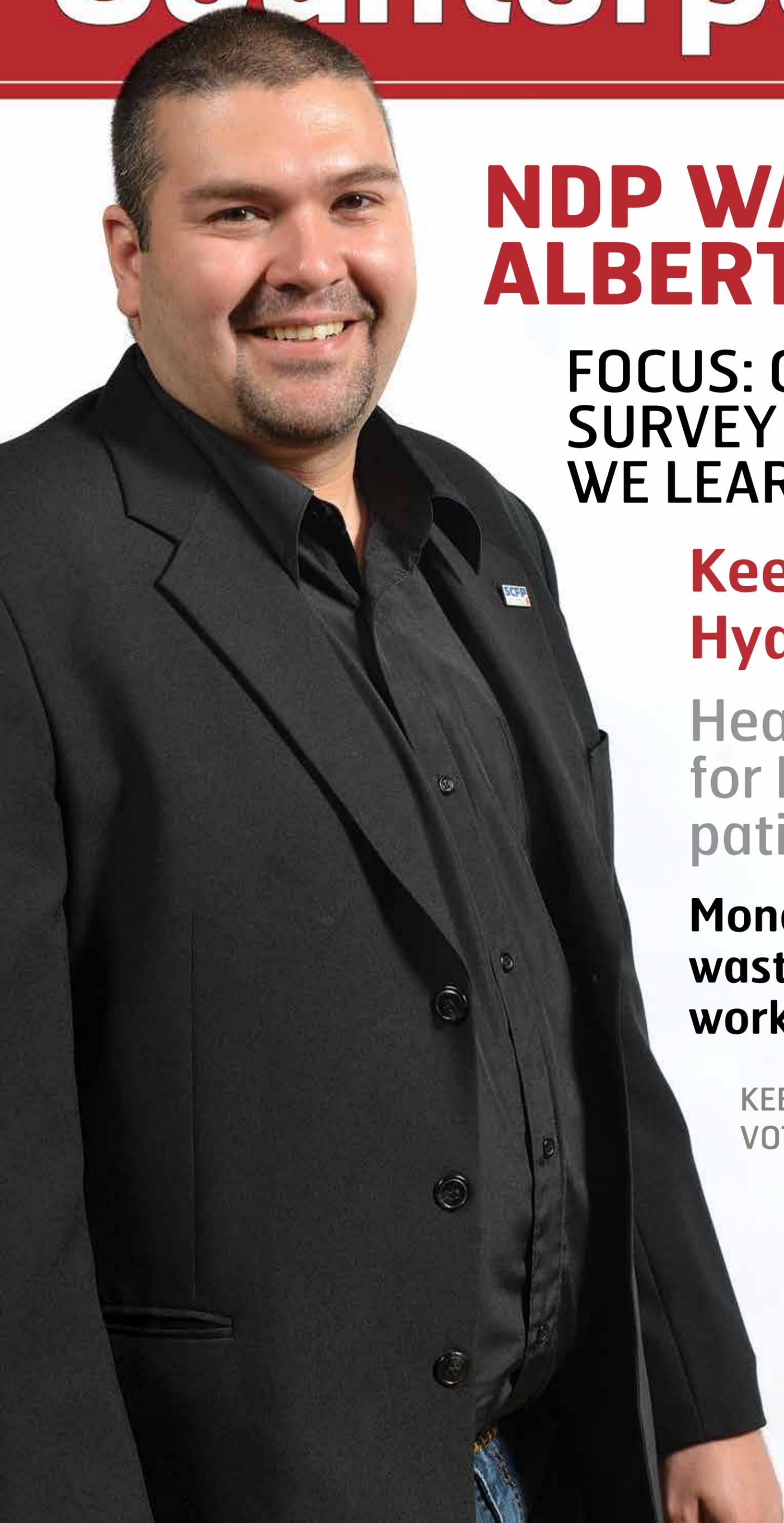


Counterpoint



NDP WAVE IN ALBERTA

FOCUS: CUPE SURVEY AND WHAT WE LEARNED

Keep Ontario Hydro public!

Healthy food for healthy patients

Moncton wastewater workers join CUPE

KEEPSAKE POSTER:
VOTING MATTERS

“Food is medicine. When a loved one is sick, we cook nutrient-rich dishes for them. We don’t give them a microwavable TV dinner.”

Dave Murphy, president of CUPE 7800 – Hamilton, Ontario. P.7

CUPE Researcher elected in Alberta

The ‘Orange Chinook’ that washed over Alberta on May 5 included the election of CUPE Researcher Ricardo Miranda as MLA for the riding of Calgary Cross.

Miranda was one of

54 NDP MLAs elected as part of Rachel Notley’s victory in the Alberta provincial election. Miranda won a squeaker, defeating PC star candidate, and former Calgary Police Chief Rick Hanson by only

100 votes.

Previously considered Canada’s most conservative province, Albertans surprised pundits by defeating a 44 year old government and electing a Premier and party committed to better health

and education funding, fighting climate change, a higher minimum wage and a review of the province’s energy royalty system.

A parent of two, Miranda worked as a flight attendant with Air Canada for 15 years, serving as president of CUPE 4095, joining CUPE’s staff in 2012. Miranda says he wants to work as an MLA to make it easier for workers to join unions. “I’d like to see a process where the only deciding factor on

forming a union is the will of the employees,” said Miranda.

His experiences working with CUPE had an impact on his campaign. “Calgary Cross includes Peter Lougheed Hospital and Lester B. Pearson High School, both places where CUPE members have told me their first-hand experiences trying to deliver public services on budgets starved for too many years,” said Miranda.

■ Lou Arab

On strike at Halifax Water!



The 335 members of CUPE 227 (outside workers) and CUPE 1431 (inside workers) commenced strike action against Halifax Water (HRWC) on May 19.

The main issue is an employer demand for major cuts to the pension plan.

The union has made a proposal that would save Halifax Water \$25 million over 10 years while protecting pension benefits. The employer rejected it. They are determined

to move the pension benefits that employees receive back by 30 or 40 years.

The Municipal Auditor General, Larry Munroe, has described Halifax Water as being heavily stacked with managers, most of whom supervise three or fewer employees. Munroe also found that Halifax Water has double the number of financial managers as it does other managers.

■ John McCracken



CUPE’S QUARTERLY PUBLICATION SUMMER 2015

Counterpoint

ISSN print 1920-2857
ISSN online 1920-2865

Counterpoint is published by the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Address all letters to the editor to: CUPE Communications, 1375 St. Laurent Blvd. Ottawa, ON, K1G 0Z7 T: 613-237-1590 F: 613-237-5508 Publications Mail Agreement Number 40005741

Union-printed on 50% recycled, 30% post-consumer waste, elemental chlorine-free paper, certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: CUPE Communications, 1375 St. Laurent Blvd. Ottawa, ON, K1G 0Z7

Visit CUPE’s website at cupe.ca or contact us at cupemail@cupe.ca

Managing Editor Catherine Louli
Communications Director Heather Fraser

Graphic Designer Jocelyn Renaud

Editorial Assistants Hélène Bélanger • Geneviève Robichaud • Méliza Fournier • Karin Jordan

Contributors Lou Arab • Dan Gawthrop • John McCracken • Greg Taylor • Riccardo Filippone • Sébastien Goulet • Margot Young • Catherine Louli • Craig Saunders • Roseanne Moran • James Chai •

Tria Donaldson • Danielle Savoie • Stella Yeadon • Philippe Gagnon
CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

National President Paul Moist

National Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury

General Vice-Presidents Daniel Légère • Lucie Levasseur • Fred Hahn • Kelly Moist • Marle Roberts

Regional Vice-Presidents Wayne Lucas / Newfoundland & Labrador • Danny Cavanagh / Nova Scotia • Odette Robichaud / New Brunswick • Lori MacKay / Prince Edward Island • Denis Bolduc, Benoit Bouchard / Quebec • Michael Hurley, Candace Rennick / Ontario • Henri Giroux / Northern Ontario • Mike Davidson / Manitoba • Judy Henley / Saskatchewan • Don Monroe / Alberta • Mark Hancock, Victor Elkins / British Columbia

Diversity Vice-Presidents Brian Barron • Yolanda McClean



“When I believe in something, I follow through on it.”

Simon Beaulieu is one of CUPE's many remarkable activists in Quebec. Beaulieu is fully involved at every level and mobilizes our members in the health and social services network battling the Couillard government's cutbacks.

Beaulieu founded the action committee of CUPE's *Conseil provincial des affaires sociales* (CPAS), created four years ago. He still heads the committee and helped organize very effective regional demonstrations last spring. He also represents CUPE at the mobilization table of the Quebec Federation of Labour. It was in that role that he became aware of the need to further coordinate

actions among the different sectors of CUPE-Québec. This culminated in the creation of the mobilization table of the CUPE-Québec office.

Originally an attendant at a seniors' home, Beaulieu embarked on his union involvement in 2005. “I started as a delegate and then got involved here and there,” said Beaulieu. “I was motivated in part due to the abusive approach of

certain managers.” In recent years, CUPE's CPAS has run a major campaign for its members who are “care enablers.” The sector purchased an ambulance that flies its colours and has a big impact at demonstrations. That was another of Beaulieu's ideas, achieved through his well-known tenacity. “I choose my battles, but when I believe in something, I follow through on it.”

Beaulieu also has been president of CUPE 3247 since December 2012. He gets his motivation from the “thanks” received from members who appreciate the support of their

union. But he stresses that his major commitment to the union would not be possible without the support of his wife and his entire family.

■ Sébastien Goulet



It's a wrap

Parliament has adjourned for the summer and when it returns it will likely be a brand new parliament. With a fixed election date of October 19, it's expected that summer will lead straight into a September election campaign.

Let's take a quick look at the parliamentary session that was.

In 2015, Stephen Harper brought in Bill C-51 and with it, threw out many of our most important rights and freedoms. He said we had to choose between security and our rights –

but it's starting to look like Canadians will simply choose a new government instead.

The Conservatives also committed to moving forward with income splitting. At a cost of \$2 billion, Harper is going to give a tax cut to the wealthiest among us, while the majority of Canadians get nothing – except the bill.

Most recently the Prime Minister had a deathbed conversion on retirement security but his ineffective voluntary retirement saving scheme is not a solution for

the over 11 million Canadians without a workplace pension. The Conservatives' plan is nothing more than an election sideshow, meant to distract Canadians from what is really needed – a doubling of the Canada Pension Plan benefits.

And all of these Conservative projects have moved forward while Stephen Harper continues to attack workers and their unions at every turn.

What might the next parliament look like?

The latest polls have all three parties running

neck-and-neck. If Canadians vote for genuine progressive change, we can have an NDP government that will deliver:

- \$15-a-day child care,
- retirement security through an expanded CPP,
- a complete repeal of Bill C-51,
- a \$15 federal minimum wage,

- strengthened public health care, and
- a national inquiry into murdered and missing aboriginal women.

And rather than attacking workers and their unions, they'll work to create well-paying jobs while protecting the environment and public services.

■ Riccardo Filippone



NATIONAL PRESIDENT PAUL MOIST

We can get the change we want, by voting

It's undeniable that many Canadians, and many CUPE members, are cynical about politics. Voter turnout in the last federal election was less than 61 per cent – that means almost nine million Canadians did not vote.

The troubling thing is, there's a lot of people who like it this way. They're hoping Canadians stay home on election day. The fewer people who vote, the fewer people they need to elect them into power. That's how our current federal government won a majority with only one in four eligible Canadians voting for them.

But it doesn't have to be this way, as the people of Alberta have shown in their most recent provincial election. How was a 44-year political dynasty unseated, something many considered unthinkable just a few months ago?

People voted for change.

Albertans have shown the rest of Canada just what is possible, and it helped create a new optimism about what could happen this October. We are one election away from the change we want.

But we need to vote, and we need to encourage our families, friends and neighbours to vote too. That is why CUPE is kicking off a new *Fairness Project*, encouraging our members to talk about this election.

To help start discussions in our workplaces, all CUPE locals will receive a kit that will include some valuable resources for member-to-member conversations. In addition to tips on organizing and conducting conversations, the kit will include facts on issues important to workers and the importance of voting.

The kit will help us talk about protecting our pensions and helping workers without a pension by expanding the CPP. It will help explain how our votes can get us quality affordable child care, and strengthen our public health care system. It will start conversations on how our votes can build an economy that works for workers, with well-paying jobs.

If we can get our members to vote, and encourage others to vote – other union members, community activists and allies, young people, Indigenous peoples and racialized Canadians – we can get the change we want for Canada.



PAUL MOIST ONLINE twitter.com/CUPENatPres

Focus:

CUPE SURVEY



Connecting with our members

CUPE has been renewing our union through the *Fairness Project*, a comprehensive campaign to reinforce the value of union membership. It is a project to build membership skills to create an active and powerful union. The *Fairness Project* provides members greater opportunities to understand, engage and participate in CUPE local, regional and national campaigns.

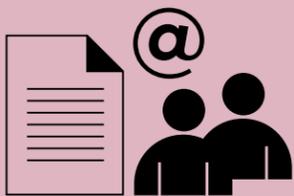
The CUPE membership survey gives us some insights on how we are connecting to our membership. We were pleased to learn that a majority of members surveyed participated in some way with their union in the past year. We learned that union involvement increases with job security. We also know that older and higher-income members are more likely to participate in their union. Men and non-racialized members are more likely to report participation in their union. We must explore how we can expand our connection with our members and look to new and inclusive ways of engagement.

There are many ways our members receive communications from the union. **63** per cent of members surveyed reported they get their information from a CUPE newsletter. Notice boards, emails, and face-to-face communication were also predominant ways that members received information. Less than **40** per cent have been to a CUPE website and only **13** per cent received information from a CUPE Facebook or Twitter account.

It is important to gauge the changes in how CUPE members connect with their union as this may change dramatically as the demographics of CUPE change.

■ Margot Young

63%



LESS THAN

40%



13%



CUPE membership survey results for sectors

The results for the sector survey showed us that in general, women, racialized, and younger members were most likely to work in more precarious circumstances compared to the overall membership of CUPE. The full analysis of the equality results can be found at CUPE.CA/CUPE-MEMBERSHIP-SURVEY-RESULTS-EQUALITY.

Using the index of precarious work developed by the Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario Survey (PEPSO), CUPE's survey found that there were significant sector differences. Overall members classified as secure or stable were most likely to be in the communications, municipal, and utility sectors. Members in the airlines and health and social services sectors were more likely to be vulnerable or precarious. The highest levels of precarious work were found in the hospital, long-term care, post-secondary, and library board sectors. The school board sector was more likely to be distributed across the secure, stable, or vulnerable employment but they were not as likely

to be precarious.

Examining the results we can see specific differences in working conditions which also help us understand how we can engage our membership on bargaining strategies to improve their working conditions.

Almost two-thirds of the membership told us they had permanent full-time jobs, with the utility and communications sectors having the highest percentage. Post-secondary members had the lowest rate of full-time permanent employment at 23 per cent. These members were also the least likely to have a pension plan or employment benefits. They are also most likely to work for more than one employer.

Library workers reported the highest rate of permanent part-time employment at 46 per cent compared to the average of 14 per cent. Our library members were also least likely to be paid for sick days. The airlines sector reported being most likely to work on call and feeling a reduction of hours in their employment in the next six months. Income variability

was reported a lot or somewhat for 22 per cent of our members. Hospital workers experience the most variability of income at 30 per cent. Members in the health and social services sectors were least likely to know their work schedule in advance. Casual, on-call labour was most reported in the long-term care sector. Members who were most concerned about raising an employment rights concern were from the airlines, long-term care and public library boards sectors.

Unionized workers are paid better and are more likely to have benefits that help you balance work with life at home. But there are still issues we need to address as a union, as there are serious indications of levels of precarious work in our membership. Learning about the conditions of our members helps us understand how we can change. We can show solidarity for all our members by looking at how to improve wages and working conditions for our precarious members across sectors. We need to continue to improve working conditions for all workers.

■ Margot Young



“How we respond to the challenges created by the changing nature of employment will influence our shared prosperity and the economic health of our region, province and country for years to come.”

The Precarity Penalty.

How we did the survey



CUPE conducted its first-ever comprehensive survey of its membership in 2014 to give our union a better understanding of the union’s demographics and diversity, as well as the degree to which its members face precarious work. Nearly 3,000 members representing all regions and sectors were surveyed by telephone.

A well-known and respected survey firm worked with CUPE to develop a reliable methodology for developing a representative sample from our membership. The survey drew from a random sample from more than 80,000 contacts representative of each province, from each size of local, and from each sector.

Because we had a solid sample to draw from, the survey results are reliable. This rich national level data from the survey has many stories to tell about our membership.

Members were divided into four employment precarity classifications, where precarious work describes states of employment that do not have the security or benefits enjoyed in more traditional employment relationships. Precarious employment has real implications in terms of economic well-being, though it can also affect social, community, and family life.

■ Margot Young

What the CUPE survey told us about precarious employment

The results of the 2014 CUPE survey revealed the degree to which CUPE members face precarious work.

Nearly 3,000 members representing all regions and sectors were polled. The survey data shows that CUPE’s membership has more women (68 per cent) than the Canadian labour force in general (48 per cent). It also shows that we are older. Canada’s working age population under 35 is 39 per cent, whereas only 21 per cent of CUPE members fit into this category. At the opposite end of the spectrum, 55 per cent of our members are 45 to 64 years old, compared to 32 per cent for the general population.

“Members were divided into four employment precarity classifications, where precarious work describes states of employment that do not have the security or

benefits enjoyed in more traditional employment relationships. Precarious employment has real implications in terms of economic well-being,” said CUPE national researcher Margot Young.

In late May, the CBC reported, “new studies from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Way of Toronto are exposing how precarious work is hurting economies and blocking opportunities for an entire generation of young people. Much of the burden of insecure jobs is falling on youth and they are at greater risk of spending their lives in poverty than the elderly across most developed economies.”

CUPE members in precarious employment were concentrated in permanent part-time, casual, on-call,

or contract employment. Many equality-seeking groups are over-represented in precarious or vulnerable classifications, including women, young workers, racialized members, non-citizens and those speaking a language other than

English or French at home, as well as those reporting physical or mental conditions.

The Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO) report *The Precarity Penalty*, states that “how we respond to the challenges created by the changing nature of employment will influence our shared prosperity and the economic health of our region, province and country for years to come. The place to start is acknowledging that change is in

our midst, and that it is having significant negative impacts on our workforce and our communities.”

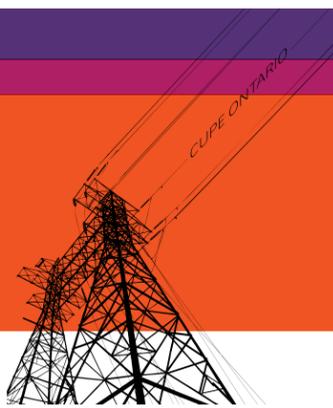
Young said “the conclusions on precarious work couldn’t be clearer: as precarious works becomes more prevalent, inequality grows. Having a union on your side makes your job and your workplace safer and fairer. Unionized workers are paid better and are more likely to have benefits that help you balance work with life at home.”

■ Catherine Louli

Têtes-à-têtes!



KEEP HYDRO PUBLIC



Hundreds of CUPE members from locals across Ontario marched up University Avenue in Toronto one sunny day in late May. At the head of the march, CUPE leaders carried a banner reading “Keep Hydro Public.”

The provincial Liberal government spent months laying the groundwork for what has become the most criticized privatization scheme in the province’s history.

ALTHOUGH THE LIBERALS DIDN’T CAMPAIGN ON THE PRIVATIZATION OF THE PROVINCE’S ELECTRICITY SYSTEM, THEY MOVED DECISIVELY ONCE THEY WON A MAJORITY.

Hydro One is a public entity that owns the electricity grid in Ontario – the high voltage transmission wires and much of the local distribution. Although the Liberals didn’t campaign on the privatization of the province’s electricity system, they moved decisively once they won a majority. The Liberal government engaged Ed Clark, a former banker, who used language

like “asset recycling,” “unlocking value,” and “broadening ownership,” and proposed the sale of Hydro One as a way to fund infrastructure spending.

POLLING SHOWS THAT THREE OUT OF FOUR ONTARIANS OPPOSE HYDRO PRIVATIZATION.

“We are here to tell the Liberal government that Ontario opposes this sell-off,” said CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn, to an enthusiastic crowd that included a dozen labour and community groups. “Hydro One belongs to all of us, it is not theirs to sell.”

CUPE Ontario, with significant financial support from CUPE National has played a lead role in building the growing movement opposed to the sale. Since the government’s announcement, our union has worked, often with partners in the Keep Hydro Public coalition, to raise political pressure. Polling shows that three out of four Ontarians oppose hydro privatization. In advance of community meetings in Oshawa and Sudbury, there were stunning levels of opposition: between 84 and 89 per cent.

CUPE Ontario will continue holding community meetings through June and July to step up pressure.

Why is the public overwhelmingly against the hydro sell-off?

For most people, it’s because they know that their electricity bills will go up, as they have everywhere hydro privatization has taken place. For others, it’s because the Liberals have a horrible track record with privatization and P3s. Headline after headline

has highlighted successive scandals, culminating in a scathing auditor general’s report last December, which said public-private partnerships had needlessly cost Ontarians \$8 billion more than public projects.

But there’s more to it than that.

To make the sale legal, the Liberals were forced to re-write the very laws they brought in to protect Hydro One from privatization a decade ago. A legal opinion from Sack Goldblatt Mitchell pointed out that the legislative changes also immediately exempt Hydro One from all public oversight – an opinion backed up by an open letter from Ontario’s official watchdogs, including the provincial ombudsman, the auditor general and the integrity commissioner. While the Liberals say they

plan to keep a 40 per cent stake in the company, they are giving up the majority of seats on the board of directors. In other words, the public will no longer have control or accountability.

The sale also doesn’t make financial sense. A report by former TD Bank Chief Economist and Secretary of State for Finance, Douglas Peters, states the government will lose more than \$338 million in revenues every year. With borrowing rates for governments at record lows, this means selling the asset to pay for infrastructure will end up costing more than borrowing would.

CUPE continues mobilizing across Ontario and exploring legal options, and will step up pressure to stop the sale, just as we did in 2002.

■ **Craig Saunders**



in brief

Naramata resolution reached

At the end of March, CUPE 608 and the Naramata Centre Society reached an agreement to resolve the labour dispute that began in May 2014 as well as outstanding issues related to the closure of the Centre. CUPE 608 President Brianne Hillson said that the support from CUPE across the country made the difference during a very tough dispute. As the final chapter, at CUPE BC’s April convention, President Mark Hancock presented Paul Moist with the plaque that accompanied a Dogwood tree planted in 2001 marking a then-25 year partnership between the Naramata Centre and CUPE.

London municipal workers strike to protect contract

CUPE 101 members hit the picket lines on May 25 after their employer refused to remove concession demands from the bargaining table. It is the local’s first strike since 1979. Concession demands include gutting the collective agreement’s language on hours of work, job evaluation, promotions, and cutting retiree benefits.

CUPE 101 was the first CUPE local to address gender equity pay in 1967 by getting rid of the male/female wage grid.



Southern Railway workers gain strength after lockout

A 119-day lockout of CUPE 7000 members working for Southern Railway (SRY) in British Columbia ended on May 4 with a new collective agreement—and an important reminder of CUPE’s clout in using legal challenges to target unfair employer practices.

During the lockout, Southern railway managers took over operations—raising new concerns about training and fatigue.

CUPE’s legal department applied daily pressure, including challenging the use of scab labour. The Labour Relations Board ruled that SRY unlawfully contracted work to A&B Rail, and declared a labour code breach. The company was ordered to stop using contractors to perform bargaining unit work.

Own it!

Own it! *Saskatchewan belongs to everyone* is a new project that will give citizens a voice in a province-wide discussion about the future of public services and Crowns. **Own it!** invites Saskatchewan people to learn more about privatization, share their views, sign a petition to stop the sell-off of public services and Crown corporations, and organize in their communities.

WWW.OWNYOURSASK.CA

Food matters to patient recovery

There is little dispute that fresh, local food, cooked in the hospital kitchen is best for sick, vulnerable and convalescing patients. It's also best for the local economy when hospitals can source patient food from local growers and cook it from scratch in-house.

Several Ontario hospitals are doing just that; keeping it local. They've revamped their in-house kitchens and use more local food. Patient meals are more appetizing and less is left uneaten and thrown out.

Unfortunately one of Ontario's largest hospital networks – Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) – plans to go in the opposite direction. HHS intends to close its in-house kitchens and buy plated, microwavable “TV dinner” style food from a factory operation.

“Food is medicine. When a loved one is sick, we cook nutrient-rich dishes for them. We don't



give them a microwavable TV dinner. So why would we give this type of factory food to our patients?”, said Dave Murphy, the president of CUPE 7800, representing nearly 4000 hospital staff at HHS. The CUPE local recently mobilized a community-based campaign to not only keep the hospital kitchens cooking, but to also improve the overall quality of patient meals.

“We are working with local farmers and community leaders promoting a local patient food solution at our hospital,” said Murphy.

■ Stella Yeadon

Moncton wastewater workers organize with CUPE

Workers at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Compost Plant in Moncton didn't see the need to belong to a union to protect their rights. For years, they were paid and treated fairly by their employer and had benefits similar to unionized municipal workers in the area.

All that changed with the arrival of a new manager in 2013 who began stripping away their benefits. He was also the driving force behind the decision of the Greater Moncton Wastewater Commission to apply for P3 funding for the construction of a new \$80 million plant needed to comply with the federal Wastewater System Effluent Regulations by 2020.

That's when the 10 workers decided to join CUPE to protect their jobs and the public service they provide. They were certified as CUPE 5217 in November 2014 and want protective language against P3s in their collective agreement.

“It's not easy to negotiate a first collective agreement and at the same time fight to keep the wastewater plant a public entity, but we are determined to do both”, said Ralph Green, president of CUPE 5217.

■ Danielle Savoie

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER CHARLES FLEURY

A call to national convention

Preparations for CUPE's 27th National Convention are well underway. The convention will be held in Vancouver from November 2 to 6. Advance notice has been sent to our chartered organizations in May, and the official convention notice will be sent no later than August 4.

I look forward to the work that we will do during convention to plan how we will continue to defend our members and work to improve the lives of all working people.

To ensure a successful national convention, our chartered organizations need to prepare and do their part. Sending in resolutions and statutory amendments to be discussed in plenary sessions at convention are essential to the democratic process of the union. Organizations have until August 4 to send resolutions to the national office.

Part of convention preparation is electing who you

want to represent you at convention. Now is the time to do this. We encourage you to select delegates who reflect the diversity of your organization. Once you have elected your delegation, we suggest that you send in their credentials to the national office.

Remember to make your room and airline reservations soon with our official travel agency, WE Travel, whose employees are proud members of CUPE 3532. Also, please remember that CUPE National will assume additional costs for delegates with disabilities. Please send in any request forms for supplementary costs related to equipment rental or the presence of an attendant as soon as possible.

In order to facilitate the participation of parents with young children, child care will be available on-site. It is important to fill out the form requesting on-site child care. This form will be included in the official call to convention package. Children between the ages of nine and 14 will be able to participate in the Youth Council. The Youth Council is a great way for them to become familiar with the value of unions.

I look forward to the conversations we will have and I am sure that the quality of our deliberations will ensure that CUPE emerges stronger than ever.

Best of luck with your preparations.

CHARLES FLEURY ONLINE  twitter.com/CUPENatSec





DON'T
JUST BARK
ABOUT
THE ISSUES
THAT ARE
IMPORTANT
TO YOU

**VOTING
MATTERS**

CUPE.ca