

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

JANUARY 2007 – MARCH 2007

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

Throughout this reporting period CUPE members have been active on a number of fronts.

Three groups, Local 3207 in Regina (Saskatchewan), Local 3251 in Cornwall and Local 3261 in Toronto (Ontario) have been on the picket line; their stories are further on in this report.

Many locals are at the bargaining table in what promises to be another busy year in negotiations.

The federal political scene has been very busy, with daily speculation about a spring election. Our Union is a big part of the CLC-led efforts to secure passage of Bill C-257, federal anti-scab legislation.

The Canadian economy remains a study in contrast. Rampant growth and labour shortages in Alberta, while some regions experience higher unemployment and lay-offs (i.e. Ontario's auto industry).

In addition to the above snapshot, CUPE activists and staff remain extremely busy on a host of local and regional issues.

1. Strikes

Local 3207 Cheshire Homes (Regina, Saskatchewan)

35 group home workers braved the harsh winter elements in Saskatchewan for 47 days in a strike over fair wages.

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A settlement was reached on March 4th after the employer finally agreed to allocate 100% of provincial funding earmarked for the salaries of Community Board organization workers (Social Services Sector).

Congratulations to local President Sister Margaret Mukakigali and all of the members and National Representative, Brother Mike Keith, who negotiated this hard fought for settlement.

Local 3251 Paramedics (Cornwall, Ontario)

70 Paramedics, members of local 3251 commenced strike action on February 26, 2007, after working without a contract since September 30, 2004.

These essential workers are seeking wage parity and were prepared to send the dispute to arbitration. The employer would not agree and instead forced the workers on strike. The City of Cornwall is now spending \$200,000 to develop a new slogan for the city!

Local 3261 University of Toronto Press (Toronto, Ontario)

Members of Local 3261 at University of Toronto Press went on strike March 5, 2007. The warehouse workers at one of Canada's most prestigious printers earn a measly \$9.36 an hour with no benefits. They are seeking a modest \$10.00 an hour with benefits. The University of Toronto owns this printing company.

2. Organizing

To be inserted post NEB

3. Federal Political Scene

Members of Parliament are expected to vote on Bill C-257, legislation to ban the use of scabs during federal labour disputes, on March 21, 2007.

You will recall that late last year the Bill passed Second reading by a margin of 167 to 101 MPs. Since this vote, there have been further parliamentary hearings and an intensive lobby led by CEOs and business groups.

There has been, not surprisingly, some slippage in liberal ranks in terms of support for the Bill. The NDP and Bloc Québécois remain solid in their support. We are fully supporting the CLC's ongoing lobby efforts in what promises to be a very close vote.

There is widespread speculation that a federal election will occur this spring. Most Canadians probably don't want an election and would prefer the current minority parliament to work on pressing issues such as climate change, childcare and post-secondary funding.

I was proud to join hundreds of Ottawa University Students on their National Day of Action on Parliament Hill on February 7th. The Canadian Federation of Students sponsored the Day of Action over the critical issue of rising tuition fees. Many CUPE leaders and activists joined demonstrations from coast to coast.

4. Trade Agreements

New trade agreements and free trade zones between provinces and with certain American states are taking shape and need our attention.

BC and Alberta have signed the Trade, Investment Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) without consulting with their legislatures or their municipalities. This agreement will give extensive new grounds to the private sector to sue local governments for enacting regulations that interfere with profit. This could include municipal zoning requirements, non-profit health care delivery or environmental protection laws.

Atlantica is the free trade zone being proposed for Eastern provinces and New England states. It is intended to avoid American trade regulations by establishing a shipping route from Asia through eastern Canada directly to the USA.

The Pacific Northwest Economic Region is a proposed free trade zone which includes Alaska, Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington in the U.S., and B.C., Alberta and the Yukon in Canada. Corporations in these jurisdictions are intent on increasing privatization and deregulation.

All of these are part of a much larger corporate attack on democracy and threat to the public sector. They should not be seen as restricted to specific regions. They are connected, both in intent and strategy to spread across the continent.

Our union is already working with other unions and our coalition partners to educate and mobilize to demand that the public interest is protected. We will continue to do so and encourage all locals to join us.

5. Quebec Election

Quebecers go to the polls on March 26th as Premier Jean Charest seeks a second term in office.

The Charest government has pursued privatization of health care as well as legislating collective agreements for thousands of public employees including CUPE members.

CUPE Quebec is working through the Quebec Federation of Labour who have formally endorsed the Parti Québécois.

6. Provincial Division Conventions

With spring, comes provincial division convention season, with all 10 provinces scheduled to meet as follows:

CUPE Saskatchewan	March 7-9, 2007	Regina
CUPE Alberta	March 21-23, 2007	Medicine Hat
CUPE New Brunswick	March 29-31, 2007	Fredericton
CUPE Manitoba	April 12-14, 2007	Winnipeg
CUPE Nova Scotia	April 22-25, 2007	Yarmouth
CUPE Newfoundland & Labrador	May 1-2, 2007	Gander
CUPE Quebec	May 7-11, 2007	Quebec
CUPE British Columbia	May 9-12, 2007	Victoria
CUPE Prince Edward Island	May 17-18, 2007	Summerside
CUPE Ontario	May 24-26, 2007	Windsor

Thousands of CUPE activists will debate resolutions and formulate policy to guide our union on provincial issues. Brother Claude and I look forward to meeting delegates and listening to the debates at each convention.

Our provincial division conventions set the scene for our national convention scheduled to be held in Toronto the week of October 15 to 19, 2007.

7. National Women's Task Force (NWTF)

Our National Women's Task Force has been very busy since my last report. The Task Force met in late January to complete analysis of its 2006 consultations and to formulate a report together with recommendations for each provincial division convention.

The feedback from members and locals has been the largest in our Union's history:

- 2,300 members attended 196 consultations in 121 communities throughout Canada.
- A total of about 4,600 individual member surveys were returned to the NWTF.
- Of these, 16.2% were from non-active Union members.
- A total of 300 locals, just over 10% of our locals, returned local union surveys.

The NWTF will both report on the feedback they reviewed and make recommendations on a number of fronts. The recommendations will deal with our union's education, bargaining women's issues and how we might remove barriers women face to full participation in CUPE. The Task Force will also present structural change

recommendations as they were requested to do so within their mandate set by the 2005 National Convention resolution that created it.

I urge each of you to watch for mailings, check in on the CUPE National web site and to attend the provincial division convention in your region so that we may receive your feedback.

As a member of the Task Force, and as National President, I want to share with you how incredibly proud I am that our Union is looking within and encouraging this open and much needed discussion. I also want to pay tribute to an incredibly hard-working group of sisters (both members and staff) who serve on the NWTF.

The goal of the Task Force is to remove barriers that women face in terms of full participation in our Union. This is an important issue for all CUPE members and staff.

A belated Happy International Women’s Day (March 8th) to all CUPE Sisters!

8. Collective Bargaining

In addition to reporting on the strikes mentioned earlier in this report, hundreds of CUPE local’s are currently at the bargaining table.

On average, about one third of our 3,100 collective agreements are open for renewal each year. In terms of some trends in recent CUPE bargaining, the following information from our Collective Agreement Information System (CAIS) is interesting, with respect to the duration of agreements.

For agreements expiring after January 1, 2007:

Sample of 1166 agreements in CAIS inventory

Duration	Agreements	%
1 Year or less	16	1.4
More than 1 Year up to and including 2 Year	121	10.4
More than 2 Years up to and including 3 Year	604	51.8
More than 3 Years up to and including 4 Year	249	21.4
More than 4 years up to and including 5 Year	146	12.5
More than 5 years	30	2.6
Totals	1166	100

Average length = 3.29 years

For agreements expiring after January 1, 2006:

Sample of 1867 agreements in CAIS inventory

Duration	Agreements	%
1 Year or less	39	2.1
More than 1 Year up to and including 2 Year	290	15.5
More than 2 Years up to and including 3 Year	967	51.8
More than 3 Years up to and including 4 Year	352	18.9
More than 4 years up to and including 5 Year	176	9.4
More than 5 years	43	2.3
Totals	1867	100

Average length = 3.23 years

The average length of an agreement has increased slightly, from 2006 to 2007. The number of 1-and 2-year agreements has declined slightly, while the number of 4-year and 5-year agreements has increased slightly. The number of 3-year agreements has remained constant.

9. Regional Reports

Airline Division

Members at Air Canada and Air Transat Components are welcoming their newly elected officers. Our Calm Air members have just ratified a 6-year agreement, which includes wage increases (3% plus cost-of-living allowance each year), longevity bonuses, an increase of 2% to their pension plan, and improvements in scheduling.

HEU

Involving members in the provincial government's "Conversation on Health" has been a campaign focus for HEU. Excellent resource material has been produced to help our members have their say. An Equity Conference is planned for early April where 120 delegates will continue to develop the union's work towards greater equality within the labour movement and beyond.

British Columbia

Cranbrook has terminated its recreation centre P3 deal, proving once again that P3's are ripe for abuse by corporations. Operation of the rec centre will return to public hands. However, the Campbell government insists that any project over \$20 million has to prove why it should not be a P3. This means that our work must increase to meet this demand. An intense campaign is underway to keep sewage treatment out of private hands in the Capital Regional District (Victoria). Given our success in other campaigns, we expect victory here as well.

Our social services sector is under pressure as the government is moving to an independent contractor model of delivery. Our locals are working with the other unions in this sector to attempt to turn this trend around.

Alberta

In spite of a \$7 billion dollar provincial government surplus, Public Private Partnerships are on the agenda in many communities. CUPE locals are campaigning hard to prevent a P3 wastewater project in Taber, and P3 schools in oil-rich Calgary.

Delegates to the Union Agreement Conference in February discussed the economic impact of Alberta's current boom, in particular recruitment and retention challenges for the public sector, and the abuse of temporary foreign workers. A Trades Conference planned for April will bring together members from all sectors who work in trades occupations to address their particular concerns.

Saskatchewan

While much focus has been on the strike at Cheshire Homes, bargaining continues in our other sectors. We've made progress in Saskatoon, and are hopeful that the Regina Civic Coalition will be able to build on the success of their 2006 strike and reach a fair settlement. We continue to lobby for provincial bargaining in the school board sector and, with a provincial election in the offing, are hopeful that our message is being heard. At the University of Saskatchewan, we are working in a coalition with the faculty and middle management association.

Manitoba

Putting passion back into politics is the theme of CUPE Manitoba's March Political Action Conference which will help delegates prepare for the provincial election.

Through the hard work of locals and staff, a number of good settlements have been bargained and disputes have been avoided. Local 500 is developing a campaign to confront the right-wing plans of City Council which continue to threaten our members' jobs.

Ontario

The Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee (OSBCC) is continuing with its Fair Funding campaign. Phase 2 of this campaign intends to put public pressure on the Liberals to change the funding model with emphasis on the following:

- Increased E.A. hours of work related to special education, supervision and workload.
- \$350 million provincial under funding of facilities.
- School closures.

- Community use of schools.
- How the education funding formula fuels support staff cuts.

Hospital locals took strike votes to escalate action in the event the government or the LHINs override the collective agreements to restructure health care. The result was 95% in favour of supporting action. The government has committed not to override the agreements.

CUPE and OPSEU (Ontario Provincial Service Employees Union) comprising of 80 bargaining units in the Association of Community Living (ACL) sector, continue their bargaining efforts to reach agreement on central issues with their employers. As a result of the employers refusing to meet at a central table, negotiations continue to be prolonged.

In a recent round of negotiations, CUPE Housing Unit (Local 416) negotiated innovative language around diversity in the workplace. The language has led to the development of a new partnership agreement between Local 416, Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), Teamsters Local 847 and Goodwill, Toronto.

B.E.A.C.H., Beyond the Block is an employment program for residents of TCHC public housing communities that will work to develop job and employment skills that will allow its participants to gain skills they need to succeed in jobs similar to those performed by Local 416 members at TCHC.

Quebec

At its convention, Local 1500 launched the Charles-Currier Fund to come to the assistance of low-paid workers and promote unionization in Quebec.

The year 2007 is a bargaining year in most universities. Among other things, contracting-out, the hiring of free-lancers, and staff mobility are among the union issues at stake. On the monetary level, the bargaining sessions will be influenced by the settlement in the public and greater-public sector that was signed in December 2005, and, especially, by the solvency of pension plans (notably, in the University of Quebec network and at Laval University). All locals that are members of the Provincial University Sector Council will try to line up the dates of the end of their collective agreements.

Bargaining continues at the Journal de Québec (owned by Quebecor). However, the 250-odd members of our four locals (1450, 1872, 2808, and 3208) fear a lockout that could be announced one of these weeks. Quebecor is trying to completely restructure the various components of its media empire (newspapers, TV stations, internet, cable TV) to the detriment of the workers at the Journal de Québec, by eliminating tens of jobs and transferring their work to other components of the empire.

Over the last several months, the CUPE-Quebec Research Branch published, in collaboration with the Information Branch, a book entitled *At Work and Under Surveillance*. The book's 230 pages constitute a review of the legislation and case law with respect to surveillance and control at work. It explains the principles that guide the various tribunals in this matter, the angle from which they examine the question, and the factors that motivate their decisions. Every local in Quebec received a copy of the book.

New Brunswick

Local 1252, New Brunswick Council of Hospital Unions is in preparation mode for their upcoming negotiations as their current contract expires on June 30th. Bargaining surveys have been provided to its 6500 members which is the first phase of a comprehensive bargaining campaign.

The Minister of Health has officially announced the establishment of a single public sector company, owned by the government of New Brunswick, to enhance ambulance services throughout the province. All individuals employed in this service will be public sector employees. Representatives of CUPE Local 1252 which represents CUPE members in ambulance services have been touring the province to meet with every ambulance service, including public, private and non-union services to communicate with our members and potential members regarding the transitions that will occur. Associated with our actions above, we are actively in the process of organizing 12 non-organized ambulance services in the province.

Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia School Board Council of Unions (NSSBCU) continues to work towards provincial bargaining in the school board sector. Work has been completed on job classifications with the issue of wage rates now being discussed with the government. The Council's goal is to have a full fledged bargaining units by April 1st.

CUPE Nova Scotia has forged a new alliance in the child care sector, with the creation of the Action Coalition on Early Childhood Education Care (ACECEC). This organization shares our goal of creating a public childcare system for working families in Nova Scotia.

Building on the success of their last round of negotiations, Home Support workers recently met and have agreed to continue to coordinate their bargaining efforts which in the past has seen major improvements.

Prince Edward Island

The CUPE PEI division recently hosted a successful Political Action Conference. The conference which was very well attended helped to identify priority issues actions for the anticipated spring provincial elections.

CUPE PEI continues to exert itself in the political process and as such has presented a brief to the Finance Minister in anticipation of his tabling of the PEI budget.

Newfoundland and Labrador

With pending representation votes in the Acute Care sector involving both the western and eastern health boards, CUPE has been actively involved on all fronts with the intent of being the union of choice.

Local 1560, Eastern School District recently held a successful “lunch is on us” event where they fed more than 600 displaced elementary students a free, hot lunch. The event was highly praised by the media.

Local 569, St. John’s outside workers, in conjunction with our communications and research reps, are actively involved in mounting a campaign to bring a new in-house recycling program.

10. Staff Bargaining

Text to come

11. Personal

In closing, I offer my congratulations to the following staff who have announced retirement plans. Thank you to each of you for your dedicated service.

Sister Carole Renaud, National Office (January 1, 2007)
Brother Serge Leboeuf, Quebec Regional Office (February 1, 2007)
Sister Nancy Roussy, Quebec Regional Office (March 1, 2007)
Sister Judith Mae Quesnell, Saskatoon Area Office (April 1, 2007)
Brother David Sarrokanian, Ontario Regional Office (April 1, 2007)
Brother Jacques Sirois, Moncton Area Office (May 1, 2007)
Sister Nancy Gainsford, Brandon Area Office (May 1, 2007)
Sister Ginette Kerwin, Maritimes Regional Office (May 1, 2007)
Sister Catherine Cheeseman, Peterborough Area Office (June 1, 2007)
Sister Sandi Howell-Solc, National Office (August 1, 2007)
Sister Joan Peters, Charlottetown Area Office (November 1, 2007)

My sincere condolences to Sister Pat McTaggart, wife of Brother George McTaggart (former Representative and Education Representative – Manitoba Region) who passed away in February.

I would also like acknowledge our retirees who recently passed away. Sister Mary Bent, January 2, 2007; Sister Margaret Hellard, January 11, 2007; Brother Manning McIntyre, February 25, 2007 and Sister Madeline Anderson, March 1, 2007. My sincere condolences to all the families.

Finally, my sincere thanks to each and every activist and staff member for your efforts day in and day out on behalf of our membership.

In solidarity,

PAUL MOIST
National President

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