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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2021 – DECEMBER 2021

Sisters, Brothers, and Friends:

I know the last three months have been incredibly challenging for our leaders and activists across the country.

The only predictable aspect of this pandemic that has been with us for twenty-one months now is its unpredictability. New variants continue to threaten our collective progress towards a return to some semblance of normal at work and in our union.

The latest challenge we have faced is the onslaught of various, and varied, workplace vaccine policies. I have an appreciation, based on the correspondence I have received from members in every province, just how much work this has been for our local leaders and our staff.

In the face of these ever-changing challenges, you continue to hold local meetings, labour-management meetings, prepare for and conclude collective bargaining. I am so very proud of the work of our local union leaders!

And while our locals go toe-to-toe with employers, our councils and divisions are supporting their work by taking on local and provincial governments, pushing them to make the right decisions for workers.

National Convention

With all of the challenges you are facing, I want to thank you for making the time to participate in CUPE's 30th constitutional convention last month.

And I want to thank you for the trust and confidence you have shown me with your support for my re-election as your National President. I am honoured and humbled to continue to serve our 700,000 members from coast to coast to coast.

MARK HANCOCK

National President/Président national

CANDACE RENNICK

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorière nationale

PATRICK GLOUTNEY, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER, LEE-ANN KALEN

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

Our first virtual National Convention was, by all accounts, a success. That success was in part a result of having followed on and learned from countless other virtual conventions hosted by CUPE divisions and other labour and political organizations. But it was also the result of diligent work and countless hours by a small staff team working with our service providers to ensure the best possible experience for our delegates.

While our convention was not without some technical hiccups, by and large our 2,167 delegates and 189 alternates took full advantage of the opportunity to participate in the equivalent of our union's parliament. More than 1,000 staff, guests and observers also joined us for the week.

Together, we adopted 31 resolutions (covering an additional 15) and eight constitutional amendments, plus our Strategic Directions for 2021-2023.

We also built on our long and proud history of challenging racism at work, at the bargaining table, in our communities, and around the world, with adoption of a new Anti-Racism Strategy.

Rooted in the knowledge and experiences heard during cross-country consultations with Black, Indigenous and racialized members, the Strategy lays out a six-year roadmap to break down barriers and create a stronger, more inclusive union for the struggles ahead.

The Strategy contains ten key goals which range from increasing representation of Black, Indigenous and racialized people in leadership positions, to expanding training and education opportunities to identify and challenge systemic racism.

These convention decisions have given your new National Executive Board clear direction for the two-year term ahead, and we are ready to get to work.

I congratulate those who are joining our board in new positions: Candace Rennick as our new National Secretary-Treasurer; Richard Delisle as Regional Vice-President representing Quebec; Yolanda McClean as Regional Vice-President representing Ontario; Gina McKay as Regional Vice-President representing Manitoba; and Aubrey Gonsalves as Diversity Vice-President representing Black and Racialized Workers.

I thank Charles Fleury for his ten years of leadership as our National Secretary-Treasurer, and wish him well in his retirement. I also want to thank Gord Delbridge and Carole Neill, who chose not to re-offer as Regional Vice-Presidents, for their service and commitment as members of our National Executive Board.

I offer thanks, too, to Shireen Clark who served our union as Trustee and did not seek re-election, and my congratulations to our newly elected Trustees: Donna Van Kroonenburg, Bob Guenther, and Talitha Dekker.

Canadian Labour Congress

I continue to work closely with the new officers of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) on a variety of significant issues, including holding the new federal Liberal minority government to account.

The CLC has revitalized a working group to combat the rise of the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), an employer-side union that has been undercutting our collective agreements, and even employment standards, across the country in sectors such as health care, education, and construction. Affiliated unions have joined together to discuss how we can work together, under the umbrella of the CLC, to prevent CLAC from organizing new groups of workers and to take back those workplaces where they have gained a foothold.

On December 3, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, CUPE BC General Vice-President Sheryl Burns was recognized for her years of activism and advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities, winning the Carol McGregor CLC Disability Rights Award from the Canadian Labour Congress. It was an honour to have nominated Sheryl for this award, and I truly cannot think of a more deserving recipient. Congratulations!

Public Services International

CUPE has had the opportunity to participate in a number of Public Services International (PSI) meetings and events in the last few months.

In October I joined labour leaders from across North, South and Central America for a meeting of PSI's regional executive committee, and in early December I participated in PSI's Executive Board meetings. These are important opportunities to share the work CUPE is doing to protect and promote public services and the rights of workers who deliver them, but more importantly to hear from public sector unions across the globe about their challenges and victories.

While I couldn't participate in the *Public Forum on Democracy and Social Justice in Colombia* hosted by PSI during the week of our national convention, I was able to record a segment for the forum, sharing my experiences in that country when I visited in 2019. Candace Rennick also participated as a speaker on a PSI webinar to recognize the Global Day of Action for Care entitled: *Unions Defending Care Workers in COVID-19 Times*, and Gina McKay spoke as part of a PSI local and regional government webinar series entitled: *Gender and Intersectionality in LRG Services and Workplaces*.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
Québec	301	Société d'habitation de Montréal (SHDM)		December 8, 2021	1 day
Manitoba	1630	Rolling River School Division	21	Nov. 1, 2021	44 days
Québec	3535	SAQ (Société des alcools du Québec)	800	November 16, 2021	rotating
Québec	5959	Société de transport Laval (STL)	625	Nov. 3, 2021	On-going rotating strike

Strikes and Lockouts

CUPE 301

CUPE 301 members working at the Société d'habitation de Montréal (Housing Corporation of Montréal) held a one-day strike on December 8. This small unit of the Cols bleus regroupés de Montréal have shown their employer that size doesn't matter when you have solidarity!

CUPE 1630

Members of CUPE 1630, representing workers at the Rolling River School Division commenced strike action on November 1, 2021.

Frontline custodians and cleaners who keep the schools clean and safe are dealing with an employer who refuses to negotiate a fair deal. Members of CUPE 1630 are seeking the same general wage increase and duration achieved by teachers and other school division support staff across Manitoba. Twenty-two other CUPE school support staff locals in Manitoba have already achieved the agreement sought by these members.

Support for the striking workers is strong, CUPE locals from across the province, in all sectors, have provided support to CUPE 1630 members on the picket lines.

CUPE 3535

Members of CUPE 3535, representing 800 members working in warehouses and distribution for the SAQ (Société des alcools du Québec) were on rotating strikes for a total of three days in November. A tentative deal was reached, and subsequently voted down by the members. These members are holding strong and have returned to the bargaining table to fight for fair salaries.

CUPE 5959

Members of CUPE 5959, representing bus drivers employed by the Société de Transport de Laval (STL), began rotating strike action on November 3, 2021. After 22 days of bargaining and conciliation/mediation, CUPE 5959 was still not able to reach a new collective agreement.

Amongst the outstanding issues is the employer's demands to change how they manage drivers' routes and schedules which impacts our members' hours of work. Members of the local have voted to increase pressure tactics and are prepared to go on an unlimited general strike if the employer will not negotiate a fair deal. The collective agreement expired on July 31, 2019.

Collective Bargaining

In New Brunswick, CUPE members working in the provincial public sector ratified a five-year contract following a 15-day strike, achieving significant wage increases after years of falling behind the cost of living. More information on this impressive victory can be found in the regional updates below.

In Québec, the School Support Staff Provincial Council (CPSS) signed a sectoral provincial agreement on November 10, 2021. This agreement is a significant gain for school board workers in the province: the employer's contribution to the health insurance plan for part-time employees is increased, four additional job classifications are eligible for the specialized workers premium, and the employer agreed to invest additional sums in the staff training to support special needs students. In addition, the staff training and development budget will now be administered by a joint committee.

CUPE flight attendants at SWOOP signed off on their first collective agreement on September 25, 2021. The five-year agreement included wage improvements and momentum towards industry standard scheduling and pay. All three CUPE 4070 bargaining units have now successfully negotiated first collective agreements, a remarkable achievement especially considering the impact the pandemic has had on the airline industry.

Members of CUPE 3338 and the Simon Fraser Student Society ratified a 5-year agreement on October 7, 2021. The new agreement eliminates a two-tier wage structure and ensures that every CUPE member at the Society will be guaranteed a living wage by 2023. The local structured their bargaining committee to ensure diverse representation from equity groups.

Regional Updates

Maritimes Region

New Brunswick

CUPE members in New Brunswick have demonstrated clearly that standing together in solidarity gives us the power needed to make gains at the bargaining table, even when faced with an anti-union conservative government. Workers' wages in New Brunswick had been stagnant for more than a decade. By mobilizing over a period of more than three years, and having a strike involving some 22 000 members, CUPE locals earned a major victory.

When the legislature resumed on November 2, CUPE New Brunswick held a massive rally in Fredericton. The event was well-attended by CUPE members and allies from across the province. They were joined by leaders and activists from the CLC, the NB Federation of Labour and other unions, as well as CUPE leaders from Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, PEI, Quebec and Ontario.

On November 19, 10 out of 11 CUPE locals who participated in the 15-day province-wide strike completed bargaining and ratified tentative agreements. More than 20,000 members from 10 locals walked the picket lines (CUPE locals 1190, 1251, 1252, 1418, 1840, 1866, 2745, 5017, and 5026). Through coordinated bargaining and coordinated strike action, they were successful in achieving above-inflation wage adjustments in each year of the new 5-year contracts. CUPE 963, representing NB Liquor employees, had also completed a strike vote but reached a tentative deal before joining the picket lines.

CUPE 1253, representing school bus drivers, custodial, maintenance, and trade workers continues to pursue a negotiated agreement.

The final settlement for the 10 locals brings wage increases between 15% and 17.9% over 5 years. Casual workers who were earning 80% of wages will now earn 100% of wage rates, which results in an increase of over 35% for these workers and a sensible pension improvement. I must congratulate the bargaining team for this achievement, which is in line with CUPE's bargaining policy in fighting against precarious work and its impacts on workers.

In the municipal sector, Miramichi outside workers represented by CUPE 1387 and inside workers represented by CUPE 3863 reached four-year collective agreements with many language improvements in addition to wage increases of 2% for each of the first two years. CUPE 1387 secured an increase of 2.25% for each of the last two years of the deal, while CUPE 3863 bargained a \$0.50/hour adjustment in the first year for the four lowest pay bands, as well as 2% for each of the last two years of the agreement.

Employees of the Town of Riverview represented by CUPE 2162 reached a deal without any concessions and a wage increase of 2.25% per year for four years.

Prince Edward Island

The municipal employees of the City of Summerside, represented by CUPE 804, achieved a three-year collective agreement with wage increases of 7.5%. The deal also provides a wage adjustment for members who will receive provincial certification for water distribution.

Locals in the health care sector in Prince Edward Island signed a collective agreement with the province in November. Members of CUPE 805 (Queen's Health Authority), CUPE 1051 (West Prince Health Authority), CUPE 1778 (Kings County Memorial Hospital and Riverview Manor), and CUPE 1779 (East Prince Health Authority) will receive a wage increase of a total of 5.9% over three years. The four CUPE locals together represent over 1,000 workers in healthcare classifications such as orderlies, utility workers, cooks, ward clerks, maintenance trades, sterile processing technicians, power engineers, painters, and cashiers.

Atlantic Region

Nova Scotia

On November 30, long-term care workers rallied province-wide in Nova Scotia to highlight the staffing crisis in the sector. Hundreds of CUPE members demanded action from the Nova Scotia government to support long-term care workers and residents by increasing staffing levels and wages. Many changes are needed to meet the basic needs of residents and the province isn't acting fast enough. Workers are exhausted and are leaving the sector, and recruitment continues to be a challenge. There is little incentive to working in a job with mandated overtime and cancelled vacations, in a short-staffed work environment that creates continuous stress, where wages are so low that many workers must work two jobs just to get by.

Twenty-five rallies were held during the province-wide day of action. Participants got the attention of Nova Scotians and the media, but the Conservative government's reaction was disappointing. The Seniors and Long-Term Care Minister only committed to making an announcement in the near future, but has never consulted worker representatives, showing how little this government cares about residents and workers in the sector.

The Nova Scotia School Board Council of Unions (NSSBCU) negotiated a protocol with the Department of Education in order to start bargaining in the new year. For the first time, the NSSBCU will be representing all CUPE members working in the sector at a provincial table.

Newfoundland and Labrador

The Newfoundland and Labrador Division held an in-person convention from September 16 to 18 in Corner Brook. It was the only in-person division convention in 2021 and I was privileged to be there, along with Charles Fleury who was attending his last Newfoundland and Labrador convention as National Secretary-Treasurer. After all these months of virtual gatherings, it was great to feel the energy of a convention hall, and spend time with members outside of convention hours as well. Debates were passionate and stimulating, as always.

The government of Newfoundland and Labrador adopted legislation to eliminate elected school board trustees in favour of a smaller board where trustees and government officials will now be appointed rather than elected. The stated objective is to “create efficiencies” within the system, starting with a shared services model for human resources and payroll, maintenance, IT, etc. The technical briefing actually uses the word “etc.” when discussing shared services. A public schools branch is being created that will be directly responsible for the hiring of teachers and other student services staff. We expect this will have an impact on union representation in the sector.

On October 14, after a marathon bargaining session over the course of several days, municipal workers in Grand Falls-Windsor, represented by CUPE 1349, reached a tentative agreement with their employer. The agreement put an end to a 14-week long lockout of approximately 100 members who work in recreation services, fire dispatch, administration, taxation and finance, road maintenance, water and sewage, municipal enforcement, and engineering and planning.

The collective agreement is effective retroactively from January 2, 2021, to December 31, 2025. The deal includes wage increases, a signing bonus, as well as improvements to call-in language that will allow greater work-life balance for casual workers. The union proposed a new stabilization fund that will ensure accountability, affordability, and transparency for the health benefits plan, which the town agreed to.

CUPE 1349 members stayed strong and united throughout this unnecessary lock-out, and the deal they have achieved reflects exactly that.

Québec Region

The Québec government continues to manage the health and social services sector by ministerial orders. The measures imposed are completely inadequate to address staffing shortages and the unbearable pressures on the workforce. CUPE, in partnership with other health care unions, filed an unfair labour practice complaint with the Labour Tribunal in order to force the government to bargain adequate measures with the unions, and to respect its constitutional obligation to bargain in good faith.

The unions are asking government to look beyond temporary premiums to resolve the crisis and to seriously consider the measures that we have been proposing for years. Months after the ministerial order was adopted, they still fail to attract and retain staff in the sector, even though the needs on the ground are glaring. This shows that the Minister of Health is on the wrong track.

In the municipal sector, general elections were held on November 7. Eleven of the fifteen largest cities have new mayors, including a record number of women. At the bargaining table, several agreements were concluded without conflict. For example, in September the white-collar workers at the City of Montreal (CUPE 429) ratified their new agreement, and a deal was reached on November 9 between the City of Montreal and CUPE 930, which represents nearly 600 crossing guards. Bargaining took place in an open and constructive climate. Also, in Saint-Hyacinthe, the blue-collar workers represented by CUPE 4636 reached a satisfactory agreement after ten bargaining sessions, with significant gains in job security.

In Saguenay, CUPE 2466, which represents the city's employees, is celebrating the holiday season this year with a campaign to help the marginalized and underprivileged in the community, partnering with the Maison d'accueil pour sans-abri de Chicoutimi. The employees want to lend a hand to those who have suffered the most during the last two years of the pandemic.

Ontario Region

In the absence of the provincial government issuing province-wide guidelines for COVID vaccinations for workplaces, employers are now enforcing mandated vaccination policies. Many major public sector employers have introduced policies which include a “vaccinate or terminate” position.

Arbitrators in Ontario have begun issuing awards addressing COVID vaccination mandates including the reasonableness, and impact, of workplace policies mandating vaccination, or vaccination and testing, and the consequences of non-compliance. The leading case to date is Arbitrator John Stout’s decision in *Electrical Safety Authority v. Power Workers’ Union*. What emerges from the decisions thus far is that policies will be held to the standard of reasonableness, both in general and as applied to individual employees, as arbitrators will carefully consider surrounding circumstances. This means a case-by-case assessment is necessary in more or less every situation. In sectors that don’t involve the care of vulnerable individuals, employers may well be required to accept testing in place of vaccination, at the employer’s cost but on the employee’s time. Where a policy provides for testing as an alternative, a refusal to comply is likely to be sufficient grounds for termination. Finally, employers are entitled to require disclosure of an employee’s vaccination status.

As the Ford government prepares itself for a provincial election in June of 2022, the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) released a report in the first week of December letting Ontarians know that over the first half of 2021-2022, the Province of Ontario spent \$4.3 billion less than planned – much of that underspending was in sectors where our members have been struggling to provide much-needed public services, working short, and working for wages that are not keeping up with rampant inflation. In other words, the government has “saved” money on the backs of workers.

CUPE Ontario is gearing up their mobilizing efforts to defeat the Ford government on June 2, 2022 and elect a pro-worker NDP government.

Following National Convention, the CUPE Ontario executive board elected Yolanda McClean as their Secretary-Treasurer. Yolanda not only becomes the first Black woman to serve in this position in CUPE Ontario but also the first person from the school board sector to hold one of the two officer positions. Congratulations Yolanda!

A significant win was achieved by workers at the Hillcrest Activation Centre, members of CUPE 5439, who after over two years of intense campaigning and bargaining, achieved an arbitrated first collective agreement. The award was a ‘home run’ victory after the Board deemed the hospital as the appropriate comparator for their purposes.

Details of the award include wage increases ranging from \$5.66/hour to \$11.53/hour, with an additional 3.25% increase over two years. The local was also awarded many of the terms and conditions of the hospital central agreement, including pension, sick leave, maternity and parental leave top ups, increased vacation entitlements, hospital benefit plans, and most of the job security protections. The work done by these members had previously been contracted out, and after facing significant public pressure, the employer, the University Health Network, finally agreed to bring the workers in-house as direct employees.

Manitoba Region

CUPE Manitoba held a successful annual convention virtually from October 20-22, where delegates joined from across the province to set priorities for the coming year and elect a new executive board – including the new equity representative positions adopted at their last convention. Significant work was done to update the division's bylaws, and delegates also adopted a forward-looking policy paper which focuses on several key priorities including political action, organizing, and internal renewal.

Congratulations to Gina McKay, who was elected President, and to all the members of the incoming CUPE Manitoba executive board!

The past few months have seen the importance of strategic coordinated bargaining in the province.

In health care, coordination has resulted in a solidarity commitment between all of CUPE's locals in the sector to a shared bargaining strategy, supported by an overwhelming strike mandate of 97%. Bargaining continues to be slow and difficult, and a strike committee is preparing for action in the event it becomes necessary.

In school sector bargaining, a solidarity pact was reached among CUPE locals that establishes a minimum wage mandate equivalent to that achieved by the Manitoba Teachers' Society in several districts and includes a commitment that no local will accept an agreement that will negatively impact another local. This pact has allowed more than 23 of our locals to overcome the previous government-imposed wage mandate, securing meaningful increases of 1.6%, 1.4%, 0.5% plus a cost of living allowance over a four-year agreement.

Saskatchewan Region

I had the opportunity to join the CUPE delegation at the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour convention in October. Congratulations to Kent Peterson on his election to the role of Secretary-Treasurer of the federation.

CUPE 5430, representing more than 13,000 health care workers across Saskatchewan, is calling on their employer to address the critical staffing shortage in the sector.

Staffing was a problem before COVID-19, but the pandemic has definitely exacerbated the situation for workers and for patients and residents as well. On top of the slow downs in surgeries, therapies, and other services due to staff shortages and redeployment, rural communities are facing temporary closures and shutdowns because of recruitment and retention issues. Food services in long-term care facilities have been affected, as has access to home care.

Recruitment and retention issues also mean that our members are working excessive overtime, consistently working short, being denied holidays, and repeatedly called to come into work on days off. To make matters worse, rampant precarity in the sector is causing workers to reconsider their career choices. A look through the government health care postings found that of the 1,400 jobs posted across classifications only 180 were permanent full-time jobs.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority continues to react to short staffing by implementing short term measures. Instead, the local is calling on the employer and the government to commit to market supplements, better wages, and full-time permanent jobs to fix the staffing crisis.

More than 250 members of CUPE 5435 have ratified their first collective agreement after almost eight months of bargaining made more difficult by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group homes run by CBI Health, where members of the local are employed, have experienced some of the highest staff turnover rates in the province because of low wages, a lack of benefits and job security, and poor relationships between workers and management. Most members of Local 5435 work as community support workers and childcare workers, supporting the vulnerable children and adolescents living in these homes. While the work is rewarding, it is often difficult, and burnout is always an issue. The local is optimistic this agreement will give them the tools and protections to improve their working conditions.

Alberta Region

Jason Kenney and his government used the fall sitting of the Alberta legislature to continue its attack on unions and workers. They introduced and passed legislation aimed at restricting the ability of unions and organizations (like the Alberta Federation of Labour) to conduct advertising and advocacy campaigns. Bill 81 will have far-reaching implications not just for CUPE's election-related advertising campaigns, but also any political advertising outside of the election window. This is in addition to Bill 32, passed previously, which restricts the ability of unions to collect dues for this kind of spending.

The UCP also passed changes to election financing which will affect spending limits for political parties, but also introduces a loophole allowing 'dark money' to get into the hands of political parties. Existing rules had restricted parties from collecting donations from corporations, unions, and non-Alberta residents. Amendments to the act will allow non-receipted donations during nomination contests (including corporate and out of province money) which can then be transferred to party coffers.

Local government elections were held in Alberta on October 18. There was concern that conservative groups would make inroads in several cities, but the unpopularity of the provincial government served to help elect progressive and centrist politicians. In Edmonton, progressives and centrists won about two-thirds of the council seats, while former Liberal MP Amarjeet Sohi easily won the mayoralty race over his conservative opponent. In Calgary, nine new councillors and the new mayor were all endorsed by the CUPE affiliated “Calgary’s future” group. In Medicine Hat, former CUPE Research Representative Linnsie Clark defeated the incumbent mayor by a large margin. Across the province, with a few exceptions, candidates who ran on platforms of fighting the Kenney/UCP agenda were successful, while conservative candidates were often defeated.

Municipalities continue to face difficult rounds of bargaining. Ten of our 60 bargaining units are currently in bargaining. Employers are proposing wage freezes, contracting out, and other job losses. We are hopeful the new councils will change the direction of bargaining; however, we are also aware that, regardless of the political affiliation of a council, municipalities are being starved for funding by the UCP government.

CUPE is seeing an increased interest from non-union workers in social services, after a recent media story focusing on CUPE’s recent successful battle to certify employees at Alpha House in Calgary. The sector includes many difficult jobs that, while rewarding, are often stressful, usually precarious, and frequently underpaid. We currently have 12 locals in Alberta representing workers in the sector under 21 collective agreements.

British Columbia Region

In the wake of the latest extreme weather event to strike BC, a series of three “atmospheric rivers” that brought record-levels of rain through the Fraser Valley and parts of the Interior in November causing mudslides and wide-spread flooding, CUPE members stepped up and came to the aid of their communities.

This is especially true of dispatchers and ambulance paramedics who responded to medical and other emergencies, and municipal workers who were called in to protect critical infrastructure, assess and close roadways to keep drivers safe, and help with evacuation efforts.

Many members worked through the night as flood waters rose and were unable to protect their own homes. And they continued to work long hours to assist with clean-up and rebuilding.

CUPE BC’s executive board established a Disaster Relief Fund to support CUPE members impacted by these events. And at a meeting just prior to our National Convention, CUPE’s National Executive Board committed to a donation of \$100,000 to community agencies providing support in the hardest hit areas of the province.

CUPE members at Prince George Public Library voted overwhelmingly to ratify their first collective agreement on November 9. The CUPE 4951-04 bargaining committee had met with the employer for six intense days of bargaining that concluded on October 29. The fifty workers voted to join CUPE in April, following a major restructuring of their workplace.

The collective agreement provides job security and increased wages and benefits for the workers, and locks in protective policies that were previously workplace procedures. Members believe that the contract will improve communication and foster a better relationship with the employer.

CUPE 8911, representing over 500 9-1-1 operators, dispatchers, IT and support staff working at Emergency Communications for BC Inc (E-Comm), have launched a campaign to raise awareness about the critical state of the services they provide.

A recent report commissioned by E-Comm concluded that the company is hampered by an understaffed system and recommends that the current roster of 153 full-time call takers and other staff needs to increase by 125 to meet public demand.

The union is calling for both an immediate infusion of financial resources into E-Comm to address the operational problems, and a coordinated effort by municipalities to update the organization's funding formula to prevent future crises.

CUPE 23 recently won a major arbitration that brings overdue equity to parks and recreation members at the City of Burnaby. The ruling – impacting over 200 members working in Clerk 1, 2, and 3 positions – will increase wages one to two dollars per hour on average. All members covered under the arbitrated settlement will also receive retroactive pay to January 1, 2016.

Clerks working at City Hall had received a wage increase through a job re-classification, but the same increase was not given to parks and recreation clerks doing the same work. Not only was this inherently unfair, but it created a retention problem because many parks and recreation clerks would apply to work elsewhere in the city. The local has been fighting this pay inequity for years. In 2016, the bargaining committee negotiated a memorandum giving the local the right to grieve if an agreement could not be reached through job evaluation.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

More than 530 delegates gathered virtually for HEU's 32nd Biennial Convention from November 1-5, 2021 where they made significant changes to the union's constitution and bylaws that expand equity group representation on the union's Provincial Executive. Delegates overwhelmingly supported the addition of five equity seats and one young workers' representative to the Provincial Executive.

Delegates adopted a number of constitutional changes and resolutions on everything from ending dues on overtime hours and increasing strike pay, to action on affordable housing, recommitting to our work on truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and reaffirming HEU's decades' long program to establish a common collective agreement standard for all its members.

Barb Nederpel and Betty Valenzuela were re-elected to their respective positions of President and Financial Secretary, and Meena Brisard was confirmed as Secretary-Business Manager. Congratulations to Barb, Betty, Meena, and the rest of the 22 members elected to the Provincial Executive.

Following the provincial government's August 30 announcement that it will end 21 commercial contracts with a number of health authorities, HEU has been working to ensure a seamless transition that will see more than 4,000 workers brought back under the direct employment by health authorities from their current private contract employers within the next year.

Last month, 235 workers at six sites—Saanich Peninsula Hospital, Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health, Glengarry Hospital, Aberdeen Hospital, Gorge Road Hospital, and Priory Hospital—were among the first workers to be returned in-house since the government's announcement.

These sites were among many hospitals and health-authority operated care homes to have housekeeping and food services contracted out to for-profit, multinational corporations when the former BC Liberal government enacted the *Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act* (Bill 29).

The health care workers coming back under health authorities will be covered by the province-wide Facilities collective agreement and will see improved wages and benefits as a result.

Airlines

CUPE's Airline Division held its convention online just prior to our National Convention. Delegates from all airlines locals and components got together to reflect on the challenges faced by the industry and to plan for the months ahead. Although our members are not yet back working at pre-pandemic levels, we can be optimistic for the coming years, as airlines are increasing flights at a good pace.

Air Transat and WestJet announced a partnership to cooperate on a codeshare that will allow customers to book transatlantic travel involving both carriers on a single ticket with through-checked bags. This type of commercial agreement allows both carriers to operate independently and without any bargaining unit disruption, while increasing convenience for travelers.

Not long after this announcement, CUPE's Air Transat Component reached an agreement with the employer to extend the collective agreement for a year, avoiding all the concessions that were being requested by Transat. The Component was also able to settle a dispute regarding the 2020 wage adjustment.

Organizing

For the reporting period of September 1, 2021 to November 30, 2021, CUPE welcomed 1,262 new members in 23 bargaining units, including 526 in healthcare, 463 in social services, 232 in the municipal sector, and 18 in transportation.

There are currently 107 active campaigns underway that, if successful, would bring 22,224 new members into our union.

In the Atlantic region we currently have 7 active campaigns which could see 541 new members, with 300 of those in the emergency and security services sector.

In the Maritimes there are 14 active campaigns in various sectors including social services, municipal, health, education, post-secondary and emergency and security services. If successful we would welcome 2990 new members into our union.

Of the 13 active campaigns in Quebec, 11 are targeting firefighters and if successful would see an additional 295 firefighters welcomed into our union. We also have an active campaign in the municipality of Ville de Victoriaville which could bring 250 new members into CUPE.

In the Ontario region there are currently 31 active campaigns with the potential for 14,000 new members, including two active campaigns at the University of Waterloo that could bring 4,000 new members into CUPE.

The Manitoba region has 8 active campaigns, with the majority of those campaigns being in the education sector. If successful CUPE would be welcoming 1,267 new members into our union.

In Saskatchewan we currently have 3 active campaigns which could bring 175 new members into CUPE.

In Alberta there are 4 active organizing campaigns that could welcome 595 new members to our union, including the Parkland School Division where we are actively pursuing 300 workers. Three of the active campaigns are in the social services sector.

We have 25 active campaigns in BC with the potential for 2,094 new CUPE members. There are active campaigns in several sectors, including post-secondary education, where we hope to organize 1,000 research assistants at the University of Victoria.

HEU continues to organize in health care, with 2 active campaigns in long term care.

In Memoriam/Personal

I offer my sincere condolences to the families of the following CUPE members, active staff and retirees who have passed away in this reporting period.

Members

- Lorna MacKinnon Local 441 – BC
- Brenda Finley Local 1015 – AB
- Larry Sokolowski Local 3500 – AB
- Kathleen Rutledge Local 3500 – AB
- Cheryl Charun Local 3500 – AB
- Sherril Jeffrey Local 3500 – AB
- Norman McIntosh Local 3785 – ON
- Mike Irwin Local 2167 – BC
- Dean Roy Local 1393 – ON
- Steve Sanderson Retired – Local 1521 – ON

Retired Staff

- Govind Sundram Assistant Regional Director
British Columbia Regional Office
- Adrien Charette National Representative
Edmundston Area Office
- Cynthia Wishart Regional Director
British Columbia Regional Office

In solidarity,



MARK HANCOCK
National President

:tp/ceu