



Canadian Union of Public Employees
Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique

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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

September 2013 – December 2013

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

The last quarter of 2013 has been a jam-packed one for our union.

On September 25, 2013, our National Executive Board (NEB) and staff at national office celebrated the 50th anniversary of CUPE's founding convention. The fall season was full of 50th anniversary celebrations, culminating in our national convention held in beautiful Québec City between October 21-25, 2013.

More on the convention later in this report; suffice it to say that the almost 3,000 delegates, alternates, staff, and guests had an event-filled week in commemorating our past and setting clear direction for our future.

This reporting period saw pensions in the news on a number of fronts. Our campaign to double CPP benefits continued with Provincial Finance Ministers and Premiers' meeting, with CPP on the front-burner of both agendas. We are also dealing with the provinces of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Alberta on pension reform.

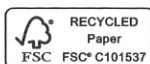
Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippine Islands, the second huge natural disaster in a few short months. Our union provided direct financial support to both Oxfam Canada and our sister union in the Philippines, COURAGE.

While critical issues abound, including high youth unemployment and the devastating impact of Employment Insurance (EI) cutbacks, Canadian politics this fall were dominated by the Senate scandal and ongoing saga of Mayor Rob Ford of Toronto.

As detailed in this report, three small but very stubborn strikes continue in British Columbia and Ontario. I was incredibly proud that our convention delegates gave such a warm welcome to representative members from our three striking locals.

PAUL MOIST – National President / Président national CHARLES FLEURY – National Secretary-Treasurer / Secrétaire-trésorier national

TOM GRAHAM – FRED HAHN – DANIEL LÉGÈRE – LUCIE LEVASSEUR – BARRY O'NEILL – General Vice-Presidents / Vice-présidents généraux



As this report goes to print, we learn of two very regressive pieces of labour legislation being introduced by the Alberta government which will add to the climate of austerity in the province, as well as increasing fines and monetary penalties in response to any illegal strikes in Alberta by public sector units that do not have the legal right to strike.

As we close out 2013, we should reflect on the words of one of our guest speakers at the recent national convention. Aboriginal writer and artist, Tomson Highway, said “unions protect human dignity”. A fitting description to guide us into our sixth decade of service to CUPE members.

1. National Convention: October 21-25, 2013 – Québec City

My sincere thanks to all locals who sent delegates to our historic 50th anniversary convention. It was an event-filled week which included:

- Increasing CUPE strike pay by 50% to \$300/week, our first hike in 16 years.
- Establishing the new CUPE National Sector Council to provide a national meeting for our major sectors in each off year from convention, beginning in fall 2014.
- A spirited rally to support CUPE Local 1638 members (Québec City blue collar workers) facing a hostile mayor and council in bargaining.
- Adoption of a strategic directions policy document to guide our union for the next two years. It includes provisions to continue our economics for workers initiative, our Unite for Fairness campaign, and our commitment to elect Tom Mulcair as Canada's first NDP prime minister in 2015.

Full details on all aspects of the convention are available online at <http://cupe50.ca>.

I welcome all members elected to our National Executive Board and offer a special thanks to Brothers Barry O'Neill and Tom Graham who stepped down after long and distinguished service as general vice-presidents.

2. Federal Scene/Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

Bill C-4

In early October, the Harper government again utilized an omnibus budget bill to introduce a host of non-budgetary matters including granting themselves the exclusive right to determine that a service is essential and the numbers required to provide the service in the event of a labour dispute.

The Toronto Star correctly called this move “a stealth blow to workers”. In year one of the Harper majority, they legislated away bargaining rights for Air Canada, Canada Post, and CP Rail workers. They now seek to arm themselves with a law giving them the right to destroy bargaining rights without having to introduce legislation in parliament.

Bill C-4 also dramatically alters provisions of health and safety regulations under the Federal Labour Code. Workers under the Federal Labour Code have the right to refuse dangerous work; this will now be changed to state a worker must be facing “imminent” danger. Bill C-4 must be read in concert with Bill C-525 which I referenced in my September report. It makes organizing more difficult and decertifying easier in the federal sector.

CUPE has over 20,000 members covered by the Federal Labour Code, including all flight attendants whose safety will be compromised by these regressive changes.

CETA

The federal government announced a tentative Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Union (EU) but few details have been released and it could take up to two years before Parliament votes on the deal.

Of primary concern is speculation on increased pharmaceutical costs due to the extension of two years of patent protection to multi-national drug companies and the opening up of municipal tendering to EU firms.

Delegates to our national convention passed an emergency resolution on CETA clearly directing that CUPE continue to oppose the negative aspects of CETA and to ensure there is open public debate on the deal.

CUPE Statement on Russian Anti-LGBTTI Legislation and the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games

Our union has written the federal government and the president of the Canadian Olympic Committee about Russia’s anti-LGBTTI legislation; for example, Russian law bans the distribution of “propaganda on non-traditional sexual relations”.

CUPE joined more than 100 Canadian organizations in signing an open letter demanding decisive action on this situation by Canada and international authorities before, during, and after the 2014 Sochi Olympics (see <http://egale.ca/all/lgbt-rights-under-attack-in-russia-canadian-civil-society-demands-collective-action-on-sochi-olympics/>).

2013 Sisters in Spirit Vigils

CUPE offered both financial and physical support to the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and the Families of Sisters in Spirit (FSIS) who held some 200 vigils across Canada on October 4.

I was privileged to attend and speak at the Parliament Hill vigil along with a number of members of our National Aboriginal Council. Thanks and congratulations to CUPE Local 3550 (Edmonton Public School Board) who again sponsored a native family member to the Ottawa rally.

Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)

The Harper government has targeted federal employees for concessions, including attacking their sick leave provisions. The Federal Conservative Convention held in Calgary in late October specifically targeted federal employee benefits and pensions.

I was pleased to speak at the PSAC rally in Calgary and our National Executive Board recently met with PSAC national president, Sister Robyn Benson, and pledged our full support to PSAC members in their 2014 negotiations.

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) TV Ads

This fall saw the CLC, with the full support of all affiliates, run a \$6 million ad campaign throughout Canada for a seven week period. The response from union members and the general public has been universally positive.

CLC polling and feedback from affiliates all indicate a very positive response to the ad which projects a positive image of the labour movement.

CUPE members can view the ad online on the CUPE website homepage at cupe.ca. The commercial can be viewed by clicking on the "Fairness Works" icon at the bottom of the page at cupe.ca. It will remain there until fall of 2014 (the CLC owns the rights to the ad for a one year period). From time to time, depending on the news of the day, the Fairness Works links will be featured as the top story on cupe.ca.

When you click on the Fairness Works icon, the commercial will appear in a new window along with links to CUPE's fairness project (uniteforfairness.ca) and the CLC's "Fairness Works" website (fairnessworks.ca). At CUPE's uniteforfairness.ca, you will find information on our member to member project along with the materials for locals. At fairnessworks.ca, the CLC has posted background information on the major themes of this campaign: wages, equal pay, pensions, health and safety, and parental leave.

Future ads as part of the fairness campaign will be discussed next year, including at the May 2014 CLC convention.

In addition, all 55 CLC affiliate unions have pledged to continue the campaign to connect with individual union members through one-on-one workplace conversations.

CLC – Labour College of Canada

The CLC Executive Committee has decided to not hold the residential program in 2014 and work with affiliates on future Labour College programs.

The new residential program introduced four years ago, while a success, has seen numbers fall to under 30 students. The breakeven point is 40 students and the Congress will use 2014 to meet with affiliates to determine how to go forward with this most important advanced union education. Our union remains fully committed to the Labour College of Canada and we will participate fully in the 2014 review.

3. Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

As I write this report, there are four disputes ongoing across Canada:

- CUPE Local 389 – North Shore Winter Club (British Columbia)

With a sense of optimism, negotiations resumed on December 2, 2013. Unfortunately the negotiations did not last long as the employer came to the table with new concessions including reducing the bargaining unit down to seven members and attacking the protection against contracting out.

- CUPE Local 4616 – Township of Bonfield (Ontario)

Sixteen members have been on strike since August 1, 2013. The town council is seeking numerous concessions and the mayor is scabbing at the community landfill. A national strike support appeal was sent in November; please consider a donation. Financial support should be sent to CUPE Local 4616, c/o the CUPE North Bay Area Office, 120 Lakeshore Drive, North Bay, Ontario, P1A 2A8.

- CUPE Local 1281 – Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson (Ontario)

After months of very difficult negotiations, our two members at the Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson were locked out. Two issues are at the center of this dispute: elimination of vacant positions and the employer's request for a two tier wage structure where new members would be paid 10% less than current members.

- CUPE Local 1393 – University of Windsor (Technical/Trades and Maintenance) (Ontario)

Members of CUPE Local 1393 were forced onto the picket line when the university proposed substantial concessions that would reduce wages through an amended job evaluation program. Job security of the members was also at stake as the university proposed language that would impact on their seniority. After 33 days on the picket lines, members voted to accept a memorandum of settlement that contained no concessions and modest wage and benefit increases over three years.

- CUPE Local 4893 – Town of Kensington (Prince Edward Island)

Six civilian members of the Kensington police service were locked out unexpectedly by their employer on December 4. Concessions are not an issue. Wages and benefits and term of agreement remain unresolved.

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
British Columbia	389	North Shore Winter Club	16	May 3, 2013 lockout	ongoing
Ontario	4616	Township of Bonfield	16	Aug. 1, 2013	ongoing
Ontario	1393	University of Windsor (Technical, Trades and Maintenance)	276	Sept 8, 2013	33
Ontario	1281	Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson	2	Sept. 30, 2013 lockout	ongoing
Prince Edward Island	4893	Town of Kensington	6	Dec. 4, 2013 lockout	ongoing

Sixty-three members at the Town of Truro in Nova Scotia have a new four year deal with increases of 3% in each of the first two years and 2.5% in each of the last two years. There were other improvements in the deal.

At time of writing, our members in CUPE Local 151, Thorold, Ontario, have reached an agreement with the municipality. CUPE Local 151 was facing significant concessions and were able to reach a three year deal with wage increases of 1%, 1.5%, and 1.75%; no concessions and improved language with respect to scheduling and overtime.

In Manitoba, members of CUPE Local 3729 at Lions Housing Personal Care Home in Winnipeg were able to achieve their goal of wage parity with other public and not for profit personal care homes. They have ratified a five year agreement that provides retroactive wage increases of 1% in each of the first two years. In 2014, 2015, and 2016, the hourly rates paid to Lions health care aides will be equal to those paid pursuant to the CUPE central table agreement.

Members in the District of Summerland, British Columbia, have a new five year collective agreement which provides for increases in each year providing for an overall increase of 9.75%. The new deal provides for improvements in other areas as well.

4. Regional/Service Division Updates

Newfoundland and Labrador

Municipal elections were held this fall in Newfoundland and Labrador; the following CUPE members were elected town councillors:

- Patricia Cullihall (President, CUPE Local 4934) – Rock Harbour, NL;
- Todd Strickland (Treasurer, CUPE Local 4937) – Port aux Basques, NL.

Our master agreement negotiations for about two-thirds of our members in the province (school board, hospitals, housing corporations, and others) concluded with a new concession-free four year deal. We are currently in discussions with the provincial government regarding sustaining measures for the provincial pension plan.

Nova Scotia

The NDP government, headed by Darrell Dexter, was defeated after one term in office in the October 8 provincial election. CUPE enjoyed good relations with the Dexter government and we will be part of the NDP rebuilding process in the weeks and months ahead.

CUPE Nova Scotia president, Brother Danny Cavanagh, has been elected as chairperson of the Literacy Nova Scotia Board of Directors.

New Brunswick

CUPE New Brunswick has been an active participant with First Nations and other groups seeking a moratorium on fracking in the province.

The government of New Brunswick has introduced legislation to replace the current PSSA Defined Benefit Pension Plan with the so-called “shared risk model” (a target benefit pension plan). I joined CUPE New Brunswick president in an early November meeting with the provincial government where we reiterated CUPE’s view that there are options other than that being proposed which CUPE opposes.

Prince Edward Island

In late September, I was pleased to join CUPE Prince Edward Island health care workers for a public meeting on the renewal of the Health Care Accord, held in Summerside, Prince Edward Island. CUPE activists knocked on over 2,000 doors in federal cabinet minister Gail Shea’s riding as part of our National Health Care Campaign. Our efforts were so successful that Minister Shea wrote constituents stating that CUPE was “spreading misinformation”.

The Prince Edward Island government is reviewing the provincial pension plan and CUPE is working with other unions to ensure that any moves to sustain the plan are measures that have been discussed with us, and that we can live with. Hundreds of workers participated in a demonstration in the provincial capital on November 15, 2013.

Quebec

The CUPE Quebec General Council passed a comprehensive resolution regarding the proposed Quebec Charter of Values in September. The resolution affirms CUPE’s general support to separate church and state through secularism, but also affirms our union’s intention to fully represent any member who faces discipline due to their dress.

Pensions remain a front and center issue in Quebec, with the recently re-elected mayor of Québec City calling for new municipal powers to change pension obligations. As mentioned, our entire national convention demonstrated in support of Québec City municipal workers represented by CUPE Local 1638.

Ontario

CUPE Ontario leadership and activists have been busy this fall period offering tremendous picket line support for the following groups on picket lines:

- CUPE Local 1281 (Continuing Education Students’ Association of Ryerson);
- CUPE Local 1391 (University of Windsor);
- CUPE Local 4616 (Town of Bonfield).

In mid-November, CUPE Ontario held a very successful lobby day at Queen’s Park (the provincial parliament in Toronto).

The ongoing issues with Mayor Rob Ford brought international attention to the City of Toronto. It is ironic in mid-October that both the mayor and a city councilor called for the dismissal of a civic employee for allegedly sleeping on the job. Ford was quoted as saying, an employee being caught in this position was "... a complete embarrassment and a black eye on our city". Talk about the "kettle calling the tea pot black"!

Manitoba

CUPE Manitoba and members from a number of private nursing homes held a very successful rally on the steps of the Manitoba legislature in mid-November calling for increased support to ensure adequate staffing for long term care facilities.

The week of November 18-22, 2013 was the first ever Education Support Workers Week in Manitoba. This proclamation resulted from CUPE Manitoba lobbying to gain provincial recognition to the important work CUPE support workers play in the province's education system.

CUPE Manitoba hosted the president of COURAGE, Brother Ferdinand Gaite, at a number of workplace and community events in early October. Brother Ferdinand had been a guest at our national convention.

Saskatchewan

On September 25, the citizens of Regina voted to approve a P3 wastewater treatment plant in a city wide referendum.

A citizen's coalition, led by CUPE retiree Brother Jim Holmes, forced the referendum by gathering 20,000 signatures on a petition. The city spent near \$500,000 on a campaign to push the P3 option, and despite this pressure, CUPE members and community activists achieved 43% of the public's support and drew much needed attention to the pitfalls associated with P3s.

Alberta

CUPE education and municipal workers, and others, continue to work in coalition with other unions to deal with the Government of Alberta's announced plans to introduce legislation to "stabilize" the Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP).

I was pleased to be in Calgary in late October to speak at the Common Causes "Pros and Cons Conference" and the PSAC rally; both events were associated with the Federal Conservative Party Convention. CUPE activists were in attendance at both events.

As mentioned earlier, on November 27, the Alberta government introduced two regressive labour bills. Bill 46 grants the province the authority to impose a four year agreement on 100,000 members of the Alberta Union of Public Employees. Bill 45 increases penalties, up to and including a suspension of Rand Formula, for units that do not currently have the legal right to strike and engage in strike activities.

British Columbia

CUPE British Columbia leadership, members, and staff were very visible at the November British Columbia NDP convention, which focused on the renewal process which will see a leadership convention in fall 2014.

CUPE British Columbia secretary-treasurer, Brother Paul Faoro, was elected as vice-president of the British Columbia NDP.

K-12 workers continued the ratification process this fall for their new two-year deal; many school boards are protesting the lack of funding commitments from the provincial government. We continue to be in a difficult round of bargaining with CUPE Locals 389 and 1048 in Prince George, British Columbia.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

HEU leadership continue to campaign against raid attempts by the British Columbia Nurses Union for LPNs, and a further raid by PPWC – Pulp and Paper Workers Canada, seeking to represent HEU trades workers.

In early October, HEU led our National Health Care Campaign in the federal riding of Kamloops-Thompson-Cariboo and the federal riding of Vancouver Island hosting a public meeting and knocking on doors to discuss the renewal of the Federal-Provincial Health Care Accord. A large number of Canadians, including those in the two ridings, were unaware of the Health Accord and the Harper government's plan to remove \$36 billion in funding across the country which means a \$4-5 billion cut in funding to British Columbia. The town hall meetings and door knocking with a pamphlet is intended to bring awareness and pressure on to the federal government.

Airline Service Division

Airline division leaders held their biennial conference on October 20, 2013, the day prior to the national convention; it was a successful gathering with all components represented.

The division continues with their 1:40 campaign, in opposition to the federal government allowing certain airlines to move to 1:50 ratio of flight attendants to passengers. This is a key health and safety issue which our union is challenging in the courts. Flight attendants held a successful demonstration in front of Transport Minister Lisa Raitt's office on Friday, November 29, 2013 in Milton, Ontario, which I was pleased to attend.

CUPE has launched a legal challenge in response to the federal government granting a 1:50 exemption to Sunwing Airlines.

5. Organizing Report

Member organizers, activists, and staff have had an active period of organizing activity during the period September 30, 2013 to November 30, 2013. During this period, 1,247 new members in 15 bargaining units joined CUPE. CUPE currently has 10 applications for certification before labour boards at this time. If successful in these applications, CUPE membership would grow by up to an additional 1,482 members. We also are involved in seven restructuring campaigns representing 1,454 members.

Our new members come from a variety of occupations and workplaces including long term care homes, health care, child care, municipalities, social services, and K to 12.

CUPE is currently involved in a number of projects that potentially represents 13,125 public sector employees in 73 new units who are currently not organized. These campaigns are at various stages – in some cases we have made presentations, while in other cases we are at the card signing stage. Each project takes on a character of its own. Certification can be done quickly or it can take up to two years.

We are also, at times, facing threats of raids or decertification. This period is no exception. The biggest threat we are facing is CUPE members in HEU who continue to face raiding attempts by the British Columbia Nurses Union and now Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada. In both cases, these unions are outside the house of labour. Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada are going after trades and maintenance workers. We have over 3,500 members at risk.

In Ontario, government restructuring in the hospital and social services sector will see CUPE involved in a number of representation votes in the coming months.

6. Global Justice/International Solidarity

As always, our union has been busy on a number of fronts in terms of global justice.

- **Typhoon Haiyan – Philippines**

The National Executive Board approved a \$25,000 donation to Oxfam Canada and a \$5,000 donation to our sister union, COURAGE, in response to the devastating typhoon that hit the Philippines in early November.

- Our union issued a solidarity statement in support of Korean education support workers striking over the issues of union recognition and the right to engage in collective bargaining.

- We received a thank you note from Canadian filmmaker and activist, John Greyson, one of two Canadians detained by Egyptian authorities for participating in Tahir Square protest actions. CUPE had leant our voice to demands for the release of the Canadians who had been held without charges being laid.
- Between November 24-December 6, 2013, Sister Kalpona Akter, Executive Director of the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity visited Canada (Vancouver, Ottawa, Québec City, Montréal, and Toronto) to draw attention to the plight of Bangladeshi garment workers.

I was pleased our union could support this tour and that I could attend the luncheon CUPE hosted for Sister Akter at our national office.

7. Personal/In Memoriam

In Memoriam

In memoriam, I offer my sincere condolences to the family of CUPE retiree, Brother Howard (Howie) Atkinson, retiree from the British Columbia Regional Office, who passed away on October 9, 2013.

I also offer sincere condolences to the family of CUPE assistant director of Organizing and Regional Services, Sister Donna Felder, who passed away suddenly on November 4, 2013. My condolences as well to all of Sister Donna's co-workers.

Former Ontario NEB members and CUPE Local 79 member, Sister Muriel Collins, passed away in early November. As well, longtime CUPE activist from CUPE Local 5167 and a former president of the CUPE Hamilton District Council, Brother Bill Hickey, passed away after a short illness on November 21, 2013.

CUPE Local 3876 president, Sister Sharon Gallant, of Nova Scotia, passed away after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

CUPE Local 728 member, Sister Kimberley Hahn, died while recovering from surgery after a workplace accident.

Our condolences to the families and union friends of each of the above mentioned members and staff.

Retirements

I offer sincere thanks, congratulations, and best wishes to the following CUPE staff who have announced plans to retire.

Sister Constance (Connie) Credico – Alberta Regional Office – January 1, 2014
Sister Sylvie Jones – Québec Area Office – January 1, 2014
Sister Anna Sweet – Sudbury Area Office – January 1, 2014
Sister Judy Barry – Alberta Regional Office – February 1, 2014
Brother Gordon Black – Maritimes Regional Office – February 1, 2014
Brother Robert Cull – Oshawa Area Office – February 1, 2014
Sister Ann-Margaret (Margaret) Evans – National Office – February 1, 2014
Sister Danielle Letarte – National Office – February 1, 2014
Brother Doug McLaughlin – Brandon Area Office – February 1, 2014
Sister Sylvie St-Pierre – Quebec Regional Office – February 1, 2014
Brother Jean Pierre Cabana – Quebec Regional Office – March 1, 2014
Brother James Keenan – Barrie Area Office – June 1, 2014
Sister Daunine Rachert – Calgary Area Office – June 1, 2014
Sister Ann Robins – Manitoba Regional Office – August 1, 2014

My sincere congratulations to Sister Susan Shiner (CUPE Local 3017) on receiving the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case. Sister Shiner, a member of CUPE's National Women's Committee, has done groundbreaking work in the area of family services for children and women who were victims of violence.

In accepting the award, Sister Shiner paid tribute to her community allies and to CUPE; she described her union as "the social movement committed to the equality of women". Congratulations, Susan, on this most fitting tribute to your lifetime commitment to equality.

I also offer sincere congratulations to Sister Yolanda McClean, national diversity vice-president (workers of colour) and a member of CUPE Local 4400 (Toronto Board of Education), on her election as president of the Canadian Chapter of the Congress of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU).

8. Conclusion

As always, our union remains incredibly busy as we take our initial steps into our 51st year, onwards towards our first century.

I thank all activists, staff, and retirees for your commitment to CUPE and our collective goal of social justice for all.

Best wishes for a peaceful festive season and the very best to each of you for a happy new year!

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Moist". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'P' and a stylized 'M'.

PAUL MOIST
National President

:jvp/ceu