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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT DECEMBER 2020 – MARCH 2021

Sisters, Brothers, and Friends:

It has been just over a year since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic, and everything changed. Looking back on the last 12 months, knowing the challenges we all faced, I cannot help but be proud of our union and how we responded in the face of this crisis.

Working together, we adapted. There were some bumps along the way, perhaps, but CUPE members and staff joined together to make sure the work of our union continued.

We learned to use new tools and different technology to ensure our members, our locals, and our leaders had the support and resources they needed. Bargaining, labour-management meetings, and grievance arbitrations all continued. We negotiated furloughs and layoff agreements, and helped members navigate and access government benefits.

CUPE advocated with governments and employers for PPE, for better financial supports for workers, and more funding for public services. And we kept our members informed on government updates and health and safety measures.

COVID has impacted CUPE in many ways. But there are two key stories to be told.

First, this pandemic has meant tens of thousands of our members losing work, either temporarily or permanently. Some sectors have been hit harder than others, but overall we saw the greatest impact in municipalities, libraries, education, post-secondary, casinos, and transportation - especially those members in the airlines sector. Across all sectors, precarious workers were hit especially hard.

MARK HANCOCK

National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

BENOÎT BOUCHARD, PAUL FAORO, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

The second story is that of our members who have continued, throughout the pandemic, to provide the necessary and vital frontline services we all rely on. I have always been proud of the work CUPE members do across this country, but I am especially proud of our members who have kept our public services running throughout this public health crisis. We owe these workers a huge debt of gratitude.

Hundreds of our members contracted COVID on the job providing these services, and ten of them paid for it with their lives. We can never forget how they stepped up and delivered the services our communities depend on in these uncertain times.

And we will not let governments and employers forget it either. When they try to come at us with restraint and austerity, whether at the bargaining table or through legislation, CUPE will be there to remind everyone just how much we have all relied on public services, and the workers who provide them in this last year.

We will continue to defend our collective agreements and our members' jobs. We will demand that large, profitable corporations and wealthy individuals pay their fair share of taxes. We will not allow our members to pay the price of austerity.

Federal Government

It has been more than two years since the Canadian government last tabled a federal budget in the House of Commons on March 19, 2019. Last year, Budget 2020 had been scheduled for March 30. It was, understandably, postponed. But by now, all provinces have released their budgets for last year, and some have proceeded with budgets for 2021 as well. The Liberals have not yet announced a date for Budget 2021, but we anticipate it will not be until mid- or late-April.

In the meantime, I had the opportunity to join other labour leaders in a pre-budget consultation meeting with the Minister of Finance on March 1. Together, we outlined our priorities for our members and the country, including: implementation of a national system of public, non-profit child care; eliminating for-profit interests from long-term care and bringing the sector into the public system and regulating it under the *Canada Health Act*; introducing a national, universal pharmacare program; the extension of emergency benefits for workers until much-needed changes to Employment Insurance can be made; worker-focused assistance for the airlines sector; and fair tax reform that would see profitable corporations pay their share and the government close tax loopholes.

Federal Election

We all know that minority governments do not generally last for their full term. And with the Liberal government 16 seats short of a majority, we expect they will take any opportunity that comes their way to try and secure a majority.

We very nearly ended up in a federal election last October, and this parliament is now 18 months old. It seems likely that we will have a federal election before the end of 2021.

CUPE is developing a plan that will use union education, social media communications, and virtual training to engage our members on key issues and encourage their participation in the election. When workers vote, we have the power to elect representatives who will govern in our interests.

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

The 29th Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress will be held virtually from Wednesday, June 16 to Friday, June 18, 2021, using an interactive and secure online platform.

A virtual convention, with a lower registration fee, is a chance for CUPE activists to participate in a convention their local might not be able to afford, and I hope our locals will take full advantage of this opportunity.

This convention is also our opportunity to help re-set the labour movement in Canada. With 700,000 members, CUPE is unquestionably the largest union in Canada. Your National Executive Board is determined that CUPE will have a significant presence at the CLC convention, with a goal of electing new leadership and achieving important constitutional changes.

Hassan Yussuff is not re-offering as CLC President, and Secretary-Treasurer Marie Clarke Walker is not seeking re-election again either. CUPE has endorsed three candidates for leadership positions: Beatrice Bruske for President, our own Lily Chang for Secretary-Treasurer, and Siobhan Vipond for Executive Vice President. Information about these candidates and platform can be found at www.teamuniteclc.ca

To ensure CUPE locals receive the necessary convention information, and to streamline our participation, we are coordinating all CUPE credentials through my office. Information was sent to all locals by email on March 1. If you didn't receive the correspondence, or have any questions about the CLC Convention, please contact my office.

COVID-19 Research – Acute Care Environmental Service Workers

CUPE is a partner in COVIDEM, a pan-Canadian research project funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to explore psychological distress experienced by environmental service workers (ESW) in acute care during the COVID-19 pandemic. These CUPE members put themselves at risk and work tirelessly to ensure the safety of all patients and hospital staff. However, their work responsibilities can cause the ESWs to experience heightened psychological stress, or distress. The principal investigators of this project are committed to explore, on a national scale, the psychological distress experienced by ESWs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project was pilot-tested at the Hôpital Montfort in Ottawa and is now being scaled up at a pan-Canadian level. CUPE's role is to provide information about the project to our members and to share and promote the survey to our members through staff, leaders, and locals, as well as social media channels. Montfort management allowed ESWs to complete the survey during working hours, and our research partners will ask other hospitals to do the same. The survey will be anonymous and confidential; participants may be invited to be part of focus groups for the research project in the summer. They will be compensated with gifts cards for focus group participation.

The research results of the survey will be made available to CUPE; based on the pilot at Montfort, we believe the results will show increased psychological distress being experienced by ESWs in the hospital sector. CUPE will be able to use this information in our promotion of better compensation for work in the sector and for future bargaining with employers.

Human Rights Conference

Our 2021 Human Rights Conference saw 700 members gather online to hear reflections from some incredible guest speakers and from member activists across the country, on how the events of the last year have impacted equity-seeking groups. The theme of the conference, *Human Rights in the time of COVID: Organizing for Change* offered participants the opportunity to chart a course for a better future as we come out of this pandemic, for a more progressive union, more equal workplaces, and a more equal country. Activists shared ideas and strategies on how to make that a reality.

The conference also allowed us to consult members broadly on a draft anti-racism strategy. The comments and feedback will guide us in developing an even stronger document for adoption at our upcoming National Convention.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

Strikes and Lockouts

There were no strikes or lockouts during this reporting period.

Collective Bargaining

CUPE 4963 members employed by Queens Association for Supported Living in Liverpool, Nova Scotia voted 92 per cent in favour of strike action at the beginning of December. Their last collective agreement had expired in 2015, and they had been bargaining for 15 months.

An impasse had been reached over one issue – the inequity in employer contributions to the pension plan that occurred when the employer moved vocational instructors, but not residential counsellors, into a different pension plan. The employer failed to inform and subsequently negotiate with the union prior to making changes to the pension plan.

CUPE 4963 turned to their community for assistance, asking them to put pressure on the Minister of Community Services, whose department fully funds the programs these members deliver, to help end the impasse. The local also filed 48-hour strike notice and planned a rally as their first strike action. Shortly after their rally on December 21, a tentative deal was reached with the assistance of a conciliation officer appointed by the province.

CUPE 4500 members who work as transit supervisors, control coordinators, and lead supervisors for BC Transit in the Capital Regional District have ratified a new three-year collective agreement. The agreement includes wage increases consistent with previous settlements in the provincial public sector, while also improving shift premiums and language for job security. It also includes significant new language on harassment and bullying.

After years of preparation, hard work and tough bargaining, CUPE 4070 reached a tentative agreement with WestJet on January 28, 2021. The executive is presenting the terms of the agreement to the membership before proceeding to ratification.

In these extremely difficult times, in a sector that has been devastated by a global pandemic and a subsequent lack of government support, achieving a first collective agreement represents a significant step forward for these members and is quite an accomplishment.

Regional Updates

Maritimes Region

Prince Edward Island

The Prince Edward Island government serves as an example of how collaboration can work in times of crisis. PEI has invested 5 times more than its neighbouring province in COVID-19 measures to help communities, and has been respectful and responsive to CUPE PEI's submissions.

A number of locals in the province were successful in securing good agreements despite these challenging times. CUPE 3373, representing members in Queens County Residential Services, settled a three-year deal with a 10% wage increase, language on violence in the workplace and a process to access membership information.

In the municipal sector, three locals reached tentative agreements recently and will be presenting them for ratification shortly: CUPE 501 (Charlottetown Public Works, Fire and Recreation), CUPE 830 (Charlottetown Water and Sewer employees) and CUPE 1174 (City of Summerside - Police and Fire).

New Brunswick

In December 2020, Premier Higgs announced a province-wide wage freeze and wage restriction plan affecting over 90% of public sector workers. He mentioned in his announcement that all public sector bargaining tables should expect a wage freeze for the first year of the agreement, an increase of 1% for the second year, and another wage freeze thereafter. CUPE New Brunswick said loud and clear that front line heroes deserve better than zeros. Our members are ready to fight this government because they very well know that more than ever, they deserve wage increases above the increased cost of living. Local leaders, members, and staff will show leadership and resolve in this difficult round of bargaining, despite COVID fatigue and anxiety.

A number of locals in the nursing home and community care sector have reached agreements recently. CUPE 5446, representing clinical and non-clinical workers of Shannex in different locations, signed a wage reopener effective to the end of 2022, with a wage increase of 9.75% overall, and improvements to evening and weekend premiums. CUPE 5379 negotiated its first contract. The wage increase amounts to more than 9% over four years. Our members will receive retroactive adjustments for years worked even before CUPE was certified. CUPE 1726, representing workers of Aramark at the Spencer Memorial Home in Salisbury, signed a new collective agreement retroactive to 2016 with annual wage increases of 0.625%, 0.75% and 1% thereafter.

CUPE 5023, representing workers of Shannex at Embassy Hall, signed a four-year collective agreement with increases of 9.75% overall, increases to premiums, and double time for working on December 25.

CUPE 1190 and CUPE 1251 exposed blatant mismanagement of a health and safety incident which happened at the Saint John Laundry facility earlier this month. The Saint John Laundry processes linens for nearly half of the province's nursing homes and hospitals. On March 3, 2021, a fire alarm went off and the employees left their workstations and went outside for rollcall. Instead, management ordered the staff to re-enter the building, return to their positions and recommence work, despite the fact that the fire department was not yet on site. After workers smelled something burning, management urged everyone to exit the building again – but because the alarm was still ringing, supervisors had to go through the site to get all workers to go back outside immediately. Once outside, roll call was once again ignored. This workplace is an industrial facility, processing on average 25 tonnes of linens per day, where there is major amperage running for the machines, strong chemicals, solvents, and propane-run dryers. Management disregarded the health and safety of their staff to maintain productivity, risking our members' lives. CUPE members from across the province stood in solidarity with Saint John Laundry workers after this incident, demanding accountability from the employer.

Atlantic Region

Nova Scotia

The province of Nova Scotia saw a change of leadership with Ian Rankin winning the Liberal leadership race and ascending to the role of Premier. The resulting cabinet shuffle has raised concern regarding the portfolios of Health and Education, given that acute care, long term care, and home support sectors are all preparing to commence bargaining this spring and the Nova Scotia School Board Council of Unions is having talks with the Department of Education to prepare a framework for bargaining.

CUPE Nova Scotia organized a car rally in support of long term care workers at Wynn Park Villa in Truro. Staff are frustrated by workplace health and safety issues, scheduling, sick leave, vacation time and staff shortages, and now they are being intimidated for speaking out about their issues. One of them, a Licensed Practical Nurse, was fired for speaking about unionization.

Activity surrounding the Economic Security for All campaign continues, including virtual actions to draw attention to the economic disparities and staffing shortages for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) who work in child care centres as opposed to school-based ECEs.

CUPE continues its involvement, along with allied organizations, in revitalizing the move to starting a Child Care Coalition in the province. The pandemic temporarily halted plans for a founding meeting, but they are moving forward with plans to do so this spring.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Until recently, the Atlantic region had been relatively free of COVID-19, compared to other parts of Canada. But Newfoundland and Labrador was hit in February with an alarming spike in cases, causing the alert level to be raised and a full lockdown imposed. Despite this, and amidst calls for a postponement, the provincial election proceeded with a mail-in ballot. Results will likely be announced in April.

As the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in our workplaces continue, the "good neighbour" agreements signed a year ago are again being acted upon, which has provided some relief to our members in long term care who had been working short for many months and were consistently being mandated to work overtime.

CUPE leaders continue to do the hard work needed to represent our members. In Happy Valley-Goose Bay, CUPE 2019 has asked for conciliation in contract negotiations with the Town. The local has been trying to get the employer to bargain since September 2018, offering over 100 dates to meet in 2019 and 2020, but negotiations only began last October. The local represents firefighters, arena workers, as well as roads and parks, water and wastewater, municipal landfill workers, and clerical and technical staff.

CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador called on regional health authorities to cancel their deal with an American corporation they hired to cut approximately \$70 million from the province's public system. In return, the company (Change Healthcare), is guaranteed to receive half of that amount as payment for their services over a 5-year term. This deal will have massive consequences. Services have already been reduced substantially, and people are suffering from those service cuts. If the province really wants to save money without affecting the health of its citizens, it should be hiring more staff to reduce overtime and sick pay costs.

Quebec Region

SCFP-Québec members are currently mobilizing against a bill drafted by the Legault government that is designed to reform the province's Occupational Health and Safety regime. This reform would impose major cutbacks and weaken various measures regarding prevention and compensation for work injuries. The bill stipulates, amongst other things, relinquishing full control to employers over prevention mechanisms by eliminating employee participation in identifying the risk factors in their workplaces.

Negotiations are continuing in the health care and education sectors, but the government is still brushing off union bargaining proposals. In February, the unions affiliated to the QFL embarked on a tour of some 30 establishments across Quebec, centred on the theme “Still Standing”, to pay tribute to the province’s health care, education, and social services workers. Notwithstanding their fatigue, exhaustion, and arduous working conditions, our members are still standing tall and showing up, ready to serve the population’s health, education, and social services needs. Quebec will have to face the facts that without acceptable working conditions, it will be impossible to attract and retain the number of people necessary to perform the jobs to deliver services to the population. Furthermore, since the beginning of the pandemic, health care personnel is being managed by ministerial decrees that trample on the provisions in their collective agreements and that are applied in an inequitable fashion.

The Quebec Provincial Communications Sector Council marked its 20th convention with the launch of a new website: www.nostelecomsnosemplois.ca . The mission is to denounce the deficiencies regarding the protection of personal data and the preservation of jobs in the telecommunications and digital sectors in Canada. Our large local telecom companies, with whom we regularly share our personal information, often make use of offshore subcontractors. Although Canadian laws in this domain are not perfect, they do a better job of protecting our personal information than those in the countries where many of these telecommunications company call centres are located. We have to be concerned and vigilant about offshoring jobs, as well as the transfer of our personal data towards foreign shores. Not to mention that these offshore jobs go to countries where salaries are very substandard. These practices undermine the job market in the province of Quebec and across Canada, by abolishing quality jobs.

The Quebec Fraternity of Pre-hospital Workers (FTPQ) recently embarked upon a process to have its members join CUPE. Close to 1,000 paramedics working in every region of the province will be called upon to join the ranks of CUPE 7300, as soon as allowable under the time frames for each certification. We extend you all a sincere welcome!

Ontario Region

CUPE Ontario recently called for increased scrutiny of the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) following an announcement that the pension fund lost more than \$3 billion last year. This represents a shortfall of more than \$10 billion compared to their own benchmark returns for 2020. OMERS manages more than \$100 billion of pension money for half a million workers and retirees from municipalities, libraries, school boards, children’s aid societies, police, and fire.

In 2019, OMERS made a series of sweeping changes to its governance that have weakened the voices of workers and their unions. In 2020, OMERS eliminated guaranteed cost of living increases for pensions earned after 2022. CUPE Ontario represents more than 120,000 active OMERS plan members.

CUPE worked diligently to ensure our members' experiences and stories were shared with Ontario's Long Term Care Commission. Our members' powerful stories, told anonymously, were shared with the Commission and on more than one occasion brought the Commissioners to tears. Staff have also interviewed several members, and used this to form the written submission that was delivered to the Commission. These submissions are in addition to the presentation CUPE made to the Commission last fall.

We are anticipating the final report to be released by the end of April. We are hopeful that the report will highlight and address the crisis in the sector that existed prior to, and was exacerbated by, COVID-19. Ensuring our members' experiences were shared with the Commission was our way to honour the pain, loss, and courage that was experienced and shared by residents and staff of the LTC sector and, hopefully, trigger much-needed change.

Tunney's Child Care Centre in Ottawa, which closed last year after five years of financial struggles caused in part by the federal government's decision to charge commercial rent, will be reopening under Andrew Fleck Child Care Centre. We were successful in negotiating with the operator of Andrew Fleck to take over operations from Tunney and reopen. A new four-year agreement was reached with the new operator, with many gains including a 4.25% wage increase over the term of the contract.

This is an example of one of too few wins in a sector that has been hit hard during the pandemic, with the closure of child care centres becoming a prevalent issue. To date, more than 130 child care centres across Ontario have closed due to financial hardships brought about by a combination of government underfunding, increased costs, and lower revenues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. More centres are expected to close in the future. Staff are working closely with elected leaders to mitigate closures through lobbying, mobilization, and active campaigning.

Manitoba Region

In November, Pallister's government introduced Bill 64 (*The Education Modernization Act*) at first reading in the legislature – but failed to provide the text of the proposed legislation to the opposition or the public. On March 15, they finally unveiled the contents of the bill - a massive overhaul of the province's education system.

Bill 64 is the end result of a comprehensive review of the education system that began in 2019. A report was delivered to government in March 2020, who delayed the release of the report for a year.

The bill will eliminate Manitoba's 37 English-language school divisions and their elected boards, and replace it with an appointed Provincial Education Authority, to be established by the summer of 2022. Once in place, it will handle all collective bargaining in the sector. We anticipate, and are prepared for, representation votes in the sector.

CUPE 998 continues to work on an anti-privatization campaign, with support from staff at national office. The local met with other unions in January to begin collaborating with the Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition. Following the meeting, the Manitoba Hydro Accountability Board was formed to serve as an authoritative voice to respond to Hydro Board statements and media releases. The Accountability Board will provide a counter-narrative to decisions that are not in the public interest. Grassroots community organizing will strengthen our ability to create partnerships and solidarity to fight back privatization efforts.

Our members in the municipal sector continue to be impacted by pandemic-related public health restrictions, resulting in the closure of many municipally run facilities. In Winnipeg, employment security language, maintained over many years despite efforts by the employer to remove it from the collective agreement, has significantly helped reduce layoffs among members of CUPE 500. Political advocacy has also helped to mitigate the impact.

Across the province, our municipal locals continue to work proactively, negotiating agreements to minimize the impact and extent of layoffs in this sector.

Saskatchewan Region

CUPE 5430 faced a challenge in December when the Saskatchewan Health Authority, in consultation with the Ministry of Health, unilaterally tried to mandate our members in Regina to redeploy to a private long-term care facility with a declared outbreak. With support from staff, the local successfully negotiated a principles document that not only ensured voluntary redeployment but also outlined guidelines geared at protecting our members' rights in the event they decided to volunteer.

In the Community-Based Organization (CBO) sector, some of our locals are not receiving full disclosure of provincial government funding increases from their respective employers. This information is, of course, important to our locals as they prepare for negotiations. An access to information request was submitted to the Ministry of Social Services for payment information to the Mackenzie Ventures Society, a group home employer in CUPE's jurisdiction. The response redacted the funding amounts, and we will be requesting a review of this by the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner.

This is just one example of the challenges we face in this sector. CUPE Saskatchewan, working with local leaders and staff, are preparing a campaign against the government's refusal to provide a pandemic wage top-up for workers in the CBO sector. This top-up has been provided to health care workers, but the government's decision to ignore vulnerable workers in this sector is unacceptable.

Alberta Region

At the end of February, Premier Kenney introduced a provincial budget that claimed to be funding services but in fact cut about \$4 billion from health care, education, and other key programs.

Budget cuts included: \$600 million less for health care than Alberta spent in 2018-19; a cut to education funding of \$160 million, even though student enrollment is projected to grow; \$600 million cut from post-secondary education; \$750 million less funding for municipalities. Kenney is cutting funding for the homeless, funding for housing, and funding for fighting wildfires.

And on top of all that, there's \$1.4 billion in further cuts coming by 2023.

The government had originally refused to access federal COVID assistance funds because of the requirement to match the funding. But right before the budget, they announced a "Critical Worker Benefit" program funded mostly with the federal government money. It will provide a \$1,200 one-time payment to front-line critical staff who meet the criteria in several sectors, including healthcare, K-12, and social services. Several groups were excluded. Notably, teachers are not included in the program but EAs are, and the rollout as a whole has been divisive. Almost two weeks after the announcement, employers are still confused as to who qualifies and how to access the funds as they will be responsible for the disbursement.

The Kenney government's Bill 32 introduced an American-style opt-in requirement for use of union dues for political purposes. The changes are an attempt to weaken unions and limit the ability to make democratic decisions to engage in political activity – a direct attack on free collective bargaining and freedom of association in Alberta.

While work continues towards a legal challenge, once we finally know the specifics of the regulations and their impacts, CUPE Alberta and our staff have established a project team to prepare our locals for the work ahead, which includes ensuring they have personal contact information for all of their members, and are prepared to ask those members to opt-in.

Since mid-September, 100% of our 109 Alberta locals have been contacted by our project team, and 81 locals have had a presentation from the team. Thirty locals covering 61 bargaining units have requested access to MRM and 37 bargaining units have already provided their membership lists.

The second phase of member education was launched in early February. This includes workshops on mapping our membership, and building and practicing one-on-one conversation skills asking members to opt-in, as well as more in-depth workshops on changes to the Employment Standards and Labour Relations Codes. The secretary-treasurer orientation training for March is already fully booked, with plans to add another session.

British Columbia Region

Our K-12 Presidents' Council will be hosting a series of classification-specific virtual meetings this spring to hear from members. This is an opportunity for our members to connect and share concerns with others doing the same work across the province.

These calls will guide and inform both the strategic plan for bargaining in advance of 2022, and identify distinct challenges faced by our members based both on region and classification.

CUPE has joined the BC Federation of Labour and other unions in support of an application brought before the BC Supreme Court against Chilliwack School Trustee Barry Neufeld. Mr. Neufeld is a proponent of far-right Christian views. He frequently takes to social media and the public to amplify transphobic, homophobic, and sexist ideas. An application has been made under section 62 of the *School Act*, seeking Mr. Neufeld's removal as trustee regarding a breach of conflict of interest. Specifically, the claim is that he disclosed confidential information related to, and refused to recuse himself from, an in-camera board meeting where an issue in which he had a financial interest was discussed.

This is the same trustee against whom CUPE 411, representing workers at School District 23, filed a complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal in 2017. Recently, the local reached a resolution with the school district, involving a number of very favourable terms that will advance issues of equity for the LGBTQ2+ community in the school district and the surrounding region. The complaint against the individual trustee continues to proceed and will likely involve a hearing before the tribunal sometime next year.

Not unrelated, recent work focused on a by-election for the Chilliwack School District led to a victory for a candidate who secures a progressive balance on the Board. Both municipal and K-12 CUPE locals engaged with their members about the importance of the by-election, and this engagement helped to secure a good result in a high-turnout by-election. The result will serve as an example of the effectiveness of political action to other locals facing local government by-elections this year.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

The serious recruitment and retention crisis in seniors' care is nothing new, but the COVID-19 pandemic has focused public attention on the lack of staff in a system that has been fragmented and weakened by waves of privatization and contracting out under the previous BC Liberal government.

As part of a \$1.6 billion investment to strengthen BC's COVID-19 response in several areas, the province is creating 3,000 new jobs in a Health Career Access Program (HCAP). The program provides on-the-job training and education in partnership with established post-secondary institutions, allowing participants to become qualified care aides upon completion. During the training period, HCAP participants will work as extra staff – health care support workers -- in their facilities and will not be providing hands-on care.

This investment in recruitment and training is welcome and has the potential to help reduce workloads in the long run, if it is done well and is accompanied by a level playing field for wages and working conditions across the sector.

In addition to funding the HCAP program, the \$1.6 billion investment in the COVID response includes funding for thousands of new long-term workers (including screeners) and more than \$168 million to level up wages in long-term care and assisted living.

Airlines

Faced with increasing numbers of members on layoff because of the pandemic, and frustrated with the federal government's inaction, the Airline Division launched a campaign targeting Prime Minister Trudeau: "Mayday, PM Trudeau! Airline workers need your help." Canada remains the only country in the G7 without a plan to support airline workers and ensure there is an industry to return to when the pandemic is over. It is time for the federal government to deliver an aid package that puts workers first and sustains tens of thousands of good jobs in this vital industry.

For a year, our members have been banging on the government's door to get help for their industry in crisis, and the prime minister's response has been to turn the lights off and pretend no one is home. At the same time, the government is negotiating in total secrecy with the airlines.

Secrecy also surrounds the transaction between Air Canada and Transat. The airlines' shareholders voted 91 per cent in favour of the sale in a virtual meeting in December and the Canadian authorities approved the transaction in February. However, Air Canada is still allowed to back out, as other conditions of the deal have not yet been met.

Organizing

For the period of January 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021, CUPE welcomed 1,347 new members in 26 bargaining units, including 697 in emergency and security services, 226 in social services, 162 in municipalities, 128 in healthcare, and 92 new HEU members.

There are currently 91 campaigns under way that, if successful, would bring 20,721 new members into our union. We are also organizing in four representation votes.

In the Atlantic region, we are actively pursuing wall-to-wall organizing, extending our scope to include casual workers in our existing locals. We are organizing early childhood educators in the Tri-County region of Nova Scotia, and contracted security employees in the acute care sector across the province. In Newfoundland and Labrador, we have strong leads in the long-term care and retirement home sector.

In the Maritimes, we have filed at the Labour Board for successor rights after the contract for custodial services was awarded to a different company, and continue to explore opportunities to organize lifeguards employed by the province.

We have had great success in organizing paramedics in Quebec, with nearly 700 new members brought into our union and another 150 members pending certification. We also continue to pursue opportunities in the insurance industry, the communications sector, and public transit.

At Mt. Sinai Hospital in Ontario, we were successful in organizing clerical workers who had previously been represented by an independent union. Many other drives are underway in the province, including a campaign for 700 crossing guards in Toronto and one for casual workers at York Region District School Board.

We continue to prepare for the possibility of another representation vote in health care in Manitoba, and a looming province-wide representation vote in the education sector.

Saskatchewan organizing efforts include a campaign focused on recreation centre workers in Yorkton, and child care workers in Regina.

In Alberta, five current drives could bring in 750 new members in the education and social services sector. We celebrated a successful drive in Calgary which brought 59 new long-term care workers into our union.

In BC, several successful drives brought in nearly 100 new members, and organizing continues to focus on expanding our membership through wall-to-wall organizing, with a focus on contract fitness workers in the municipal recreation sector.

After organizing activity slowed through 2020, HEU has seen an increase in interest and organizing in the long-term care sector is once again in full swing. There is also an active campaign to organize security service workers across more than 25 sites in the Vancouver Coastal Health region.

In Memoriam/Personal

I offer my sincere condolences to the families of the following CUPE members, active staff and retirees who have passed away in this reporting period.

Members

- Giuseppe (Joe) Sottile Local 2
- Shihab Shams Local 2191
- Ma Crestina (Bobby) Tejeda-Baguio Local 8
- Cecilia Cabanilla Local 8
- Jarett Brumsey Sr. Local 5247
- Karen Robertson Local 2875
- Antonio Gaerlan Local 145
- Tom Thomas Local 5430

- Carlo Martelli Local 416
- Emily McLaughlin Local 3890
- Mary-Jo (MJ) Nadeau Local 1281
- Michel Lizée Local 1294 – Retired
- Brian Morgan Local 416 – Retired
- Bill Ferguson Local 900 – Retired

Active Staff

- Barb Bryant National Office

Retired Staff

- Hélène Bourbonnais National Office
- Yvette Painchaud Quebec Regional Office
- Ed Finn National Office

Labour Movement

- Gordie Larkin CLC

In solidarity,



MARK HANCOCK
National President

:tp/ceu