

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

June 2014 – September 2014

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

The summer period, while often a time to slowdown and enjoy time with family and friends, has been quite a busy period for our union.

Bargaining continued right across our union, with members walking the picket line in Durham Region, Ontario (Local 1764) Naramata, British Columbia (Local 608), the Township of Black River, Matheson, Ontario (Local 1490) and in Quebec (Local 957, 3939 and 3993).

Communities in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba were once again hit by unexpected severe flooding, which saw public employees in both provinces coming to the service of their communities.

On the international scene millions of citizens suffered as war and civil unrest continued in the Ukraine, the Middle East, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, to name only the most prominent hot spots. In addition, the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and its potential to become a global health issue, highlights the dangers that health care workers face daily. Our union must, in concert with global unions, remain a progressive voice for peace, security and social justice for all citizens.

Closer to home, and as detailed within this report, pensions remained a front-burner issue in Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, the City of Regina, and the City of St. John's.

In late June I was proud to march with hundreds of our Ontario members in the Toronto World Pride Parade. On Labour Day I was also proud to speak at and march in the annual Labour Day Parade in Winnipeg, followed by a labour-sponsored family picnic.

Throughout Canada CUPE members and staff have been very visible in pride marches, rallies and Labour Day events. To each and every one of you, thank you for increasing our union's profile and for standing up for our union's values.

1. National Scene

- Notwithstanding that parliament was not in session over this reporting period, things have been busy on a number of fronts.

Canada's economy remains sluggish with very modest growth and high unemployment, especially for young workers, at over 13%. The temporary foreign workers (TFW) program remained in the news as the Harper government made ineffective incremental amendments to a program which was never intended as a cheap labour strategy for service sector employers.

- Canada's Premiers and territorial leaders met for their annual summer meeting in Charlottetown, PEI, from August 27 to 29, 2014.

I was pleased to attend with other CUPE leaders and staff to lobby on critical issues such as health care, CETA and the need to expand CPP/QPP. Our union held a public meeting on the Health Accord with Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians. We supported fully the Premiers' call for a national inquiry into the tragedy of 1,200 murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls.

We also hosted a meeting involving PEI municipal locals, labour endorsed candidates, and mayors and councillors to discuss pressing municipal issues including the infrastructure deficit, and funding options to address this deficit.

I was also pleased to join the CLC and the Federations of Labour leaders in direct lobbying of the premiers. (A copy of CUPE's letter to premiers on issues of importance to our members is available at <https://cupe.ca/council-federation-2014-paul-moist-calls-urgent-action-letter-premiers>).

- Canada's first ever People's Social Forum was held in Ottawa from August 21 to 24th, 2014.

About 3,000 activists from labour, student groups, seniors and other progressive movements rallied and met in hundreds of workshops with the broad goal to reclaim a progressive agenda for our country and to oppose the neo-liberal agenda of the Harper Conservatives.

I was pleased to speak at the commencement of the rally and at a forum on public services. Key CUPE staff also spoke at workshops on water, health care and trade issues.

- Throughout the spring and summer we continued to press the Harper government to reverse their devastating cuts to literacy organizations.

The Centre for Literacy is having to dismantle its library, the largest English-language adult literacy collection in the country, due to the cuts.

We have had tremendous feedback from various literacy groups for our advocacy, many of these groups hesitate to protest on their own for fear of retribution from the federal government.

- Our union has joined many others in offering financial and staff support for the British Columbia Health Coalition and the Canadian Doctors for Medicare to defend public Medicare in the Charter Case being fronted by Dr. Brian Day over the issue of public funding for private clinic surgical services.
- The last national item of interest is a CLC communiqué that confirmed that union membership in Canada increased by 71,000 workers to 4,735,367 workers in 2013 – union density rose to 30.0% from 29.9% in 2012. CUPE's membership as of July 2014 stood at 628,000 members.

2. Pensions

Pension challenges remain the single biggest issue our union has faced over the past year. A brief re-cap of the issues before us, includes:

- In July we submitted CUPE's brief to the federal government on their consultation paper titled, "Pension Innovation for Canadians: The Target Benefit Plan".

CUPE has about 20,000 members who are federally regulated including flight attendants, long shore workers and communications sector staff (largely based in Quebec). Our presentation may be accessed at <https://cupe.ca/pension-innovation-canadians-target-benefit-plan>.

- In early September I attended a special meeting for members of the Regina Civic Employees Pension Plan. Saskatchewan's Pension Regulator is threatening to wind-up this plan due to its funding status. CUPE is leading a coalition of civic unions in defence of solutions to the plans issues which will see the preservation of the current Defined Benefit (DB) plan.
- The city of St. John's is attempting to bargain a new Defined Contribution (DC) plan for all new hires to the city. Locals 569 and 1289 and other civic unions have united in opposition to this proposal.

As we discussed at our last national convention, moving to two-tier wages, benefits or pensions must be strongly resisted by our union, future CUPE members deserve no less from their union.

- In Alberta, CUPE and other stakeholders who are members of the Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) have successfully campaigned to stop the provincial government's plan to introduce legislative changes to the plan.

Legislative hearings were held this summer and the Union Coalition's campaign seems to be working. Our goal is to secure moderate changes which see the DB plan preserved and strengthened.

- Newfoundland's Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP), currently underfunded, and has been the subject of intense consultation/negotiation between the provincial government and various unions, including CUPE. On September 2nd, the Government and the Union Coalition announced an agreement which preserves the DB nature of the plan with certain amendments and a move to joint trusteeship.
- Quebec sees what has been the country's most high profile pension campaign ongoing throughout the summer and fall period.

Bill 3, introduced by the new majority Liberal government, is designed to restructure all municipal defined benefit pension plans in the province. The proposed Act contemplates:

- Imposed 50% - 50% sharing of past benefits
- Imposed 50% - 50% sharing of current service costs
- Prohibition on automatic indexing clauses, and suspension of indexing for current retirees
- The capping of current service costs.

High profile demonstrations have been held and the all-union coalition is being led by CUPE. Legislative hearings began in late August and this promises to remain a very high profile debate. There have been important rallies from active members and retirees and their families on September 20.

- The last word on pensions for this report is to say that the above summary barely scratches the surface, as there are multiple pension issues before our union, and many others.

Beyond these immediate challenges is what I still view the #1 pension issue in Canada, namely that over 60% of Canadian workers with no workplace pension plan and little prospect of gaining one in the current environment.

Hence our continued push for expansion of CPP/QCC, a campaign we must remain at the forefront of with both our voices and resources.

3. CUPE Conferences / meetings

- **International Solidarity/Global Justice Strategic Meeting (June 26 to 27, 2014 – Ottawa)**

About 50 key members and staff gathered to strategize on our important global justice work and how we can continue this important work going forward.

This meeting arose out of a resolution adopted at our 2013 National Convention. Our goal is to present a go-forward vision for this important work at our spring 2015 provincial division conventions.

- **CUPE National Sector Council Conference (October 6 to 9, 2014 – Toronto)**

As this report goes to print, well over 1,000 delegates are registered for this historic first-ever national sector gathering, a decision of our last National Convention.

Profiles of each of CUPE's 11 sectors as well as all other conference information can be found at cupe.ca/sectorcouncil.

In addition to the conference, all locals will be encouraged to join their respective sector steering committees in order to receive updates and to participate in sector specific telephone town hall meetings. Please ask your assigned representative if you need assistance in contacting your sector steering committee.

My sincere thanks to all locals for your overwhelming response to this initiative, which I will be discussing with local presidents on an upcoming series of townhall calls.

- **CUPE National Human Rights Conference (February 5 to 8, 2015 – Winnipeg)**

Plans are well underway for our 2nd National Human Rights Conference. Details will be available for all locals this fall; our National Convention/Conference Assistance Fund will be available for eligible locals for this important gathering.

4. Collective Bargaining / Strikes/Lockouts

There were three CUPE disputes involving job action in this 3rd quarter of 2014, two of which are ongoing.

- **CUPE 608 – Naramata Centre (BC)**

Our dispute at this facility continues with no end in sight. Naramata Centre is a retreat in the Okanagan Valley with ties to the United Church of Canada.

Repeated efforts to speak with the Moderator of the United Church of Canada and the Moderator of the British Columbia Conference of the United Church have been met with silence.

Despite their mounting frustration with no progress, members are solid on the picket line. The employer refuses to look at any option other than contracting out a majority of CUPE jobs as a way forward to financial stability of the facility. We will continue to call on the United Church of Canada to step forward and take a leadership role in this dispute guided by their own approved policies that support and defend free collective bargaining.

- **Local 1764 – Region of Durham, Ontario**

Members of Local 1764 were forced out on the picket lines when the employer sought concessions from only paramedics. After twenty one days on the picket line employees returned to work with a new four year deal with increases of 6% over the term and increased benefits. Paramedics return with a new sick leave plan that pays short term benefits after the 3rd day of illness, 96 hours sick leave (unused days paid out at 50%) and the employer now pays all of the short term benefits rather than forcing members out on EI to qualify for LTD.

- **Local 1490 – Township of Black River Matheson, Ontario**

The Mayor and council of the Township of Black River Matheson deprived residents of municipal services when they locked out the 17 full time members and five students. There are a number of issues that remain outstanding however the main stumbling block is the employer's insistence on moving to a seven day operation for winter control.

The seven day operation would see winter control work provided at straight time rates of pay, saving the Township \$3,500.00 in overtime costs. The Township does not have the staff to cover the seven day operation and as a result overtime will be paid at other times when all staff are required to be deployed for plowing, sanding and salting operations in this Northern Ontario municipality. Members are legitimately concerned that agreeing to the new operating hours will just lead to contracting out.

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
British Columbia	608	Naramata Centre	30	May 15, 2014	ongoing
Ontario	1764	Region of Durham	1,300	June 19, 2014	21
Ontario	1490	Township of Black River Matheson	17	Aug 11, 2014 (locked-out)	ongoing

CUPE members in the British Columbia K-12 sector continue to walk picket lines in support of the British Columbia teachers' strike action. The strike is aimed at moving the government and the Public Schools Employers' Association towards offering a reasonable collective agreement. Talks have not produced any meaningful agreement to date.

Local 1004 at the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver have reached a three-year agreement three days before the start of the annual fair. The tentative agreement runs until December 31, 2016 and provides wage increases of 4.5% over the term, new language for standby pay provisions and new parental/adoption/pregnancy leave provisions.

Showing that political action works, Local 3085 representing employees at Assisted Community Living Selkirk, has postponed a strike that was due to begin August 8, 2014. In a welcomed move to support Assisted Community Living (ACL) employees in Manitoba, the provincial government announced on August 7th that \$6 million in new funding will be earmarked to ensure ACL workers, province-wide, receive fair wages for their important work in supporting Manitobans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The new funding will allow Local 3085 to achieve its goal of a fair wage.

5. Regional Services Division Updates

Newfoundland and Labrador

As mentioned, pension is the #1 issue for many members in Newfoundland and Labrador. Our union will continue to resource our campaigns at the City of St. John's and the Provincial Public Service Pension Plan (PPSP).

The province is set to elect a new premier after the resignation of Premier Kathy Dunderdale earlier this year; this will trigger a provincial election sometime within the 12 month period after the swearing in of the new premier.

Nova Scotia

CUPE Nova Scotia is continuing to plan their major province-wide campaign in opposition to Bills 30 and 37 which reduced the collective bargaining rights of home, community and health care workers.

As well, CUPE Nova Scotia remains a strong voice on the need to restore the cuts made to Canada's Employment Insurance (EI) system.

In July, a memorial service was held in honour of Brother Gareth Drinnan, former long-time President of Local 1867 (Provincial Highway Workers) who passed away earlier this year.

Prince Edward Island (PEI)

As mentioned in this report, PEI hosted Canada's premiers and territorial leaders in late August. CUPE PEI assisted our national union greatly with our Health Accord Town Hall and meeting we held with municipal leaders on fair-funding for towns and cities.

The other key focus in PEI this fall will be our work to support and elect progressive municipal and school board candidates in province-wide municipal and school board elections.

New Brunswick

As this report goes to print the provincial election is well underway with polls indicating the incumbent Conservative government is trailing the Liberals. Brother Mathieu Chayer, a paramedic and member of Local 4848 is running for the NDP, as is Brother Phil Comeau a member of the same local. Brother Daniel Anderson of Local 1655 (Canadian Blood Services) is also running for the New Brunswick NDP.

Our union was very visible in Labour Day marches held throughout New Brunswick.

Quebec

As mentioned, the Bill 3 pension fightback campaign is the key issue our union has faced over the summer season. Legislative hearings began in late August and there have been a number of large rallies, including over 10,000 workers at the Quebec National Assembly in June.

Plans continue as well for "Common Front" bargaining in Quebec which will occur in 2015. Over 500,000 public employees will come under the "Common Front" banner, at a time when the new Liberal government seems fixated on deficits and austerity.

Two locals have served notice of limited job actions to back bargaining demands.

Members of Local 1294 (2,000 trades and services, office, technical and professional staff at the University of Quebec in Montréal) conducted a 24 hour work stoppage; they have been without an agreement since May 2012.

Quebec Hydro technologists (members of CUPE Local 957) have served notice of limited strike action to back up bargaining demands. Their contract expired in December 2013. There was a 24 hour work stoppage on September 5.

Ontario

Under the leadership of CUPE Ontario, many members/locals participated in the World Pride Parade in Toronto, the culmination of the World Pride Conference. Estimates were that over 2 million Torontonians lined the parade route.

Strikes at Durham regional municipality (Local 1764) and the town of Black River – Matheson, occurred during this reporting period.

The key priorities this fall are preparation for province-wide school board and municipal elections in which our union is very active, including the very high profile race for Mayor in Toronto where labour is backing Olivia Chow's campaign.

Manitoba

Collective bargaining has seen CUPE Manitoba very busy with demonstrations in support of the following groups:

- Local 3085 – Association for Community Living – Selkirk and District
- Local 2180 – Tuxedo Villa Personal Care Home

In both instances, multiple demonstrations assisted greatly in kick-starting negotiations and so far, achieving a good settlement for Local 3085 members.

As I write this, dates in later November have been secured for interest arbitration to conclude bargaining for our 8,500 health care workers in Manitoba after two years of difficult negotiations. We are confident that arbitration will secure the best possible deal in the context of the province's zero wage mandate.

Municipal and school board elections will be held in October and through our Labour Council affiliations CUPE locals are very active, including the very high profile race for Mayor in Winnipeg where former NDP MP, Judy Wasylycia-Leis has our backing and is the front-runner according to the polls.

Saskatchewan

The province of Saskatchewan has become a flash-point for P3s in Canada. The Brad Wall government is pushing this privatization model in school boards and in portions of the health care system. The government is also talking about possible privatization of the Liquor Crown Corporation, in whole or in part.

As mentioned, the pension debate at the City of Regina has moved to the front-burner with our national union and provincial division offering full assistance to our Regina membership. The town hall meeting I participated in on September 8th, saw approximately 1,000 active and retired plan members out to learn more about the City's attempts to renege on our deal to secure the defined benefit pension plan. For more information on this issue and our coalition campaign go to honourdeal.ca.

Alberta

The Conservative government is set to elect their 3rd new leader, and premier, in the past 3 years. In an about face, the province has abandoned the P3 model for new school construction, which represents a victory for CUPE Alberta and the campaign they ran against P3 schools.

Local 38 (Calgary inside workers) achieved a strong four year deal after serving a strike mandate from the membership, thereby establishing a solid pattern for other Calgary locals. The Alberta NDP will elect a new leader in mid-October as current leader, Brian Mason has announced plans to step down.

British Columbia

The ongoing British Columbia teacher's strike remains a very high profile issue in the province, with CUPE's 27,000 education workers honouring teachers' picket lines. Our national union is working closely with CUPE British Columbia to fully support our members who are walking the line in support of British Columbia teachers.

Bargaining remains very challenging including in the City of Castlegar where Local 2262 members have secured a strike mandate and are attempting to resolve a very difficult round.

Congratulations to Brother Gerry Shmon, President of the Kootenay District Council who is retiring after many years of dedicated service to all members in the Kootenays.

Hospital Employees Union (HEU)

HEU, like our national union, has offered strong support for the British Columbia Health Coalition's charter challenge in the Dr. Day case. The future of our public health care system is in play in this important case.

Plans are well underway for HEU's biennial convention which will be held in Vancouver, from November 3 to 7, 2014 at the Westin Bayshore Hotel.

Sister Bonnie Pearson, HEU Secretary – Business Manager has announced plans to retire later this year after a long and distinguished career in the labour movement.

Airline Division

CUPE National, in cooperation with our airline division is continuing with our legal challenge to the Harper government's agreement to a 1:50 flight attendant/passenger ratio on aircrafts, a safety issue of primary concern to all flight attendants.

Our Air Canada and Rouge flight attendants are actively preparing for bargaining which will begin in early 2015.

A townhall meeting with members is scheduled on October 2nd.

6. Global Justice / International Solidarity

- **CUPE Council of Canadians Water Caravan in support of the People's Water Board – Detroit, Michigan – July 24, 2014**

I was very pleased to join Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians and Windsor CUPE activists to transport 200 gallons of public water to the people of Detroit who face water turn-offs by their city.

Detroit, with one-half the population it had 50 years ago is in bankruptcy protection and has the highest water rates, by far, in the United States. More than one-half of the city's household are behind in water payments, not because they are irresponsible citizens, but because they are poor.

Our union, the Council of Canadians and now even the United Nations, hold that water is a human right, and our support for the citizens of Detroit brought much needed media attention to this unbelievable situation unfolding so close to our borders.

One final irony, on the day the massive water turn-offs were announced, the state government announced their support to help build a new \$400 million arena for the Detroit Red Wings!

- **American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Convention – July 15-18, 2014 – Chicago, Illinois**

Our American sister union, AFSCME, held their biennial convention this summer where 3,000 delegates gathered in Chicago.

I was pleased to accept their invitation to bring greetings to their delegates who represented their 1.6 million members (AFSCME is the largest AFL-CIO affiliate union)

AFSCME is most interested in our Fairness Project and the numerous pension fightback campaigns we are waging. Of interest, they have since January signed up to over 90,000 members through one on one discussions and through their voluntary member organizer program. (The AFSCME website (www.afscme.org) has details on this program, including convention highlights including my speech to delegates and that of Reverend William Barber, one of the most inspiring speakers I have ever witnessed in person.)

- **Middle East Conflict**

War again erupted in the Middle East with ongoing conflict seeming to be unavoidable, notwithstanding global efforts to secure a cease fire and an end to the Israelis blockade of Gaza.

Our union issued two statements in accordance with our policy on the Middle East adopted at our 2003 National Convention (these statements including our policy can be found on our website at www.cupe.ca)

We also made a \$25,000 donation at the request of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to the Humanitarian Relief Fund for Gaza, ran by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

- **Nigerian HIV/AIDS Deal**

Our Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) played a key role along with other global unions in assisting the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in coming to an agreement with their government and employers on a comprehensive response plan to combat HIV/AIDS in Nigeria.

Our union has worked closely with the CLC, who partnered with the ITUC over the past five years on this important initiative.

- Robert Fox has stepped down as Executive Director of Oxfam Canada, a position he held for nine years. He is being replaced by Julie Delahanty effective October 1, 2014. Our union is proud to represent Oxfam staff and we continue to support Oxfam's leadership on many global issues.

7. Organizing Report

During the period of June 1, 2014 to August 31, 2014 CUPE organized 2,072 members in 20 bargaining units. These members were organized as a result of new organizing initiatives and in some cases representation votes which would include both existing and new members. The largest unit organized was at Radio-Canada in Quebec covering 1,200 technical, tradespersons and production staff. We welcome all of these members into the CUPE family.

Across the country we organized 721 members in health care, 17 members in municipalities, 67 members in social services, 113 members in K-12, 36 members in libraries and 1,200 members in the communications sector.

We are currently involved in 53 active campaigns that if successful would bring 1,478 new members into CUPE. At Labour Boards across the country we have 19 projects representing 1,460 waiting for certification votes to be conducted. There are 13 restructuring projects on-going that will result in representation votes affecting 2,338 CUPE members. In Ontario there are currently five potential representation votes that will go forward affecting a minimum of 1,000 members.

8. Personal / In-memoriam

I offer my sincere condolences to the families of the following CUPE members and retirees:

- Brother Jacques Sirois, retired National Representative (Maritimes) and former NEB member and President of CUPE New Brunswick – July 19, 2014
- Brother Daniel MacLean – Retiree – Sydney Area Office – July 23rd, 2014
- Brother William Mallock, a paramedic and member of CUPE Local 4848 (New Brunswick Paramedics and Dispatchers) who died in an air ambulance crash on August 16, 2014.
- Sister Beth Kastelan, retiree and a former activist with CUPE Local 748 (Kootenay Lake Schools, British Columbia)

Retirements

- Sister Rhonda Spence, BC Regional Office - October 31, 2014
- Sister Danielle Laramée, Quebec Regional Office - August 1, 2014
- Sister Diane Lamoureux, National Office - October 1, 2014
- Sister Paulette Charbonneau, National Office - October 1, 2014
- Brother Don MacAskill, Alberta Regional Office – December 1, 2014
- Sister Diane Thériault, Sudbury Area Office – January 1, 2015
- Sister Linda Craig, Quebec Regional Office – January 1, 2015
- Sister Mary Catherine McCarthy, National Office – February 1, 2015
- Sister Johanne Touchette, National Office – April 1, 2015
- Brother William Sumerlus, Manitoba Regional Office – July 1, 2015

Conclusion

My sincere thanks to retiree, Brother Bob Gower for his gift of union pins and numerous pictures from our union's history in Ontario. I am still collecting CUPE pins and promise that all will find a home on display at our National Office.

In addition to the staff retirements which we always try to profile, there are literally hundreds of CUPE activists taking well earned retirements, and we often don't hear about these.

This summer I received an e-mail from a retired CUPE activist, his words are worth sharing.

"I was a member for almost 30 years of Local 1767....BC Assessment Authority. I served in all but one position of our local. President for 13 years and then Business Agent for another 10 years. I had to retire due to ill health. I was an Occasional Instructor and thoroughly enjoyed it.

I just wanted you to know that CUPE is and always will be in my heart and mind. CUPE will always be my union. Thank you for making my working years so meaningful."
(Brother Mick Currie)

Thank you Brother for your many years of dedicated service to both your co-workers and our union.

And to each and every one of you our staff (past and present) and our local activists, thank you for your commitment to CUPE members day in and day out.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Moist." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PAUL MOIST
National President

:jv/ceu
September 29, 2014