

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MARCH – JUNE 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

This reporting period has been incredibly busy in all regions and sectors of our union.

By far, the biggest story was the May 5th, 2015 election of Alberta's first ever NDP government under the strong leadership of Rachel Notley, which ended 43 years of Conservative rule.

CUPE members in the University sector in Toronto, Southern Rail workers in British Columbia, City of London inside workers and Halifax water workers were on picket lines, and as reported herein, we have achieved good resolutions to two of these disputes due to strong, united membership support.

In Ontario our union is waging a strong campaign against the privatization of Hydro One. In addition to selling all public assets to fund transit infrastructure, the Ontario Liberal government continues to cut funding to school boards, hospitals and social services throughout the province.

On the federal scene the election campaign has all but begun. The Conservatives are feeding their base by pushing adoption of the anti-union Bill C-377 and federal employees' sick leave provisions through their omnibus budget implementation bill.

On the international scene Britain's Labour Party suffered a terrible defeat on May 7th. And the people of Nepal endured a devastating earthquake in late April, which has to date claimed over 10,000 lives. I am proud to report that our union has made two donations of \$25,000 to Oxfam Canada and \$10,000 to our global union, Public Services International (PSI) to assist the people of Nepal.

This report, as is always the case, contains but a fraction of the activities our union is engaged in on behalf of our 630,000 members. My sincere thanks to all CUPE leaders and staff, your activism makes a difference.

1. National Scene

- **Bill C-377**

Conservative senators have again brought forward this Bill, first introduced in 2011. The Bill seeks to impose financial reporting requirements on trade unions, requirements no other groups who receive similar tax treatment face.

The Senate hearings have concluded and the Bill is in 3rd reading at the Senate. However, it remains to be seen if there is enough parliamentary time left for the Bill to be passed, given the House and the Senate will rise in June and won't re-convene until after the October 19th federal election. The other key point is that government sponsored bills take precedence over private members bills such as C-377. We'll keep you posted.

- **Climate Change**

On April 11th, 25,000 trade unionists and activists hit the streets in Quebec City calling on provincial environment ministers (who were meeting in Quebec's capital city) to strengthen Canada's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Many CUPE members were present at the rally.

In mid-May, environmentalists and progressives gathered under the banner of "This Changes Everything", called by author/activist Naomi Klein, the sub-title of the conference was, "From oil shock to energy shift: Building the next Canadian economy". The gathering concluded with a commitment for a progressive alliance under the banner of jobs / justice / climate.

Climate change is arguably the key global issue of our times and our active participation with all progressives is essential.

- **Bill S-221**

CUPE transit workers in Quebec applauded the unanimous adoption of Bill S-221 by the federal Parliament. The purpose of the Bill is to better protect public transit drivers from ever-increasing on the job violence.

- **CRA targeting charities**

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has targeted select organizations for audits due to their charitable tax status. There has been a focus on progressive groups such as the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Oxfam, Greenpeace, Amnesty International and Eco-Justice (to name only a few).

The Harper government has targeted progressive groups while ignoring right-wing organizations such as the Fraser Institute or the Montréal Economic Institute.

Many of the targeted groups plan to make this an issue in the federal election.

• **October 19th Federal Election**

Our federal election plans are in full swing. At each of our 10 provincial division conventions this spring we conducted a federal election breakfast or lunch meeting.

These sessions were well attended and we secured many commitments to vote NDP and to volunteer in an NDP campaign.

Tom Mulcair spoke at both the Ontario and Quebec conventions, with other NDP MPs speaking at the remaining conventions.

For the first time ever in Canadian history three parties will compete for power and our party, the NDP under Tom Mulcair's leadership have fashioned a very progressive platform, which includes:

- \$15 / day child care
- \$15 / hour federal minimum wage
- CPP expansion, return of OAS eligibility to age 65
- Proper funding of Medicare and introduction of a National Pharmacare program.

I urge all of you to get involved with your local NDP campaign, together we can achieve the change we all want.

2. **Alberta Elections**

On May 5th the Alberta NDP under the leadership of Rachel Notley, made history winning 53 of 87 seats and gaining power from the Alberta Conservatives, in office since 1971.

CUPE Research Representative, Brother Ricardo Miranda won in the constituency of Calgary-Cross, Brother Don Monroe (CUPE Local 37 and Alberta Regional Vice-President on our National Executive Board) narrowly missed winning, coming a close second in the Calgary-Greenway riding.

This breakthrough victory shows what hard work and strong leadership can achieve. As the late Jack Layton said, "Don't let them tell you it can't be done." It is a positive message for all of us mere months before the October 19th federal elections.

3. **Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts**

There were seven CUPE disputes involving job action in this last reporting period. Three of these disputes are on-going and four have settled.

- **Locals 227 and 1431 – Halifax Water Commission (Nova Scotia)**

The employer is intent on making changes to the defined benefit pension plan citing their costs as a detrimental to the sustainability of the plan. Members of both the Inside Workers' Local and Outside Workers' Local have taken to the picket line to protect their pension plan.

- **Local 101 – City of London (Ontario)**

The 650 Inside Workers at the City of London were forced out on strike after the employer refused to remove concessions from the table. The employer is seeking concessions with respect to hours of work, benefits and job evaluation. Wages are also in dispute. The employer has sent to the bargaining table a team that is unable to make decisions and requires constant discussion with their principals. Repeated efforts to have the decision makers at the table have fallen on deaf ears.

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
British Columbia	608	Naramata Centre	30	May 15, 2014	318
British Columbia	7000	Southern Railway of B.C.	126	Jan. 5, 2013 (locked out)	119
Ontario	3902	University of Toronto(TAs)	6,000	March 2, 2015	29
Ontario	3903	York University	4,000	March 3, 2015	29
Ontario	101	City of London	650	May 25, 2015	ongoing
Nova Scotia	227	Halifax Water Commission Outside Workers	230	May 19, 2015	ongoing
Nova Scotia	1431	Halifax Water Commission Inside Workers	105	May 19, 2015	ongoing

- **Local 608 – Naramata Centre (British Columbia)**

After 318 days on the line this dispute ended when we were able to negotiate enhanced severance provisions that recognized the years of service and valuable contribution the

employees had made to the centre. We had been notified in early January that the facility was closing permanently ending a nearly 40 year relationship with CUPE. At notification the employer, the United Church of Canada, offered employment standards minimum severance. Throughout this dispute officials of the United Church refused to speak to CUPE despite our repeated overtures.

- **Local 7000 – Southern Railway of British Columbia (British Columbia)**

After rejecting the employer's final offer in a supervised vote the 126 members of Local 7000 were locked out on January 5, 2015. At issue were the employer's concessionary stance at the bargaining table when they would come to negotiate. Over a six month period the employer agreed to meet on only six occasions.

Members approved a deal after 119 days on the line. The deal is for seven years with wage increases and no concessions. Post-retirement health care benefits remain intact.

- **Local 3902 – University of Toronto (Ontario)**

After 29 days on the picket line the sole issue remaining in dispute was the funding package which the governing council of the University refused to move on. The parties agreed to submit this last contentious issue to binding arbitration.

- **Local 3903 – York University (Ontario)**

Three units representing 4,000 teaching assistants, contract faculty and others took strike action on March 3rd after the employer failed to address key demands of Local 3903. The Local is trying to address the low-paid, insecure and precarious employment that dominates York University. After 29 days on the line Local 3903 was able to negotiate the security for their members they had originally sought.

4. Regional / Service Division Reports

British Columbia

Just over 600 delegates met in Vancouver between April 29th to May 2nd, 2015 in the 52nd annual CUPE British Columbia Convention.

A moving tribute was held for all locals involved in strikes/lockouts over the past year, CUPE British Columbia President, Brother Mark Hancock announced during this tribute, a tentative agreement for our locked out members of Local 7000 (Southern Rail), on the line for over three months.

Convention heard a moving address from Stephen Lewis who saluted CUPE British Columbia for their longstanding support for both the Stephen Lewis Foundation and AIDS-FREE World. Delegates also honoured long-time NDP MP, Libby Davies (Vancouver East) who has announced she will retire this October.

Congratulations to CUPE British Columbia President, Brother Mark Hancock, and Secretary-Treasurer, Brother Paul Faoro, re-elected by acclamation to new two year terms.

Alberta

CUPE Alberta's annual convention was held in Calgary between March 18 to 20, 2015.

Delegates debated and dealt with a range of issues including the province's austerity agenda brought about by an over-reliance on revenue from oil royalties.

NDP MP Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre) addressed delegates on the upcoming federal election. Alberta NDP Leader, Rachel Notley addressed delegates on the (then) impending provincial election.

Congratulations to Sister Marle Roberts on her re-election as CUPE Alberta President.

Saskatchewan

CUPE Saskatchewan's annual convention was held between March 4 to 6, 2015 in Regina.

Delegates debated key issues such as P3s and essential services legislation. NDP MP, Malcolm Allen addressed delegates on key federal election issues, including the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Lawyer Peter Barnacle presented a summary of the recent Supreme Court decision which struck down Saskatchewan's essential service legislation. CUPE, along with other SFL affiliates are meeting with the government as the Court ruled the province has one year to enact new legislation which respects workers right to free collective bargaining.

Manitoba

CUPE Manitoba held its 52nd annual convention in Dauphin, Manitoba between April 9 to 11, 2015.

Delegates heard from Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger and NDP MP, Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre), both of whom saluted CUPE members for both their political activism and the key public services members provide day in and day out to serve all citizens.

Delegates debated a range of issues including pensions, political action and CUPE's continued call for a federal inquiry into the 1,200 missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls.

Congratulations to Sister Kelly Moist, re-elected to a two-year term as CUPE Manitoba President.

Ontario

Over 1000 delegates, staff and guests attended the annual CUPE Ontario convention in Toronto between May 27 to 30, 2015.

Federal NDP Leader, Tom Mulcair addressed convention and received a warm welcome from delegates.

Delegates also heard from Sister Lucia McKeever, President of UNISON (UK) and Brother Hassan Yussuff, President of the CLC.

A convention rally was held in concert with the Coalition for Public Power, in opposition to the planned privatization of Ontario's Hydro One.

Delegates debated a range of issues including austerity, school board bargaining and health care cutbacks and privatization. Convention also approved a major restructuring of the CUPE Ontario Executive Board, including an increase in equity seats.

Quebec

About 700 delegates gathered in Québec City for the biennial CUPE Quebec convention.

Delegates gave a warm welcome to NDP Leader, Tom Mulcair and defeated a resolution which called for strategic voting in the upcoming federal election.

Key convention debates focussed on defending pensions and resisting austerity from the Couillard government. Delegates also pledged support for our members at Radio-Canada and the health care and school board sectors, all of who will be involved in representation votes this year.

Congratulations to Sister Lucie Levasseur and Brother Denis Bolduc re-elected by acclamation to two-year terms at convention.

Nova Scotia

Almost 300 delegates and guests met in Sydney, Nova Scotia for the annual CUPE Nova Scotia convention, between April 26 to 29th, 2015.

Front and centre were issues related to legislation introduced by the MacNeil government which sets aside labour rights, including our free collective bargaining rights. The latest attack is Bill 100 which is directed at the Post-Secondary sector, where if a deficit is deemed “significant” right to collective bargaining, including the right to strike, can be set aside. An emergency resolution and demonstration at Cape Breton University was held on day one of convention.

Delegates also debated and adopted a resolution opposing moving the provincial home care system being moved to a competitive bidding model, a province-wide campaign is planned to oppose this government plan.

A moving day of mourning ceremony was held on April 28th during convention.

Congratulations to Brother Danny Cavanagh on being re-elected to a two-year term as CUPE Nova Scotia President.

Prince Edward Island

Just over 100 delegates, staff and guests met at the Rodd Brudnell Resort on May 21 to 22, 2015 for the annual CUPE PEI convention.

Nova Scotia NDP MP, Robert Chisholm addressed delegates on key federal issues, including Employment Insurance (EI) which remains a huge issue in PEI. CUPE Economist, Brother Toby Sanger and Council of Canadians vice-chair, Leo Broderick led a very informative panel discussion on the PEI economy.

Congratulations to Sister Lori MacKay on her re-election to a two-year term as President of CUPE PEI.

New Brunswick

About 250 delegates met in Fredericton between April 15 to 18th, 2015 for the 52nd annual convention of CUPE New Brunswick.

A major focus of the convention was the austerity agenda of the new Liberal provincial government, with delegates committing to back each other up to secure fair bargaining settlements for CUPE members in all sectors.

NDP MP, Yvon Godin (Acadie-Bathurst) addressed the convention and was saluted for his 18 years of stellar service as an MP. (Brother Godin has announced he will not be running for re-election in the October federal election). Delegates held an anti-austerity rally at the New Brunswick legislature.

Congratulations to Brother Daniel Légère, re-elected as CUPE New Brunswick President.

Newfoundland and Labrador

About 125 delegates, staff and guests gathered in St. John's between May 4 to 6th, 2015 for the 41st annual CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador convention.

There will be two elections this fall in Newfoundland and Labrador, the October 19th federal election and a provincial election expected for mid-November. St. John's South/Mount Pearl NDP MP, Ryan Cleary addressed delegates, as did new provincial NDP Leader, Earl McCurdy (a former Fisheries Workers Union leader).

Delegates passed a constitutional resolution to enshrine the CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador affiliation to the NDP provincial party. An emergency resolution protesting budget cuts at Memorial University was unanimously adopted. On Tuesday, May 5th the entire convention attended a Federation of Labour protest at the House of Assembly in St. John's.

Key resolutions included opposition to Bill C-51, and plans to fight any moves to privatize or opt for P3s in the Province. Convention delegates attended the grand opening of the new Newfoundland and Labrador area office which contains rooms dedicated two "founding fathers" of our union, Brothers Tom O'Leary and Tom Mayo.

Airline Division

May 31st was International Flight Attendant's Day and CUPE flight attendants celebrated in Toronto with support from CUPE National.

We continue to fight the shift from flight attendant-passenger ratio of 1:40 to 1:50, especially in light of new procedures announced by the Federal Transport minister in the wake of the Germanwing tragedy in France earlier this year.

Bargaining has commenced with Air Canada.

CUPE's Airline division President, Brother Michel Cournoyer saluted the brave crew members aboard AC 624 which crash-landed in Halifax in late March.

Hospital Employees Union (HEU)

April saw the retirement of HEU Secretary-Business Manager, Sister Bonnie Pearson after a lifetime of commitment to the labour movement, we wish Sister Bonnie all the very best.

Sister Jennifer Whiteside has been appointed as HEU's new Secretary-Business Manager. Jennifer has worked previously for HEU and CUPE and we welcome her back to this key position.

HEU continues to deal with a key issue involving Vancouver Coastal Health Authority where members employed by Aramark will lose their jobs when multi-national Compass assumes responsibility this fall. We continue to deal with representation issues and a potential dispute with the Steel Workers.

5. Global Justice/International Solidarity

- **PSI International-Americas Conference – Mexico City (April 2015)**

Brother Charles Fleury led CUPE's delegation to this important Public Service International conference. Our delegation included Sister Lily Chang (Local 79), Sister Betty Velenzuala (HEU) and Brother Denis Bolduc (SCFP Quebec).

Key issues included, resisting austerity, P3s and regressive trade deals.

- **Jakarta Court cancels world's biggest water privatization**

On March 24, 2015 the Centre Jakarta District Court cancelled the water privatization contracts of SVWZ (PT Pam Lyonnaise Jaya-Palyja) and Aetra, the court found that the so-called PPPs were negligent in fulfilling the human right to water for Jakarta residents.

The court decision is the culmination of 18 years of resistance by residents, trade unionists and other water justice activists.

- **Guatemala – Suppression of free collective bargaining rights**

In late March we wrote the President of the Republic of Guatemala in support of PSI public sector affiliates in that country in opposition to that government's suppression of public sector free collective bargaining rights because of stated public debt challenges.

- **CLC – AFL-CIO joint statement promoting trade deal that work for people over profits**

Senior Canadian labour leaders met with AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka in late March. Trumka was in Ottawa as a keynote speaker at the Broadbent Institute where he spoke against international trade deals that destroy North American manufacturing jobs. A joint CLC/AFL-CIO statement on trade was issued arising out of these talks.

- **59th Session of the UN Commission on the status of women**

CUPE was represented by Co-chair of our National Women's Committee, Sister Sheryl Burns and our Director of Equality, Sister Elizabeth Dandy as part of the Canadian delegation at this annual UN lobby.

Key issues focussed on the advancement of gender equality and the need for decent work around the globe. Delegates sought to amend the political declaration some 20 years after the Beijing Declaration on the rights of women.

- **Nepal earthquake**

The April 25th earthquake in Nepal was the worst in 80 years, claiming more than 10,000 lives and injuring thousands more, one-third of the country's 27 million citizens have been directly affected by the disaster. A second earthquake struck in May.

CUPE has sent \$25,000 to OXFAM-Canada and \$10,000 to PSI's Global Disaster Fund, both groups offer direct, on-the-ground support in the affected regions of Nepal.

- **CUPE's response to the Report of Canada on the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.**

I am pleased to report that under the leadership of British Columbia Equality Representative, Sister Conni Kilfoil, our union has offered comprehensive feedback to the above mentioned UN Convention.

Our National Persons with Disabilities Committee has assisted Sister Kilfoil with this important work.

6. **Organizing Report**

During the period of March 1, 2015 to May 31, 2015 CUPE organized 817 new members in 18 bargaining units. The largest unit organized was at « Centre de réadaptation en déficience intellectuelle et en troubles envahissants du développement de la Mauricie et du Centre-du-Québec - Institut universitaire » in Quebec covering 280 social services workers. We welcome all of our new members into the CUPE family.

Across the country we organized 63 members in health care, 67 members in municipalities, 583 members in social services, 48 members in post-secondary sector, 3 in communications and 9 in the federal sector.

We are currently involved in 54 active campaigns that if successful would bring 10,978 new members into CUPE. At Labour Boards across the country we have 11 projects representing 462 new members waiting for certification votes to be conducted. There are 8 restructuring projects on-going that will result in representation votes affecting 2,620 CUPE members.

7. Personal / In-memoriam

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

Rhonda Ward	Local 3902 (University of Toronto)
Sharon Hundal	Local 4816 (Burnaby Home Health)
Donna Nagus (retired)	Local 1975 (University of Saskatchewan)
Stephen Penny (35 years)	Local 30 (City of Edmonton) – workplace accident
Ven Perez	Local 1483 (Dufferin-Peel School Board)
Hans Engelberts	PSI General Secretary (1981-2007)
Jean Ross	Retired Education Representative (Alberta)
Lanette Bowman	Retired Education Representative (Manitoba)

Retirements

My sincere thanks to each of the following CUPE staff for their many years of dedicated service to our union:

Heather Hibbard	Peterborough Area Office	March 1, 2015
Kelly Murray	Atlantic Regional Office	April 1, 2015
Lorna E Myers	New Glasgow Area Office	May 1, 2015
Kathleen E Corrigan	B.C. Regional Office	June 1, 2015
Donald E Devine	B.C. Regional Office	July 1, 2015
Jill Allyson Currie	Manitoba Regional Office	July 1, 2015
Sylvie Pepin	Quebec Regional Office	July 1, 2015
Elaine Ehman	Saskatchewan Regional Office	August 1, 2015
Sylvain Pilon	Quebec Regional Office	October 1, 2015
Keith A Reynolds	B.C. Regional Office	March 1, 2016
Frances C Robertson	Kitchener Area Office	April 1, 2016
Carole Lefebvre	National Office	April 1, 2016

Conclusion

As detailed in this report, our union has been extremely busy on all fronts over recent months.

The provincial division conventions were energetic gatherings with many first-time delegates in attendance. Debates were vigorous and focussed on representing CUPE members to the best of our ability.

As always I offer my sincere thanks on behalf of our national union to all activists and staff for your ongoing efforts on behalf of the members we serve.

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
June 23, 2015 | 10:20 am