

INSIDE:

Calgary's Sodexo hospital workers
CUPE 40 school members
Pay equity for Sask. health care

Tabletalk - your bargaining resource - will publish four times a year. Its goal is to give CUPE Local bargaining committees, elected officers and servicing representatives useful information for preparing - and negotiating - bargaining demands. Tabletalk's three-hole punch style makes it easy to keep in reference binders. Feel free to make copies or use the material to fit your members' needs. Comments welcome at research@cupe.ca.

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Honouring other picket lines: solidarity in New Brunswick and beyond

A "CUPE Solidarity Pact...will commit CUPE local unions to take action in direct support of any other CUPE local union under attack." ...from the Strategic Directions Document approved at the 2003 CUPE national convention.

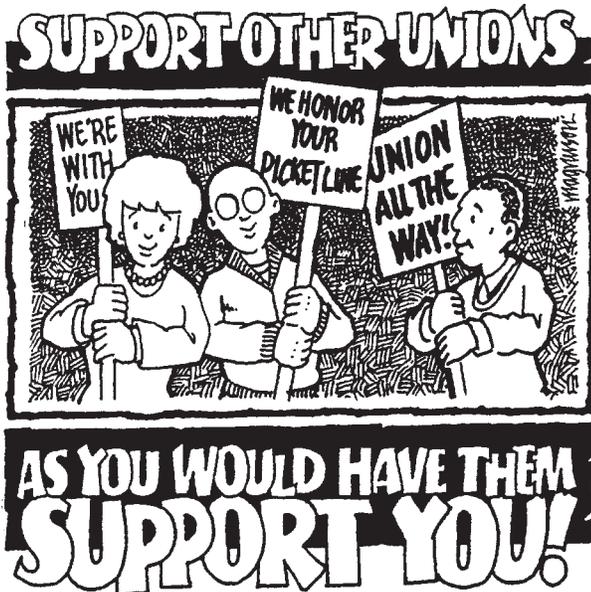
New Brunswick is the most recent province to take these words to heart! Secondary pickets, or honouring other picket lines, are part of our labour history here in Canada and around the world. During the 1990s, the Liverpool Dockworkers with their "flying pickets" set an example of effective solidarity.

Here is some background history about solidarity agreements and how CUPE locals and other unions have used them with success. At the end, you'll find examples of language that CUPE locals have negotiated to help protect their members.

New Brunswick and CUPE 1251

In the 1990s, 20,000 CUPE members in New Brunswick went on a province-wide general strike to stop the McKenna government from breaking signed collective agreements and imposing concessions. The workers went back to work with their signed collective agreements intact. Building on this history, today if a local union in the province has its bargaining rights legislated away and a collective agreement imposed, CUPE New Brunswick commits that every local union will win support for strike action.

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CUPE 1251's story is an important example of how solidarity pacts can work. In October 2003, when CUPE 1251, the New Brunswick Council of Provincial Institutional Unions (including community colleges), was coordinating their bargaining, a solidarity pact was taken to regional membership meetings. There it was decided that all locals would move toward a general strike if CUPE 1251 was legislated back to work with an imposed settlement.

This solidarity pact allowed CUPE 1251 to set up meaningful negotiations for the first time in months. After three days of marathon negotiations, a tentative agreement was reached. The contract, with an increase of 14.67 per cent over 4.5 years, was ratified by 72 per cent of the membership on October 26, 2003.

Secondary Pickets: The Liverpool Dockworkers

Throughout the nineties, the story of the Liverpool Dockworkers demonstrated great international solidarity. With the motto, 'the world is our picket line,' the Liverpool Dockworkers, who had refused unpaid overtime, created "flying pickets." They set up picket lines in countries around the world – Australia, Spain, Japan, the U.S. – even joining with the Longshoremen's union *Syndicat des Débardeurs du Québec* for a picket in Montreal.

Money was raised so Liverpool Dockworkers could actually fly to these ports to set up picket lines. Other workers demonstrated their solidarity by respecting the Dockworkers' pickets.

The Liverpool Dockworkers had a history of solidarity. Honouring a call by Greenpeace, they had earlier refused to handle nuclear waste, as well as apartheid goods from South Africa and goods from Chile where thousands of workers and students were imprisoned and put to death.

Solidarity: a CUPE tradition

CUPE locals have a history of supporting each other. In British Columbia in 2002, CUPE locals voted to back collective action to fight the Campbell Liberal government's cuts and attacks on workers.

CUPE B.C. members voted to support and defend each other up to and including job action. A political protest that would include walking off the job, can be triggered by anti-worker provincial legislation or privatization initiatives.

CUPE has also demonstrated solidarity with other unions, and they with us, throughout the country. The Quebec Common Front is a very successful example of how CUPE Quebec has coordinated bargaining with other public sector unions.

Public and para-public sector unions from the Quebec Federation of Labour (QFL), Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) and Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) recently began bargaining with the Charest government. Together, the three labour federations represent more than 300,000 workers, the vast majority of whom are women. QFL protests against the Liberal Charest government's attacks on workers and their unions have drawn hundreds of thousands. Union activists from Quebec's social affairs sector recently adopted an action plan that includes a series of general strike votes.

New Brunswick Solidarity Pact

CUPE New Brunswick has pushed for further solidarity in their province. Last October at CUPE's request, the New Brunswick Federation of Labour called a meeting of all public and private sector unions to discuss plugging all unions into CUPE's Coordinated Bargaining Program.

A provincial coalition was formed to develop an action plan to protect free collective bargaining and it has announced that legislation stripping workers' rights will not be tolerated. Representing more than 65,000 workers, the coalition includes almost every union in the province including CUPE, major public and private sector unions, as well as some unions not affiliated to the provincial federation of labour. The N.B. coalition is distributing a joint newsletter to all union members which outlines the importance of free collective bargaining. (For more information on CUPE New Brunswick, go to cupe.nb.ca) ■

Language on solidarity and honouring other picket Lines

Negotiating collective agreement language to help your local demonstrate solidarity is important. What follows are a few local union examples of CUPE language on solidarity and secondary pickets (honouring other picket lines).

Not crossing other CUPE locals' picket lines if "unsafe" with pay

CUPE 27, a school board local with the Greater Essex County District in Windsor, Ontario, has negotiated language protecting a member's right to honour another CUPE member's picket line without discipline:

"...When an employee chooses not to cross a CUPE picket line...the Board may assign the employee to another shift and/or work location where no picket line exists. The Board agrees not to take any disciplinary action against any employees who cannot be reassigned other than the deduction of wages and benefits during the period they are not at work..."

If the picket line is deemed "unsafe," and the supervisor cannot move the employee to another shift, no wages or benefits will be deducted:

"...If an employee is prevented from crossing the picket line, the employee shall immediately contact the appropriate supervisor who will have responsibility for providing safe passage of the employee to the workplace. There will be no loss of wages in cases where the supervisor is unable to provide safe passage to the workplace...the supervisor may assign the employee to another shift and/or work location." (September 1, 2001 to August 31, 2003.)

No discipline for crossing other picket lines

CUPE 1698 at Fraser Valley Regional Library in B.C. has language where members can observe picket lines and not receive discipline:

"Article 28

28.01 ...Failure to cross...shall not be considered a violation of this Agreement, nor shall it

be grounds for disciplinary action. Pay for such loss of time shall be at the discretion of the Employer." (January 1, 2001 to December 31, 2005)

Not crossing other picket lines, without pay

CUPE 3338 at Simon Fraser University in B.C. has language where members can respect other picket lines without pay:

"Article 4.05 Observation of Picket Lines

- a) Observation No Breach: Failure of an employee to cross an established picket line shall not be considered a breach of this Agreement. No employee shall be discriminated against for her/his failure to cross an established picket line. Employees who observe picket lines shall be recorded as being absent without pay.
- b) Other Bona Fide Picket Lines: Where the picket line is a result of actions of persons other than the CUPE Local 3338 members, the CUPE Executive will advise the University whether or not they regard the picket line which has been set up as a bona fide picket line." (April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2005)

Not required to be a replacement worker

CUPE 3903 at York University in Toronto, Ontario, has negotiated language that allows members to not perform work of another bargaining unit with the same employer, no matter the union:

"Article 9 – No Strikes/No Lockouts

9.02 In the event that any employee of York University, other than those covered by this agreement, engages in a lawful strike and maintains picket lines, employees covered by this agreement shall not be required to perform work normally done by that employee." (November 13, 2002 to August 31, 2005)

Unionizing private companies doing public work: Sodexho hospital housekeepers in Calgary negotiate first agreement

After voting to join CUPE 182 in December 2002, 300 housekeepers in Calgary, Alberta, have a first collective agreement that will give them a 35 per cent wage increase over two years along with many benefit improvements.

Cleaning has been privatized at the Peter Lougheed Centre, Rockyview General Hospital and Colonel Belcher Hospital where the 300 members work. The private for-profit multinational Sodexho now holds the cleaning contract and is their employer.

The majority of the workers are new Canadians and speak English as a second language. Currently more than half work full-time hours but were categorized by Sodexho as part-time. The new contract means that all employees who work full-time hours will receive recognition for full-time employment and become eligible for health benefits and sick leave.

In addition, overtime will be paid to all who work more than the prescribed number of full-time hours in a day. Currently employees only receive overtime after 44 hours per week and many employees were required to give up shifts because they worked extra hours.

Each employee who currently earns \$7.90 per hour will get a 35 per cent increase over the next two years retroactive to November 1, 2003. Wage increases over the first year range from 21 to 32 per cent.



CUPE also represents Sodexho workers in Lethbridge, Alberta, through CUPE 408. Organizing privatized public service work is one of CUPE's priorities as outlined in the Strategic Directions Document: "...we will organize the contract workers and/or privatized service and engage in effective campaigns to win the strongest possible collective agreement rights for these workers." ■

Calgary public school members with CUPE 40 win wage gain

Custodial and maintenance staff with the Calgary Public School Board have ratified a new two-year contract with an eight per cent pay raise. The school support workers are members of CUPE 40. The new agreement is retroactive to September 1, 2003, giving the CUPE members a four per cent wage increase this year and four per cent November 1, 2004.

The wage increase is significant since inflation (CPI) for Calgary was at 1.6 per cent in January 2004, 0.9 per cent for Alberta and 1.2 per cent for Canada. Alberta wage settlements for 2003 were 3.4 per cent for the public sector and 1.4 per cent for the private sector.

The workers' last contract was for four years with increases of two per cent a year for three years and 2.5 per cent in the fourth year. Prior to that, CUPE 40 negotiated a three-year contract with a five per cent raise.

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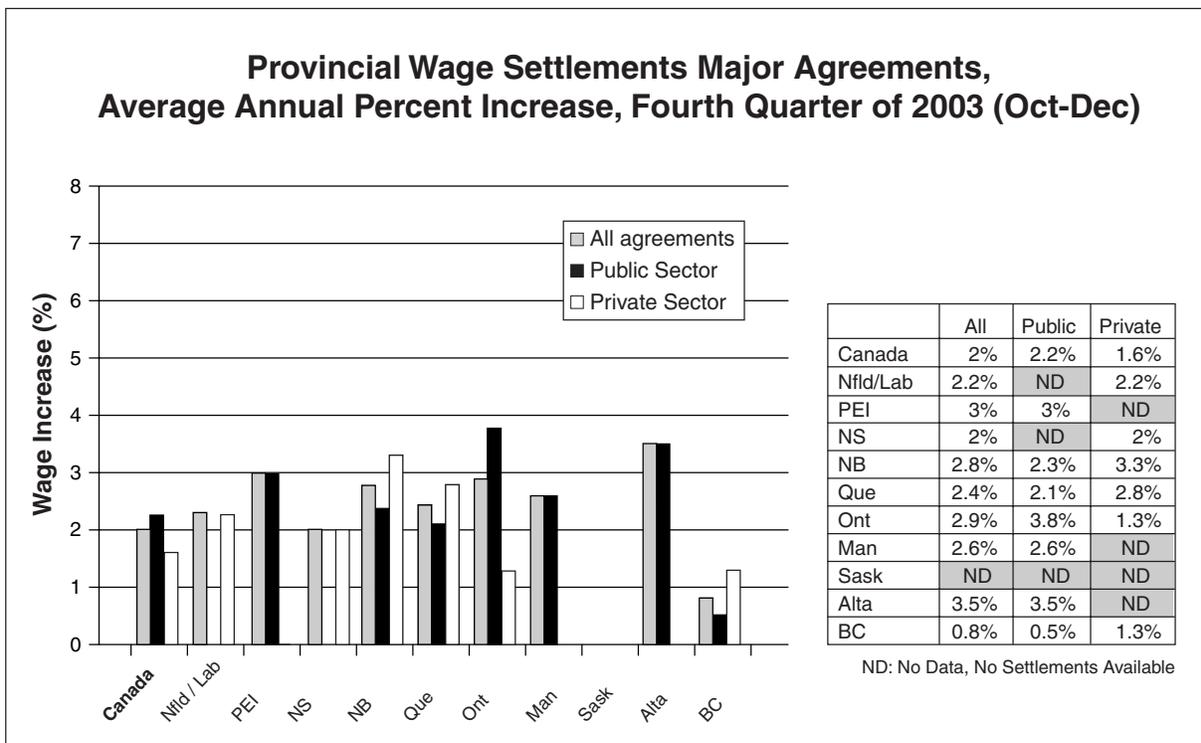
Mechanic Sub-Foreman, Journeyman Locksmith, Journeyman Welder and Welder Sub-Foreman received an increase of \$1.00 per hour. At ratification, the basic Watchman/Security rate increased by \$1.00 per hour.

Next, the local plans to step up the pressure for adequate funding to meet real staffing needs. In 2000, a Calgary physician condemned the conditions of Calgary schools, making a direct connection between the cleanliness of schools and the medical condition of a number of his patients. At that time, the board was recommending hiring additional caretakers.

On top of the eight per cent increase, wages for some trades and for the weekend watch have increased to reflect market rates. Retroactive to September 1, 2003, Journeyman Mechanic,

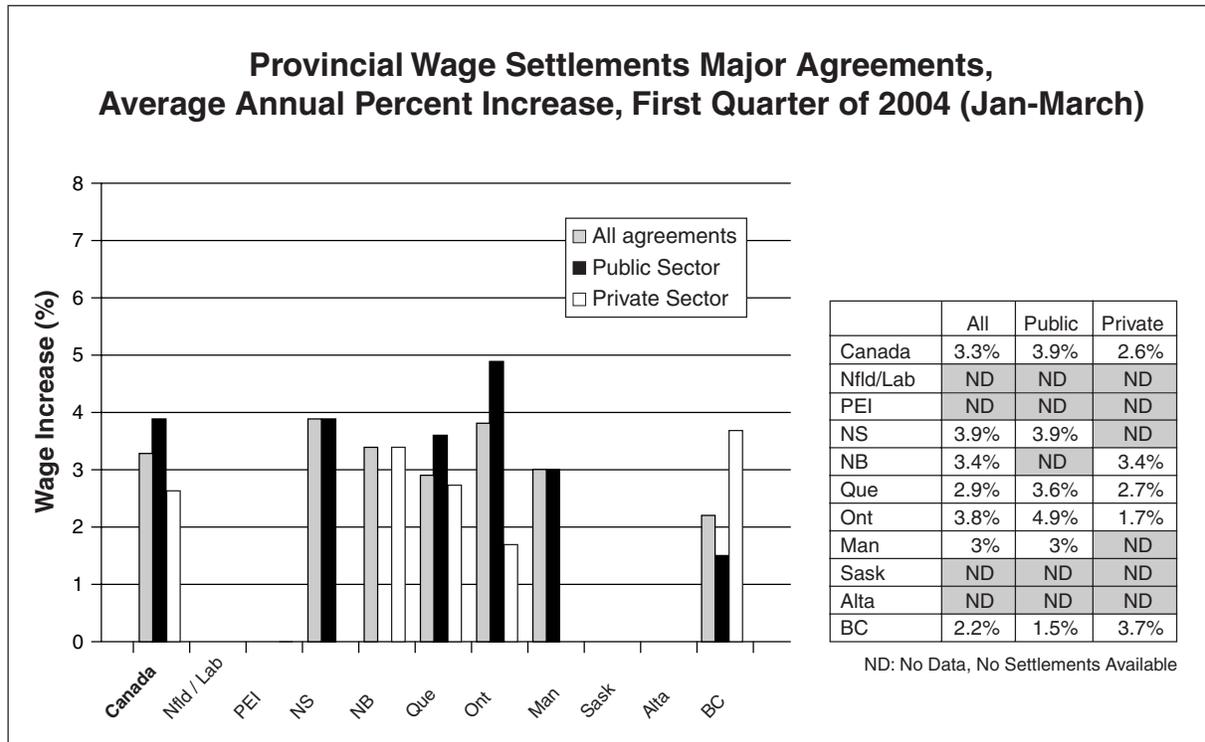
CUPE 40 is joining with other CUPE locals across the province in a campaign to raise awareness of the need for more support staff in Alberta's schools. ■

Wage Settlement Information



Source: Human Resources Skills Development Canada

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- These charts show major wage settlements and percentage increases for unionized workers in locals with more than 500 members.
- In the 2003 October to December period, public sector settlements are overall 0.6% higher than the private sector throughout Canada. In the January to March period in 2004, public sector settlements are overall 1.3% higher than those in the private sector.
- In Ontario, in the last quarter of 2003, public settlements are 2.5% higher than private sector settlements. In the first quarter of 2004, public settlements are 3.2% higher than private settlements. The main cause is higher settlements in the public education sector since the end of low wage increases with the previous Conservative government. One local of occasional teachers received 14.3% for a two-year agreement in the fourth quarter of 2003. The 710 members of CUPE 1483 at Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board received 6.6% for a one-year agreement (October 1, 2003 - September 30, 2004).
- In British Columbia, where there is a Liberal government, private settlements are 2.2% higher than public settlements in the first quarter of 2004. The Campbell Liberal's public sector wage controls are inhibiting public sector bargaining. For instance, in 2003's fourth quarter, 26,550 Government of B.C. workers received no wage increase for a two-year agreement.

Wages in Saskatchewan: new joint JE/pay equity agreement for health care workers

On November 28, 2003, three Saskatchewan unions voted overwhelmingly in favour of a Joint Job Evaluation/Pay Equity Agreement for health care workers worth more than \$64-million dollars.

Women finally “achieved equal pay for work of equal value with their male counterparts,” said Stephen Foley, President of CUPE’s Saskatchewan Health Care Council. “The agreement also eliminated hundreds of internal wage parity inequities within Regional Health Authorities.”

Representing 25,000 health care workers in the province, CUPE and two other unions, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees Union (SGEU), were involved. Implementation of the agreement is spread over six years – April 1, 2001 to April 1, 2007. About 12,000 CUPE members are covered by the plan.

The agreement was the result of many months of difficult work. In July 24, 2003, talks broke off after the unions learned that the government had imposed a funding cap of ten per cent of payroll. Under the agreement plan, two of the largest classifications – licensed practical nurses and special care aides/home health aides – required significant pay increases, which alone amounted to about ten per cent of payroll.



The employer, SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations), was prepared to give these two classifications equity increases “but they wanted to make everyone else pay for it,” explained Foley, and “red-circle 65 per cent of the jobs to stay within the ten per cent mandate.” Under SAHO’s scheme, 82 of the 150 female-dominated jobs and 72 of the 87 male-dominated jobs would have been red-circled.

Funding was received from the Saskatchewan government for this Pay Equity process. Several criteria had to be met under the “Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value and Pay Equity” policy framework agreed to in March 1999.

The most crucial step was the development of a male trend line (pay policy), which would then be used to establish a new wage grid

and pay bands. This proved to be a difficult process for two reasons: the internal equity had not been completed prior to the pay equity component, and because two male trend lines were identified within the members.

The tri-union bargaining committee had to work with a segmented trend line (two separate lines) in order to ensure that red-circling was kept to a minimum. The employer did not use this type of line which is why their proposal resulted in the reduction of male salaries rather than the accepted practice of identifying the male trend line and moving the female (and some male) classifications up to the line.

As technologist positions were particularly difficult, a joint reconsideration committee will review technologist classifications.

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At the end of this process, all three unions will have reached full internal equity. For example, each job class will earn the same wage throughout Saskatchewan (unless red-circled).

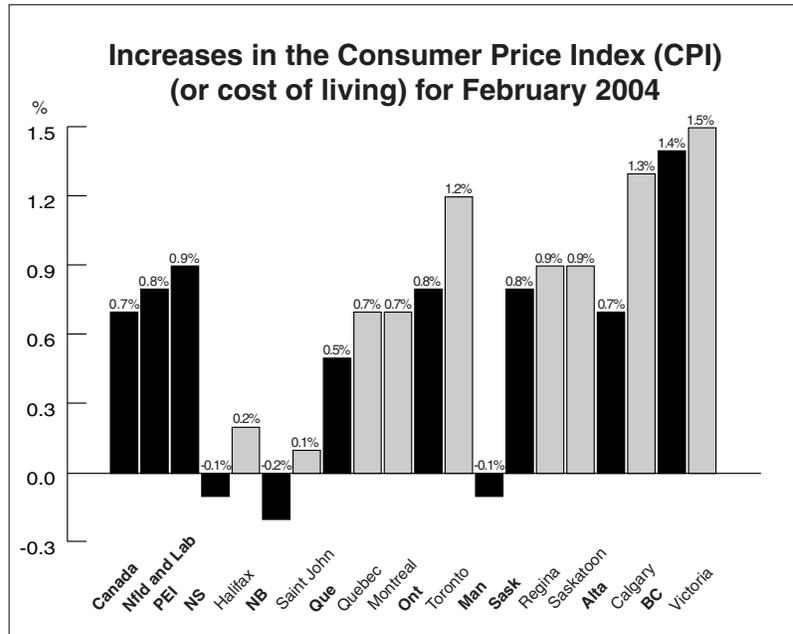
For years, the government has been promising health care support workers – hard hit by health care restructuring – that the new job evaluation plan would provide pay equity and fix internal wage disparities. Some classifications had as many as 20 different rates of pay.

The government's pay equity policy was introduced in 1997 and was restricted to about 20 public sector employers – Saskatchewan government office buildings, crown corporations such as SaskTel and SaskPower, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, and the regional colleges. In 1999, following strikes by CUPE Saskatchewan's health care workers and the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses for pay equity and wage parity, the health care sector was formally included through the negotiations.

CUPE is now urging the Saskatchewan government to pass pay equity legislation so women in all occupational sectors can achieve similar fairness in the workplace.

For more information, e-mail CUPE national representative Jacque Griffiths at jgriffiths@cupe.ca ■

Inflation at 0.7% (February 2004)



Source: Statistics Canada

- In February 2004, the Canadian cost-of-living was 0.7% higher than a year earlier – the smallest increase since December 2001 when the economy was still feeling the effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. This was a significant slowdown from the 1.2% increase in January.
- The CPI for a city is included in the graph where it is higher than the CPI for the province. Members should use the highest CPI numbers to increase their bargaining leverage.
- Over the past ten months, the CPI has been increasing slowly at an average rate of 0.1% per month. Home purchase cost (up 6.1%), cigarettes, tuition fees (up 8.1%), restaurant meals, automotive vehicle insurance premiums (up 4.2%) and homeowners' insurance premiums (up 10.5%) have contributed to the increase. B.C. shows the highest rate of inflation.
- Gasoline prices were 5.8% lower than in February 2003. In January 2004, gas prices were 2.5% lower than those of January 2003. Last year's prices were higher partly due to the U.S.-led war on Iraq.
- New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Manitoba experienced "deflation": a decline in the cost-of-living or "negative growth" in the economy. A higher dollar, lower prices for automotive vehicles, traveller accommodation, fuel oil prices, transportation, health and personal care, recreation, education and reading, clothing and footwear, and computer equipment and supplies created a smaller CPI increase or deflation.
- Throughout 2004, inflation will likely increase at a greater rate (estimated between 1.2 and 1.7%).

Looking for bargaining tools?



Go to cupe.ca for these new CUPE National publications or contact the research branch:

- ***Bargaining Equality: A Workplace For All***, March 2004.
- ***Overview of Bargaining and Wage Settlements Across Canada***, March 2004.
- ***P3s and Pensions***, December 2003.
- ***Comparing Defined Benefit and Money Purchase Pensions Plans***, September 2003.
- ***Home Care Sector Report Calls for Better Wages, Working Conditions***, November 2003.
- ***Burned Out and Tired: Women Workers and Long Term Care***, April 2004.
- ***P3s Pick the Public Pocket***, March 2004.
- ***Enough Workplace Stress: Organizing for Change***, December 2003.

Bargaining? Check These Out!

- **Statistics to help bargain pay equity** – *Global Employment Trends for Women 2004*, www.ilo.org/public
- *Healthy Workplace Strategies: Creating Change and Achieving Results*, Health Canada, www.cprn.com
- *Unions and Collective Bargaining: Economic Effects in a Global Environment*, www.worldbank.org
- *Passion and Commitment Under Stress: Human Resource Issues in Canada's Non-profit Sector*, www.cprn.com ■

Calling all CUPE Sisters and Brothers – Send Us Your Great Bargaining Language!

If you would like to see any contract language or your story featured in *Tabletalk*, please write to



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