in favour of a private pooled pension scheme that is good for banks and mutual fund companies—but bad for Canadians.

Flaherty made the u-turn just ahead of a pre-Christmas meeting with provincial finance ministers.

"A pooled registered pension plan fails to address the real needs of Canadians not able to save for retirement," says Moist. "It doesn't even require employers to make any contributions and fulfill their responsibility to help fund the retirement needs of their workers."

"Improving the CPP is the best way to help Canadians save more for retirement," he says.

The Conservatives were roundly criticized for kowtowing to big banks and insurance companies and putting the private pooled scheme on the table.

"Harper's proposal will leave Canadians exposed to gouging by the mutual fund industry, who charge the highest administration fees in the world," adds Moist.

A recent CUPE/Environics poll shows 74 per cent of Canadians who don't make RRSP contributions aren't able to do so because they can't afford it.



# A just transition and climate change



An interview with Claude Généreux, national secretary-treasurer of CUPE

BY PIERRE DUCASSE

**Pierre Ducasse:** CUPE attended the last UN conference on climate change. Why is it important for CUPE to attend these conferences?

**Claude Généreux:** Last year in Copenhagen, some delegates were still questioning the science behind climate change. This year, in Cancun, the thinking was more advanced and the delegates were looking for more concrete commitments.

It was important for us to be there, firstly, to put pressure on our own federal government to participate in good faith and not block an international consensus. That took some effort, but it was partially successful. The conference ended with an agreement.

It's also important to work with our allies in the International Trade Union Confederation. More than 200 trade unionists from around the world were in attendance. CUPE sent a delegation of five and our contribution was useful and appreciated by the other unions.

We also worked closely with civil society organizations, it was an opportunity for us to network and think about future partnerships.

**PD:** One of the key issues for organized labour is the principle of a "just transition." Can you explain what that is?

**CG:** In order to really deal with climate change, we need to move towards a new, green economy. That will entail major transformations in the economy, and we want the transition period to be equitable.

This is where environmental issues and trade unionism

intersect. If the economy has to change, we need green jobs that are also good jobs with decent working conditions.

The message is clear: Unions must be involved in the efforts to curb climate change. We want to be a part of the solution, while protecting workers and our communities.

**PD:** Has there been any progress on that front?

**CG:** In Copenhagen, we managed to have a reference to "a just transition and decent jobs" included in the official texts. But on arriving in Cancun, we learned that the passage had been removed. By applying pressure and mounting a well-coordinated campaign at the conference, the unions managed to get the passage reinserted.

**PD:** What does all this mean for us here in Canada?

**CG:** In the last five years, the Government of Canada has had two different emission targets,

**If the economy has to change, we need green jobs that are also good jobs with decent working conditions.**

three action plans and four changes of ministers. It's total chaos.

Canada had committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by six per cent by 2012, as compared to 1990 levels. Instead, our emissions have increased by 24 per cent. We're 30 per cent off target, and in the wrong direction!

We want a real action plan from the federal government. Some countries that are rich in oil and gas, like Norway, have managed to grow economically while reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. It's possible to accomplish that in a gradual and progressive manner, without damaging the economy. Here in Canada, Prince Edward Island and Quebec have reduced their emissions by one per cent compared to 1990, and Quebec's gross domestic product (GDP) has increased by 46 per cent at the same time.

[cupe.ca/claude-generoux/](http://cupe.ca/claude-generoux/) podcast

## National Executive Board highlights from December meeting

Our National Executive Board (NEB) met on December 15-16, 2010 in Ottawa. These are the highlights of their deliberations and decisions.

### Support for USWA local 1005

The NEB passed a resolution unanimously to contribute \$10,000 to the USWA Local 1005 strike fund. Nine hundred members of USWA 1005 have been locked out by their American employer since November for refusing company concessions to their pension plan.

US Steel wants all new hires enrolled in a defined contributions pension plan rather than the current defined benefits plan. It also wants to remove indexing for all current and future retirees under the existing defined benefits pension.

The NEB resolution calls on the federal government to extend employment insurance benefits to those locked out, and for changes to the rules governing foreign takeover's to better protect workers.

### CUPE's 2011 Budget

National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux presented the 2011 budget which was

passed unanimously by the NEB. Due to the economic downturn, revenue growth in CUPE is lower than it has been in the last number of years.

At the same time, CUPE needs to ensure we have the resources to continue to fight to protect our collective agreements and public services. This year's budget walks the line between prudence and boldness.

### Economic Climate for Bargaining

Brother Toby Sanger, CUPE's senior economist, presented his quarterly report on the economy illustrating that the outlook for 2011 continues to weaken with growth now expected to average 2.3 per cent.

This is not the time for governments to pull back on economic stimulus measures. Progressive taxes and higher wages can both reduce deficits and also reduce economic instability.

The report also summarizes recent developments for the economy, jobs market, inflation, and wage settlements. Find out details on all this and more by accessing the quarterly report at [www.cupe.ca/economics](http://www.cupe.ca/economics).

## CUPE launches national public services survey

BY HEATHER FRASER

In communities and workplaces across Canada our valued public services are at risk of being handed over to private interests. Whether it's health care, garbage pick-up, water and sewage or child care, many services are threatened by contracting-out and privatization.

Bringing work back in-house is an important strategy in fighting privatization. CUPE has launched an online survey to find

out more about what CUPE locals are doing to contract-in important services. By exposing the problems of contracting-out and making the case for contracting-in, we can protect public services. Vital community services belong in public hands so that high quality, affordable, locally controlled services can be delivered to the public.

Tell us your story. Take the survey today by visiting [cupe.ca/contracting-in](http://cupe.ca/contracting-in).

## PRIVATIZATION WATCH

Privatization Watch is a monthly bulletin tracking the latest news about P3s, contracting out and public alternatives to privatization.

Subscribe at [lists.cupe.ca/privatizationwatch](http://lists.cupe.ca/privatizationwatch).