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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2017 – DECEMBER 2017

Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

What a busy few months it has been!

I know CUPE members and leaders across the country have been working hard – at labour-management meetings, at the bargaining table, through municipal elections, and at city council chambers and provincial legislatures – to promote and protect our members' rights and working conditions and the public services we deliver.

With that in mind, I am grateful so many of you made the trip to Toronto in October to participate in our 28th biennial National Convention.

Before convention, I was proud to stand with hundreds of activists from CUPE and other unions in Halifax and speak against Bill 148, legislation that interferes with our right to free collective bargaining.

As always, I appreciated the many opportunities I had to meet with CUPE members this fall – and the warm welcome I received from local presidents in PEI, education and health care workers in Ontario, and members of our provincial locals in BC. And I look forward to so many more in 2018.

National Convention

More than 2,200 delegates attended our 28th biennial National Convention in Toronto, October 2 – 6, 2017.

We accomplished a lot, including adopting 40 resolutions and setting our Strategic Directions for the coming two years. Together, these decisions set a path that will strengthen our great union and commit us to continuing our work of promoting and protecting public services, the rights of the workers who deliver them, and improve living and working conditions for all Canadians.

MARK HANCOCK
National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY
National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

DENIS BOLDOC, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, DANIEL LÉGÈRE, MARLE ROBERTS
General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

In one of the key decisions taken in Toronto, delegates approved a resolution to create a Task Force on Governance to conduct a comprehensive review of the governance and structure of our national union. While I was very disappointed that convention did not approve a constitutional amendment that would add four diversity seats to our National Executive Board, delegates agreed that it is time to assess if our current structure is meeting the needs of our members. You'll hear more about the Task Force in 2018.

In another convention decision, delegates approved a resolution to begin paying strike pay from the first day of a strike or lockout. This will strengthen the position of locals who encounter obstinate and unreasonable demands from employers at the bargaining table. Coupled with the union's renewed bargaining policy, which rejects all attempts by employers to force concessions and two-tier proposals on workers, we now have a full set of tools to take on bargaining in a climate of aggressive austerity.

Strategic Directions commits us to making gains in our workplaces and communities, fighting racism and discrimination in all its forms, and advocating for a better country and world. It calls for a new member engagement program for CUPE locals, and the creation of a campaign program that will train and support our members in their work to defend public services and their fights against concessions.

We have already met with senior staff to review all the decisions taken by convention and are already hard at work on a plan to realize them. You will hear more about the role you can play in this plan in the months to come.

A New NDP Leader

We were fortunate to welcome newly-elected NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh to address delegates on the final day of our National Convention.

Jagmeet has my full support as he takes over the leadership of our party. He brings with him a new focus, tonnes of energy, and much support from urban and suburban communities across the country.

I also want to recognize and thank outgoing NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair. He was dedicated, determined, and did so much to hold Prime Ministers and their governments to account in his years at the helm.

Public Services International

In November, CUPE sent a 7-person delegation to the World Congress of the Public Services International (PSI). Accompanying me were Brother Charles Fleury, Sister Nan McFadgen, Brother Benoit Bouchard, and three staff members in support of the delegation: Sisters Tania Jarzebiak and Kelti Cameron, and Brother Michael Butler.

PSI represents more than 650 unions in 148 countries and territories. The World Congress is an opportunity for leaders and activists from these unions to come together to share strategies and build unity in our collective struggle to promote and fight for quality public services and trade union rights around the world.

Delegates spent the week discussing and debating a Program of Action that sets out objectives for the next five years, focused on “defending a strong democratic state and an inclusive society, committed to ensuring gender equality, respect and dignity for all, economic development for the benefit of all, redistribution of wealth and strengthened workers’ power”.

I participated on a panel focused on the municipal sector: “Heaven or Hell: Sustainable urbanisation and public services” where I shared CUPE’s history of fighting privatization and shared examples of our successful remunicipalization campaigns. Brother Charles intervened during the debate on Just Transition where he called for “full publicly-owned utilities to ensure workers, their families and their communities are part of the energy choices made for the future generations, including a fair and just transition for the workers being displaced”.

Sister Nan shared with the Congress how CUPE conducts an “abilities audit” prior to every CUPE National Convention to ensure our conventions are accessible and inclusive. She challenged the PSI to ensure that conferences and congresses are accessible to all, stating “we cannot take our employers to task without meeting the test ourselves”.

CUPE’s resolution on Canada’s Anti-Terror Act 2015 (Bill C-51) was well received by the Congress. We know that governments around the world have used the “war on terror” to justify the violation of civil liberties and restrict the right to protest. The experiences of our allies in countries such as the Philippines, Colombia, and Turkey show that trade unionists who are fighting against union busting, and indigenous activists fighting against multinational mining companies, are labelled as “national security threats” and “terrorists” to justify shutting down their resistance activities.

In addition to the business of the Congress, this was an opportunity to reconnect and build relationships with our global allies. I attended a meeting of municipal unions from the InterAmerican Region, Brothers Charles and Benoit attended a meeting for energy sector workers, and we met with delegations from Haiti and South Korea.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

All regions have now submitted bargaining plans as required by the NEB Policy on Collective Bargaining. Locals who have not received the plan for their region can do so by requesting a copy from their assigned National Servicing Representative or their Provincial Division.

Despite no new disputes during this quarter, bargaining remains as tough as ever with most employers still holding firm on an agenda of austerity, refusing to share the growth in the economy with the workers who have produced that growth. CUPE's bargaining policy is in play in every region and is assisting our members in resisting concessions.

The policy also requires locals to address issues of workplace violence and precarious work at the bargaining table. These issues are being fought right across the country.

University locals in every region know the face of precarity all too well. Members in this sector are faced with low wages, few benefits, unstable work hours and no job security. For these locals currently in bargaining they are addressing this issue and pushing back on employers through member mobilization and strong strike mandates.

Contract negotiations between the Ontario Hospital Association and CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions abruptly broke down following the employer's refusal to address the issue of workplace violence. The employer has refused to engage in meaningful dialogue on this very important issue.

Nearly half of direct care hospital staff report being assaulted by patients or patients' family members each year. It is widely acknowledged that incidents of workplace violence are under-reported because of fear of employer reprisal, which hinders health care staff from reporting violent incidents.

Protection from reprisal for speaking out, improving health and safety measures such as providing personal alarms for all staff, enhancing internal systems to flag violent patients, and increasing staffing levels in emergency departments and psychiatric units where staff are vulnerable to assault, are key priorities in this round of provincial bargaining.

There were no new disputes involving job action in this reporting period.

| PROVINCE | LOCAL | EMPLOYER | # OF MEMBERS | STRIKE BEGAN | DURATION (days) |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| British Columbia | 1816 | Pacific Blue Cross | 601 | May 13, 2017 | 128 |

Local 1816 – Pacific Blue Cross – British Columbia

The 600 members had commenced job action in the form of work-to-rule, an overtime ban, and small group study sessions in an effort to move towards a settlement prior to taking full out strike action. The employer subsequently locked out the members of Local 1816 who refused to be bullied.

Local 1816 members ratified a new collective agreement with Pacific Blue Cross that includes annual wage increases, preserves retiree benefits, and establishes a health and welfare trust to be managed by joint union-management trustees. The six-year contract includes wage increases of 1.5 per cent for year one (retroactive), 1.75 per cent for year two, and 2 per cent for each of the final four years.

Members, staff, and CUPE BC working together were able to turn back the employer and resist the concession demands sought by the employer.

Regional Services Division Updates

ATLANTIC REGION

Newfoundland and Labrador

Until last month, Newfoundland and Labrador had not fallen for the poisoned deals that are P3s. But that good NL vibe is gone. Premier Ball awarded a P3 contract to a consortium of private companies to design, build, finance, and maintain a long-term care facility in Corner Brook, despite many protests. The details of the so-called partnership remain secret. CUPE NL called on the Liberal government to change the way it makes decisions about infrastructure and services in the province and start being transparent.

CUPE members in Newfoundland and Labrador continued to mobilize against the Liberal government's austerity agenda that worsened with the latest economic update. Key for boosting the health of the economy is addressing unemployment, which is at a disgraceful level in Newfoundland. But instead of getting itself in job-creation mode, the Ball government went into slashing mode, telling health and education authorities to continue to cut spending. This austerity-driven approach has proven to be detrimental to the economy, but this stubborn and ideological government won't listen to reason.

In this context, we can expect that our members in Newfoundland and Labrador will face challenges at the public sector bargaining table and will need the full support of our union. We will be there!

Nova Scotia

With Bill 148 hanging over their heads, bargaining has been challenging for impacted locals in Nova Scotia. Although the bill's constitutionality will eventually be determined by the courts, in the meantime, our members are not getting close to a fair contract. Local 5047, which represents support staff at the Halifax Regional School Board, has applied for conciliation after talks broke off in mid-November. Members have been without a contract since August 2014. Local 1867, highway workers, applied for arbitration after an impasse was declared by the conciliation officer at the end of October. They have been in negotiations since November 2014.

Negotiations are overshadowed by Bill 148, the Public Services Sustainability Act, which took away the ability to bargain significant portions of the collective agreement, including wages, term of agreement, and seeks to impose a major concession with the elimination of the long-service award. It also precludes any arbitrator to rule on those matters.

CUPE members did not sit silent though. They held a huge protest at the legislature in September, and I was glad I could participate in what turned out to be a great success. CUPE members, and workers from other unions, travelled from across the province to let the Liberal government know that we will defend our right to free collective bargaining.

CUPE Nova Scotia also protested against the McNeil government's budget cuts to long-term care across Nova Scotia. On November 17, long-term care workers were joined by friends and family in Inverness to defend quality of care and to demand that the government reverse the cuts.

This fall, the province undertook a "Pension Funding Framework Review". CUPE Nova Scotia presented a submission outlining that the discussion paper for the review failed to address the real concerns of the members and beneficiaries of defined benefit pension plans: ensuring the pension promise is delivered and benefits are protected.

The consultation process is driven by employer desire to reduce their pension commitments as all of the "options" proposed shift the pension plan risk away from employers and on to pension plan members and retirees. CUPE strongly opposed the proposal to allow the retroactive conversion of DB pension plans to TB pension plans.

MARITIMES REGION

New Brunswick

Workers from across the province rallied in front of the New Brunswick legislature in Fredericton on October 24 to protest a continual deterioration of workplace injury compensation in the province. WorkSafeNB has buckled under employer pressures to reduce contributions to the system. Members working at WorkSafeNB, represented by

Local 1866, see the unnecessary harm being done to individuals and their families and want the public to be aware of what is going on.

CUPE New Brunswick also delivered a strong presentation to the working group tasked with reviewing the workers' compensation system. The consultation dealt mainly with the financial situation and overall objectives of WorkSafeNB. Along with making recommendations regarding the governance of the agency, CUPE New Brunswick denounced the current under-funding of the Workers' Compensation Fund.

CUPE and the Federation of Labour recommended funds be restored at pre-1992 levels. This would make it possible to eliminate the 3-day wait period for injured workers, increase benefits, and expedite the claims process by hiring more front-line staff.

CUPE New Brunswick strongly opposes the recent decision of the Government of New Brunswick (GNB) to hand over management of the Extramural Program and Tele-care to Medavie. This deal, like in the case of Sodexo, is a clear case of privatization.

Information sessions were held in different areas to show that this decision to privatize will not even generate short-term savings, and that long-term savings are uncertain, to say the least. The health networks will lose in administrative capacity and in-house expertise: any innovation in management, whether logistic, financial, or organizational, will now be intellectual property of Medavie. Rather than developing "by us and for us", government is handing over present and future expertise for the benefit of the company, which will lower our capacity to ever be able to bring the work back in-house.

On a brighter note, the provincial government announced two major improvements to laws and regulations that will benefit workers in New Brunswick. First, there will be new workplace regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act aimed at preventing workplace violence. The Minister intends to have them in place by April 28, 2018 for the National Day of Mourning. Second, a bill was introduced in the legislature to include first contract arbitration in the Industrial Relations Act. This change, which was long overdue, will help newly-certified unions get a fair first collective agreement.

Prince Edward Island

CUPE PEI held its annual All President's Meeting on December 1st in Charlottetown and I was glad to attend with Brother Charles. Locals from PEI are getting ready for a very busy year: 2018 will see the majority of our collective agreements being open for bargaining. We heard directly from local leaders on the island about a broad range of issues. Unfortunately, violence in the workplace is on the rise and employers are not doing what is needed to prevent it. As well, workload for our members is increasing as government is not willing to increase funding for public services despite growing needs.

On a good note, we were able to push back on a punitive attendance management policy in the health sector, and worked towards a policy which is supportive of workers when they get sick, in order to facilitate their return to work. Hopefully, this approach will have served as an example in other sectors.

Quebec

The municipal elections across the Province of Quebec gave us a few surprises, the best one being the victory of a progressive team in the City of Montréal. The first woman to be elected as Mayor of Montréal, Valérie Plante, with councillors from Projet Montréal, offers a glimmer of hope to the members of Local 301 (blue-collar workers) and Local 429 (white-collar workers), but likewise to our members working for the Montréal Transit Corporation, in Local 1983 and Local 2850. Indeed, the newly-elected representatives are strongly partial to in-house expertise and the development of public transit.

Other good news on the municipal front: we officially gained nearly one thousand new members, employees of the City of Gatineau, as CUPE Local 5400 was certified to represent them. Welcome to CUPE!

Meanwhile, the Laval blue-collar workers, members of Local 4545, have been carrying out job actions, including a ban on overtime hours, as a means of firmly opposing the employer's demands for concessions at the bargaining table.

The Government of Quebec had been dragging its feet in terms of getting on board with improvements to the Quebec Pension Plan (RRQ), as the Federal Government had done with regard to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). But thanks to pressure from the trade union movement, they've finally done exactly that and today we can applaud this decision that will benefit hundreds of thousands of future retirees.

CUPE was before the Supreme Court of Canada on Halloween to challenge the constitutionality of the amendments made to the Pay Equity Act in 2009. This reform undertaken by the Liberals deprived employees of their legitimate right to have pay equity maintained. CUPE, along with other union allies and various community groups, was successful in their challenge before the Quebec Court of Appeal in October 2016 in this litigation. We're now awaiting the decision from the Supreme Court of Canada that will have a significant impact all across the country.

Ontario

In the absence of government leadership, CUPE Ontario has rented a large winterized trailer to ensure the volunteers working to save lives at the Toronto Moss Park overdose prevention site can continue to do their important work.

CUPE Ontario agreed to pay for the trailer after a tent provided by the provincial government did not meet fire regulation. Since August 12, 2017, a collective of over 170 volunteers have set-up and taken down tents in Moss Park. In the first 100 days, Toronto Overdose Prevention Society (TOPS) witnessed 2,611 injections and has stopped or reversed 106 drug poisonings/overdoses.

Thanks to the work of CUPE Ontario's long-term care workers and CUPE Ontario, seniors living in long-term care are now closer to a minimum of four hours of daily hands-on care. Bill 33, the *Time to Care Act*, passed second reading thanks to all party support for an NDP private members' bill that would legislate the minimum care standard.

Currently in Ontario, the only legal guarantees are one on-site nurse 24 hours a day, and two baths a week. CUPE Ontario's long-term care members have been campaigning for these changes for many years, holding community rallies, and bake sales, and building coalitions with family groups. Together they collected close to 70,000 signatures supporting the bill and know of at least 5,000 letters sent to MPPs asking them to vote for the bill.

Sister Candace Rennick, CUPE Ontario's Secretary-Treasurer, has led this fight and was instrumental in drafting the legislation. The fight is not over as we need to make sure the government acts swiftly to bring it to final reading and pass it into law.

I was pleased to speak to a meeting of CUPE education workers on November 11, where school board workers came together to discuss the creation of a Council of Unions to represent the more than 55,000 members in bargaining and defending a central agreement. Since 2008, Ontario school board workers have voluntarily negotiated a central agreement. Earlier this year, the Ontario government legislated central bargaining and as a result, a new structure is required for CUPE members.

Over the course of the day, delegates debated bylaws and a budget for the new Ontario School Board Council of Unions. While not unanimous, support was high at over 80%. The NEB will be asked to approve both the bylaws and issue a charter for this new Council of Unions. An Executive Board will be elected early in the new year and OSBCU will start its preparation for bargaining in 2019.

CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) continues their campaign in support of its 27,000-member central hospital bargaining group's demands for concrete steps towards ending the crisis of violent attacks against hospital staff by patients and family members. Radio, television and social media advertising, media conferences by hospital staff disabled in attacks at work, the release of a major study in partnership with a university, and an escalating campaign of actions by its members continues to unfold.

The union has welcomed the statement of the minister of health, who, when asked in the Legislature recently about hospital sector bargaining and the issue of violence specifically, indicated that the government would invest to make the workplace safer, if it were asked.

OCHU/CUPE is calling on the provincial government to amend both the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Public Hospitals Act to provide protection for employees who report or speak out about workplace violence. These proposed amendments are necessary, the union says, after North Bay Regional Health Centre fired a nurse in 2016 who spoke up about the general problem of violence.

I want to take the opportunity to congratulate Sister Yolanda McClean and Sister Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam, both recipients of awards at the recent Ontario Federation of Labour convention.

Sister McClean was presented with the Cliff Pilkey award for outstanding contribution to the labour movement. Yolanda has dedicated herself to building an inclusive union movement that makes sure the voices of all workers are heard through her work as Second Vice-President for CUPE Ontario, Diversity Vice-President for CUPE National, President of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionist Canada, and an executive member of CBTU International.

Sister Poole-Cotnam was presented with the Olivia Chow Child Care Champion Award for her work as Chair of CUPE Ontario's Social Services Sector, Treasurer of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, member of the Equal Pay Coalition, and an anti-poverty activist. Carrie Lynn understands that affordable public child care is the key to closing the gender pay gap and lifting families out of poverty. This goal has lead her to combine her work as a child care advocate with the fight to erase the gendered wage gap that exists in Ontario.

Manitoba

Restructuring in the health care sector has begun to impact our members within the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, with the regionalization and elimination of hundreds of positions. Our members are frustrated and anxious, and CUPE continues to work to ensure their rights are protected through the process. We are also opposing changes announced to the primary health care pension plan (HEPP) which would see new plan members have reduced rights to early retirement compared to existing members.

Our new regional health care local, Local 204, has held elections and their inaugural General Membership Meeting this fall. While we continue to work with other unions to avoid the representation votes envisioned by Bill 29, we are also preparing for the possibility that they will proceed.

We continue to fight Bill 28, the “Public Services Sustainability Act”, a wage control bill that sets out public sector compensation rates for the next four years. The bill, which was passed in June, has still not been proclaimed and we are moving forward with a court challenge to ensure it never is.

In the meantime, there is agreement among the 26 affected unions in the province that we will refuse any collective agreement that attempts to impose a settlement in line with the wages laid out in the legislation.

Premier Pallister’s late November throne speech laid out the government’s agenda to further slash public services and pursue privatization. Having already introduced schemes for P3 schools in Winnipeg and Brandon, and eliminated transparency and accountability legislation for public private partnerships, the government signaled its intention to use privatization and Social Impact Bonds in the child care and child welfare sectors. CUPE Manitoba is voicing its opposition to these proposals and will continue working with community coalitions to protect and improve public services in the province.

Saskatchewan

The provincial government continues to face collective opposition from the labour movement. In mid-October, members of IBEW working at SaskPower were the first public sector workers to consider the government’s proposed 3.5% wage rollback – and they overwhelmingly rejected it. This vote forced the finance minister to admit that achieving savings through public sector bargaining “doesn’t look promising”, and has emboldened public sector unions in their opposition to the government’s austerity agenda. The government has previously backed down in the face of public anger to other decisions – they reversed a decision to slash library funding, did not proceed with cuts planned to social service agencies, and backed away from legislation that would make it easier to privatize crown corporations.

Most of the province’s public service workers are in bargaining, including 13,000 health care workers. Local 5430 continues to show leadership at the bargaining table by resisting the proposed concessions. At the same time, they are also dealing with mass reorganization of their workplaces as the province moves to implement a single provincial health authority, and the possibility of representation votes.

With the school year in full swing, our members in the education sector are seeing the impact of provincial funding cuts. In some school divisions, there are layoffs and reduced hours, and in many cases, staff on leave are simply not being replaced. This is likely leading to a noted increase in workplace violence, as students struggle with the changes brought about by reduced funding.

CUPE Saskatchewan continues to mobilize members against the government’s agenda, and has planned and executed successful rallies and actions with community groups and coalitions across the province throughout the year.

Alberta

The Alberta economy continues to improve, with economists predicting that its growth will outpace that of every other province in 2018. And despite the business community decrying the government's move to increase the minimum wage, claiming it would hurt the province's hospitality industry, restaurant sales reached record highs over the summer. Alberta's minimum wage is scheduled to reach \$15/hour in October 2018.

Municipal elections took place across Alberta in October, and CUPE members worked with their District Councils and Labour Councils to support progressive and worker friendly candidates in communities across the province.

Despite concerted efforts from conservative forces to unseat Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi and several progressive members of city council, they were handily re-elected – with the help of CUPE members. Mayor Don Iveson was re-elected in Edmonton, and elsewhere in the province, retired CUPE staff members were also re-elected: Bruce McLeod as Mayor of the Village of Acme, and Dianne Wyntjes as City Councillor in Red Deer.

British Columbia

CUPE members in BC and across the country mourned the loss of three workers killed in a tragic workplace accident in the City of Fernie. Two of the victims in Fernie were CUPE members— Chief Facility Engineer Wayne Hornquist, a member of Local 2093 (City of Fernie) and Director of Leisure Services Lloyd Smith, who was also a paramedic (off-duty at the time of the tragedy) and a member of Local 873 (Ambulance Paramedics). The third worker who lost his life was a contractor – Jason Podloski of Turner Valley, Alberta. The three died while making emergency repairs to the refrigeration plant at a community arena. Our deepest condolences go out to their families, friends and co-workers, and to the entire tight-knit community of Fernie.

In the aftermath of the 128-day lockout at Pacific Blue Cross, Local 1816 and CUPE BC have joined forces to ensure that a slate of progressive board members is elected at the benefit provider's upcoming annual general meeting. To date, seven candidates with strong progressive backgrounds in labour activism and community involvement have put their names forward to run for the board of directors of Pacific Blue Cross. The CEO, and architect of the lockout, recently retired without notice, so there is no better time to change the Board and influence the management style at this organization.

In what can be termed the first of its kind, the Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) is working together with the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) to study the extent of precarious work in the sector. CUPE members will be encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences concerning this important issue.

This survey is the result of the work carried out by the Precarious Work Committee – a joint union/employer committee whose purpose is to examine the effects of precarious work, part-time, and casual employment on employees and the continuity of care in the sector.

Health Minister Adrian Dix announced that the new government is initiating a process to establish a standalone bargaining unit for the province's 3,700 paramedics and dispatchers. This is welcome news for Local 873 who were transferred to the Facilities Bargaining Association in 2010. The move to a standalone bargaining process recognizes the unique nature of the services paramedics provide in the BC health care system.

Economic Stability Dividend (ESD) provisions that were included in collective agreements covering more than 250,000 public sector workers will provide an additional 0.4 per cent wage increase in February 2018. The modest boost is based on economic growth numbers for 2016 and will be effective the first pay period starting in February 2018. This newly announced adjustment is in addition to any already scheduled wage increases that were negotiated in the 2014-2019 collective agreements.

Airlines

We are excited to welcome the flight attendants of Flair Airlines to our growing ranks of airline employees. Congratulations to all 101 flight attendants at Flair who will now enjoy the strong representation and broad range of resources CUPE offers to more than 12,000 cabin crew members across 10 different airlines from coast to coast to coast.

We didn't get any good news this fall on the airline safety front. The Minister of Transport, Marc Garneau, refused to reverse the changes to the passenger/flight attendant ratio that the Conservatives had adopted. The Airline Division is also concerned with a recent decision of the Liberal government to allow small knives with blades less than six centimeters in the cabin. This government clearly doesn't have airline safety as a priority.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

HEU organized a two-day Young Workers' Conference in mid-November. Delegates heard from North Vancouver-Lonsdale MLA Bowinn Ma, who shared her experiences and encouraged HEU young workers to get involved and make a difference at work and in their communities.

Ma spoke candidly about getting more involved in politics after actively campaigning against Bill C-51, a controversial anti-terrorism act initiated by Stephen Harper, which threatened the privacy, rights, and freedoms of Canadians.

During the conference, participants – including several attending their first union function – shared stories about the barriers that exist to being more active in the union. They took part in workshops, where they learned the tools for creating successful campaigns, including “Care Can’t Wait”, “Living Wage” and “Fight for \$15”. And they learned some organizing strategies to take back to their work sites.

In the wake of a report detailing a working environment at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital that is rife with intimidation, bullying, and retaliation, HEU is calling for immediate, meaningful action by hospital management and the Island Health Authority to improve conditions for workers and patients.

HEU members are struggling on a daily basis with short-staffing, heavy workloads, and chronic redeployment, which has become endemic throughout the hospital’s operations.

The workplace culture assessment, conducted by independent consultant Vector Group, paints a disturbing picture of a “top-down, heavy-handed, command and control hierarchy” that has bred an atmosphere of fear and mistrust throughout the hospital.

HEU will be requesting an urgent meeting with health authority officials and hospital management. The union will also be working with its members at the hospital to identify the steps that need to be taken to create a working environment where staff are valued and respected for the contribution they bring to the health care team.

Organizing Report

During the period of September 1, 2017 to November 30, 2017, our organizing efforts have brought in new members and protected existing members. The largest new unit represents the employees of the City of Gatineau.

Across the country, we organized 19 members in long term care, 221 members in social services, 22 members in transportation, 14 members in other groups, and 973 members employed in municipalities. We welcome the 1,248 new members into the CUPE family in eight bargaining units. We also protected 423 social services members in four bargaining units.

We are currently involved in 52 active campaigns that, if successful, would bring 10,303 new members into CUPE. At Labour Boards across the country, we have 11 projects representing 498 new members waiting for certification votes to be conducted and protecting 116 existing members. There are three restructuring projects that will protect 1,984 existing members and, if successful, bring in 1,936 new members.

Our efforts to organize flight attendants at WestJet continues to grow and we look forward to making our application for certification to the Canada Board soon. We are also expecting that a vote of RCMP employees, to which we have applied for certification, will be held very early in 2018.

In Memoriam/Personal

Messages of Condolences

I offer my sincere condolences to the families of the following CUPE members, staff, and retirees who have passed away or lost a loved one in the reporting period.

Members

- Wayne Hornquist Member of Local 2093 – British Columbia
- Lloyd Smith Member of Local 873 – British Columbia
- Mike Dick Member of Local 1764 – Ontario
- Gwen Thompson Member of Local 1989 – Ontario
- Susana Pelusi Member of Local 1989 – Ontario
- Laurie Wiley Member of Local 1989 – Ontario
- Robert Boulet Member of Local 301 – Quebec
- Donna Smith Hooper Member of Local 5050 – Nova Scotia
- Lorna Tollman Member of Local 2545 – Alberta

Staff

- Jeff Lawson Servicing Representative –
British Columbia Regional Office
- Jean-Marc Bézaire Servicing Representative – Ottawa Area Office –
Ontario

Retired Staff

- Marie-Anne Churchill Clerk-Typist – Windsor Area Office
- Shirley Montgomery Secretary – British Columbia Regional Office
- James Beattie Servicing Representative – Hamilton Area Office
- Dorothy Olson Secretary – Saskatchewan Regional Office
- Kealey Cummings National Secretary-Treasurer – National Office

In Closing

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to our members, activists, leaders, and staff for your dedication and hard work in 2017. Together, we continue to ensure CUPE members, and all Canadians, have a strong voice on issues that matter to working people.

And I also want to recognize the community and charitable activities of so many of our locals, councils, and divisions – throughout the year, but especially during what should be the festive season and for so many is simply not. Whether you provide hampers, dinners or gifts directly to families in need, or provide funding to community organizations who do the same. CUPE is so very much a part of the communities we serve, but only because of the leadership shown by our locals.

As we approach this holiday season, I hope you find time to spend with friends and loved ones. I wish every member of our CUPE family the best of the holidays and a wonderful 2018.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH' followed by a stylized flourish.

MARK HANCOCK
National President

:fb/ceu