

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT DECEMBER 2019 – MARCH 2020

Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

2020 began with our annual meetings with staff across the country. This was an opportunity to discuss the priorities established by our 2019 National Convention and our plans to implement them.

We also discussed the various challenges our members and locals are encountering in the face of government austerity agendas, public sector funding cuts, and obstinate employers. In some provinces, we are facing governments who are also attacking our rights to free collective bargaining and collective political expression.

As always, I appreciated the opportunity to engage with staff on these and other conversations about our collective efforts and common goals. Their dedication to and support for our members and our union is key to the work that lies ahead.

Trial Procedure

One of the most significant changes made by delegates at last year's National Convention was the adoption of a new Trial Procedure to deal with complaints and offences under the National Constitution. This new procedure comes into effect on June 1, 2020.

With this new procedure, trials will be conducted outside the local union, by three members selected from a regional roster of trial panelists. A call for nomination for trial panelists went out to all chartered organizations in January, and the panels will be appointed by the National Executive Board at our March meeting. Panelists will be provided with training this spring to ensure they are prepared to fulfill their new role.

National Committees

Our 18 National Committees were appointed in January for the new term, and will gather in Ottawa at the end of March. At their first meetings they will review their terms

MARK HANCOCK
National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY
National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

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General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

of reference, along with Strategic Directions and resolutions adopted by our National Convention. Together, these will provide guidance in the development of committee workplans.

Privatization

We are facing a new threat to privatization in this country, courtesy of the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB). Originally envisioned as a source for affordable loans for large, cross-jurisdiction projects, the CIB has announced support for only nine projects since 2017. The latest, and smallest of these projects, is cause for alarm.

It is a \$20 million commitment to the water and wastewater project in Mapleton, Ontario, and it marks a move away from the stated intent of the CIB, and towards the privatization of small municipal water systems across the country. The Mapleton project is a classic public-private partnership, which would transfer the operation and maintenance of a municipal water system to the private sector, and lock the municipality into a long-term contract with a private operator that cares more about a return on investment than on a high-quality, accessible water and wastewater system. This could encourage predatory private-sector companies to search out small municipal water systems to take over in order to access CIB funds.

CUPE will always be there to defend any threat to public water, but we need to know as soon as the threat arises. I ask CUPE members across the country to be on alert for any moves by your communities to privatize our public water systems.

When we pay attention to what is going on in our communities, we can catch potential privatization threats early in the process, and fight back. And when we fight back, we win. That's what happened in Maple Ridge, where CUPE 622 has successfully pushed back at attempts to privatize the services at a new community centre. Thanks to proactive intervention and a strong campaign to garner public and political support CUPE members will be delivering the programs and services when the Albion Community Centre opens later this year.

Picket lines and protests

2020 has seen significant action as workers, environmentalists and Indigenous peoples exercised their Charter rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

13 Unifor members were arrested on the Co-op Refinery picket line on the evening of January 20. I was so proud of our CUPE 21 members who, as the Regina Police Service attempted to break the Unifor picket line that night, exercised their right to refuse the work. That show of solidarity was vital to Unifor's ability to hold the line. That kind of solidarity is the cornerstone of our movement, and it is the reason why I flew to Regina the next day. When worker and labour rights and freedoms are on the line, you better believe that CUPE is going to show up and join the fight.

The fight in Regina is the same as what we are experiencing on our own picket lines in New Brunswick, where in some cases employers are making plans to lock our members out and bring in scabs to do our work before we even issue strike notice.

Recent protests held across the country in support of the Wet'suwet'en have also called attention to the power of collective action.

The time has come for us to have a conversation about the value of picket lines and protests. Our rights to organize, collectively, as a union and as a movement, are what give us our strength. And while those rights are not absolute, we need to examine the impact of the restrictions being placed on those rights by the courts.

We also need to re-engage with our members about the importance protests and picket lines have played in our history, and the gains we have made because of them – not just for our members but for workers across the country. It's time to reinvigorate our picket line culture in this union, to get more creative, and to reinforce the mantra that I learned in my early days as an activist: "A picket line is a picket line, and we do not cross."

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

There is no question that the Canadian labour movement is at a crossroads. The Canadian Labour Congress is struggling with a loss of membership, and revenue, as a result of the departure of Unifor in 2018 and the Carpenters' union being sanctioned for raiding us in 2019.

CUPE has been frustrated with the political direction and leadership of the CLC for a number of years now. We also have grave concerns about the finances of the Congress, which played a significant role in the recent strike by CLC staff.

The upcoming CLC convention, being held May 4 – 8 in Vancouver, is our opportunity to help re-set the labour movement in Canada. With 700,000 members, CUPE is unquestionably the largest union in Canada. And we are determined that CUPE will have a significant presence at this convention, with a goal of electing new leadership and achieving important constitutional changes.

This means we need our local unions to step up and participate by sending delegates to convention. Every CUPE local is affiliated directly to the CLC through the national union. Locals with a membership of 1,250 members or less can send one delegate, and every additional 500 members increases delegate entitlement by 1.

If your local has not yet requested convention credentials, please contact my office as soon as possible.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

There were three disputes involving job action during the reporting period; two were resolved.

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
Newfoundland and Labrador	3768	Town of Holyrood	15	Feb. 4, 2020	10
New Brunswick	4193	Nepisiguit-Chaleur Solid Waste Commission	21	Feb. 13, 2020	ongoing
New Brunswick	508	City of Fredericton	120	Feb. 13, 2020	5

CUPE 3768 – Town of Holyrood

Municipal workers at the Town of Holyrood were locked out by their employer after several failed attempts at conciliation. The 15 employees, members of CUPE 3768, voted in favour of strike action just hours before arriving at work to locked facilities. The employees provide snow clearing, water and sewage treatment, and clerical and accounting services to the town. An agreement was reached on February 13, providing for a 6.5% increase over the term of the agreement.

CUPE 4193 - Nepisiguit-Chaleur Solid Waste Commission

Workers at the Nepisiguit-Chaleur Solid Waste Commission were locked out by their employer. The 21 members of CUPE 4193 learned of the lockout from a security guard outside the facility when they showed up to work on February 13, 2020.

The collective agreement expired December 2017, and management walked away from the table earlier in the month. Issues remaining on the table at the time were non-monetary, including notice for sick days and unpaid union leave. This lockout was the first conflict since the workers unionized more than 20 years ago.

CUPE 508 – City of Fredericton

Fredericton made history on February 13 by serving a lockout notice to its outside workers, who keep the city moving, which includes snowplow and other heavy

equipment operators, water and sewer systems operators, and engineering and service technicians. CUPE 508 issued the strike notice on February 13 following another futile day at the bargaining table with no enhanced offer by city management. The collective agreement expired December 2018 and since then the main issue on the bargaining table has been fair wages. Fredericton outside workers are paid less than their counterparts in Moncton and other municipalities in the province. An agreement was reached, and the workers were back on the job on February 18.

Non Strike-lockout Bargaining

CUPE 2348 - Indigenous Women's Healing Centre

Employees at the Indigenous Women's Healing Centre in Winnipeg have ratified their first collective agreement.

Article 21.13 Ceremonial Leave, allows "employees wishing to take part in traditional Indigenous ceremony(s) such as a Sundance or healing ceremony up to four (4) paid working days leave per calendar year, provided that such leave is authorized by the employer in advance".

The new contract also recognizes June 21, National Indigenous Peoples' Day, and September 30, Truth and Reconciliation Day as paid holidays for staff.

The Indigenous Women's Healing Centre works to support and strengthen Indigenous women and others on their journey of healing and recovery from family violence, addictions, intergenerational issues, and institutionalization.

CUPE 4500 - Coast Mountain Bus Company

Members have ratified a new four-year collective agreement with Coast Mountain Bus Company that includes wage increases, significant benefit improvements, and other provisions that address concerns the local has raised since bargaining began in late 2018.

The agreement includes an 11.5 % wage increase over the life of the contract, a skilled trades adjustment in the first year, and retroactive pay back to January 1, 2019. The agreement also calls for CUPE flags to be flown at all six Coast Mountain bus depots in the Lower Mainland.

CUPE 4979 – Municipality of Saint-Côme

Blue and white-collar employees at the Municipality of Saint-Côme in the Lanaudière region signed their new collective agreement on February 18, 2020. The five-year contract calls for wage hikes of 2.5% in 2019 and increases equal to 2% in subsequent years or to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is greater.

The parties also agreed on the establishment of a member-funded pension plan (MMFP-FTQ), the introduction of a summer schedule for the public works department, and the addition of a statutory holiday and a day of personal leave for everyone. In addition, the municipality will be providing union members with work clothes going forward.

CUPE 2541 – Alma Library

In Alma the library workers, members of CUPE 2541, won salary increases that achieved parity with the city's white-collar and blue-collar workers, improvements to benefits for part-time employees and a reduction in the number of steps in the salary scale such that employees can get paid the maximum salary more rapidly.

Regional Services Division Updates

Maritimes

Prince Edward Island

The political climate in PEI is quite different from its neighboring province. It allows for more positive work of promoting public services rather than defending them against governmental attacks.

CUPE-PEI has mounted an anti-privatization campaign to advocate for a 100% public school lunch program for all children and has done public service promotion across major radio stations and CBC during the holidays.

The Department of Education is running a pilot program offering a school lunch program to all students for \$5, with students from low-income families fully covered with public funds. The program is also designed to use local food. Initially the pilot project was to be publicly run and be managed through the Provincial School Boards, but the Minister of Education indicated the second pilot would allow for private sector involvement. CUPE PEI is advocating for a program that will be fully managed by the public sector.

CUPE 1770 is working on an anti-bullying cost-share campaign for school district staff, and the work done by educational staff in school libraries will be highlighted by a CUPE-PEI pro-literacy campaign.

New Brunswick

Our members in New Brunswick had an extremely busy start to 2020. The Higgs government did everything in its power to divide and conquer. First, our members' right to meaningful collective bargaining was attacked by Bill 17 which restricts the right to strike without providing a fair and balanced dispute resolution mechanism; second, the Government tampered with our bargaining unit in the health care sector during the statutory freeze period.

In January, all New Brunswick school officials received instructions to discipline any school worker who wore a CUPE “Solidarity” t-shirt. CUPE members in all workplaces have been wearing the “Solidarity – Bargaining Forward” shirts for almost two years and suddenly, the Districts claimed this ban was justified because they considered them to be offensive. The directive was clearly a breach of our members’ Charter rights to freedom of association and expression. Members reacted and defied the unconstitutional policy. After membership actions, interventions from CUPE 2745 and CUPE 1253 and a statement from CUPE New Brunswick, Minister Cardy thankfully issued a retraction letter.

In February, the Conservative Government announced health care reforms that included emergency room closures in many rural areas. CUPE New Brunswick reacted promptly to denounce the plan, and was instrumental in getting communities to mobilize against it. Faced with a growing wave of public backlash, the government stalled the implementation of the reform and announced further consultations. However, it is clear that the cuts are still central to the Conservative agenda.

After CUPE 508 took a strike vote and served notice, the City of Fredericton decided to lock-out our members immediately. The parties had been deadlocked over wages, as our members were asking their employer to close the wage gap between Fredericton’s outside workers and employees in other big cities in the province. Although the City had planned to hire replacement workers through a company that offers union-busting services, the parties reached an agreement after three days on the picket line. The agreement would not have been possible without the work of engaged union members and the overwhelming community support backing workers. Every call, Facebook post, conversation and rank-and-file action mattered. Council and management listened.

Another lock-out was taking place at the same time in New Brunswick and was ongoing at the time of writing this report. CUPE 4193 representing workers at the Red Pine Solid Waste facility in Allardville had to set up picket lines to block replacement workers from entering the facility and doing our members’ work. The collective agreement expired December 2017, and management negotiators had walked out of collective bargaining in mid-February, and issues on the table at the time were non-monetary, notice for sick days and unpaid union leave. This lockout was the first conflict since the workers unionized more than 20 years ago. CUPE members learned of the lockout when they went to work the morning of February 13 and a security guard at the gate told them they could not enter. Other locals in New Brunswick have been helping CUPE 4193 hold the line; the strong solidarity of CUPE locals bargaining forward in New Brunswick will be key to find a resolve in this conflict.

Atlantic

Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia School Board Council of Unions (NSSBCU) began preparing proposals for the lead table for the next round of bargaining. Representatives of the

Council also met with government to raise some concerns with the pre-primary program before it rolls out next school year. Concerns raised included increased work load for other classifications in the schools without any increase in funding or complements, responsibility for safety of children on school busses and playgrounds, inconsistent wages and qualifications for Early Childhood Educators and Early Childhood Educator Leads from one center to the next, and the changing of staff to student ratios depending on the settings.

As part of the Long-Term Care Committee's campaign to raise the level of care to 4.1 hours, members of CUPE 2330 took part in a work-in at Glen Haven Manor in New Glasgow in January. The goal was to show what a 4.1 level of care looks like. Members volunteered to take 4-hour shifts on their own time and for 24 hours, residents received timely responses from the continuing care assistants, who also had time to take care of the residents' personal needs. Following the shift, staff recorded their observations in a logbook, and then recorded observations following their next regular shift for comparison. The results of this work-in will be compiled into a report in order to document and demonstrate the difference between the current levels and an appropriate level of care.

In the community services sector, most of our locals have completed local bargaining. Conciliation for the lead table took place in December but talks broke down over the enrollment of locals in the Nova Scotia Health Employees' Pension Plan and non-payment of shift and weekend premiums on overtime shifts. Negotiations on an essential services agreement has begun in this sector.

Newfoundland and Labrador

CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador has rejected the extended contract proposed by the Ball government, which includes a major pension concession for members of the Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP). In 2016, a deal was reached between the federal and provincial governments, including Newfoundland and Labrador, to enhance CPP benefits for all Canadians and it was agreed that both workers and employers would see a small increase in CPP contributions in order to pay for the enhanced CPP benefit.

But instead of sharing the increased cost of CPP equally with workers, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador tried to pass their increased CPP contributions onto workers by extracting concessions from the PSPP. This move would cancel the CPP enhancement for 34,000 workers in Newfoundland and Labrador. The people most affected by the PSPP concession would be lower wage workers, and the cuts to workers' pensions would be much deeper than the marginal wage increase the government is attempting to trade for.

The Finance Minister later attacked CUPE for our public statement and communications with our members explaining why we would not accept these concessions. The government should know by now what we stand for and we will not apologize for being a transparent union that always represents the best interests of our members and all workers.

With Premier Ball's recent announcement that he will step down, CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador will be ready to face Government in a new environment. Our members are heading into this round of bargaining with determination and solidarity.

Municipal workers at the Town of Holyrood were locked out by their employer after several failed attempts at conciliation. Members of CUPE 3768 voted in favour of strike action just hours before arriving at work that morning to locked facilities.

The local was aiming to achieve wages earned in comparable municipalities like Placentia and Conception Bay South, but the employer's offer was clearly insufficient.

After declaring a lock-out, the Town hired a subcontractor to deliver services CUPE members normally provide. In fact, the snow clearing operations were contracted out to a company owned by the Deputy Mayor and his brother. CUPE 3768 and CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador denounced this inconceivable decision and the public reacted, putting pressure on the employer. The parties were able to reach an agreement, providing wage increases of 6.5% over three years.

Quebec

CUPE Quebec held elections during a special convention that took place in mid-February. The delegates elected Benoît Bouchard as their new President and Patrick Gloutney as the Secretary General. I congratulate them both and reiterate my gratitude to Brother Denis Bolduc for all the work he has done for CUPE.

In the education sector, the CAQ Government has acted like a veritable bulldozer in pushing through Bill 40, under the rules of closure. This controversial law eliminates democracy in Quebec's schools by transforming the school commissions into service centres. But it also does a lot more: it introduces various centralizing mechanisms that are rooted in a right wing ideology, which is designed to transform education in the Province of Quebec. Our members will be affected by this reform in diverse ways, but one thing is certain: nothing indicates that this reform will do anything to improve the services provided to students.

CUPE Quebec is unfortunately very familiar with the devastating impact of administrative reforms motivated by an austerity agenda. The health care sector was recently given a harmful dose of this medicine! We now find ourselves having to clean up the mess. CPAS has launched a major campaign with the theme: *Remettons Québec en santé* (Let's Restore Quebec's Good Health). The campaign is geared towards describing the impacts of these austerity measures and getting our members engaged in a process to identify solutions.

The CUPE Quebec Provincial Communications Sector Council has welcomed several recommendations made by the experts committee that was mandated to examine the legislation governing Canadian broadcasting and telecommunications. The CPSC is asking the government to act immediately and to compel online programming companies to charge GST/HST. In the area of TV production, the CPSC is pleased with the committee's recommendation that would enable producers who are affiliated with

broadcasters to have access to the same financing rules or income tax credits as independent producers. However, the CPSC condemns the absence of any recommendations to address avoiding the subcontracting of several jobs in this sector towards foreign countries.

Because of stalling tactics by their employer, the Port of Montréal longshoremen had to renew the strike mandate they had given their union, CUPE 375, while they're still being prevented from exercising this fundamental right. The employer has pursued frivolous judicial procedures geared towards preventing the CIRB from ruling on the level of essential services necessary in the event of a labour dispute. The Federal Court of Appeals recently rejected another one of these sham legal motions. The local is waiting for a decision whereby they might finally be able to engage in their negotiations with a genuine right to strike in their arsenal.

In the municipal sector, CUPE locals 4394 (Ange-Gardien), 3414 (Sainte-Sophie), and 4979 (Saint-Côme) signed satisfactory collective agreements at the beginning of the year. In Ange-Gardien, only four bargaining sessions were necessary to reach an agreement, which included salary increases of 2.25% (or the CPI, if the latter were to be higher) from 2020 to 2023. In Ste-Sophie, the members had to announce a strike for February 20 in order to break the deadlocked negotiations. In Saint-Côme, the agreement provides salary increases of 2.5% in 2019 and 2% in subsequent years, with an increase equal to the CPI, should the latter be greater than 2%. The parties also reached an agreement to introduce the QFL Member-Funded Pension Plan FTQ (RRFS-FTQ), a summer work schedule for the Public Works Department, as well as to add one paid holiday and one day of personal leave for everyone. Also, the municipality will now be providing work clothes to all of their unionized workers.

After more than nine years of perseverance and tenacity, UQÀM employees, who are represented by SEUQAM (CUPE 1294), and who had not been given the full amount of their pay equity retroactivity, will finally be receiving the amounts that are owed to them. The calculation method used by the employer for paying the pay equity adjustments was deemed inadequate, and the local successfully contested this before the Labour Administrative Tribunal – a victory that was a long time in coming.

Ontario

In December 10 Ontario unions, representing more than 250,000 affected broader public sector employees, announced their intention to launch a coordinated Charter challenge against Bill 124. In addition, the Ontario labour movement, with the Power of Many, will be initiating an aggressive campaign to have Bill 124 repealed.

The joint Charter challenge is being brought by a coalition of public and private sector unions that represent workers across the broader public sector. The coalition includes: the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE); Service Employees International Union (SEIU Healthcare); United Steelworkers (USW); Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC); the Society of United Professionals (IFPTE) Local 160; Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union (COPE Ontario); AMAPCEO – Ontario's

Professional Employees; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW); the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC); and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 175. Additional unions and organizations representing public sector workers in Ontario are expected to join this coordinated challenge, or pursue their own separate legal challenges, against Bill 124.

Significant strike votes and member solidarity enabled two of our largest municipal local unions to achieve new collective agreements. Both CUPE 416 and CUPE 79, representing workers at the City of Toronto, bargained through conciliation with strike action deadlines looming. CUPE 416 reached a late night deal on February 28, and CUPE 79 did the same on March 14. Both locals were able to fend off the many concessions tabled by the employer and achieved important improvements for their members.

The Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU) has remained busy as local affiliates are doing their local issue bargaining. OSBCU has been a strong advocate for the teacher's unions across Ontario, supporting them with actions on picket lines and in any other way possible. OSBCU held their convention at the end of February where they shaped their path for the next year and beyond.

The Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) has also been very busy defending the services their members provide for the benefit and safety of all Ontarians. On February 19, a telephone town hall was held to address the closure of addiction treatment beds in North Bay. This was extremely well received with over 2,000 members of the public joining the call and telling personal stories of the need for these beds, as well as the need for expansion of this service.

CUPE Ontario's Secretary-Treasurers' conference was held in late February. This well-attended event gave activists a chance to learn together and share ideas and insights about not only financial matters, but as well as ways to move CUPE as an organization forward into the future.

Manitoba

Our Manitoba health care locals are welcoming and meeting with the 9,400 new members who formally became CUPE members in December following last summer's representation votes. The locals are holding orientation sessions, recruiting stewards providing training for the new members. The sector is also actively preparing for bargaining, in what is anticipated to be difficult bargaining, impacted by austerity measures of the current government.

Members in the school sector are awaiting a provincial government report with the results of their K-12 education review in March. Anticipating a report that will upend the public education system, including possible school division amalgamation, our locals in the sector have agreed to contribute to a campaign to fight back against any attack.

CUPE 500 is fighting back against what could be the worst municipal budget in recent history, with the potential closure of libraries, pools and arenas, and contracting out of our members' work. The local responded by engaging members, councilors, and the community in discussions about the value and importance of these public services and the need for council to pass a budget that reflects the needs of Winnipeg families. The budget has now gone behind closed doors and we are ready to start the fight again in March should council not have heard our message clearly the first time.

The City of Winnipeg is also trying to renege on a deal made to bring multi-bin waste collection in-house – even though the infrastructure is in place to do so. The local is working to resolve the matter with political pressure, but is confident they will be successful at arbitration if that becomes necessary.

Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA), created by government just two years ago through a merger of regional bodies, is now making a move to re-regionalize care through health networks. While these networks are being promoted as a means to better manage health services by “wrapping care around the patient”, we are concerned about this new direction given the problems lingering from creation of the SHA.

We are also preparing for potential privatization and contracting out that may come with this change, and will be working with other unions in the sector to challenge this under our contracting out language.

In December, three health care unions (SGEU Saskatchewan Government Employees Union, SEIU West Service Employees' International Union and CUPE), signed off on a constitution for the new Saskatchewan Association of Health Services Provider Unions. We are already working together as a cohesive association on a number of initiatives with the employer.

CUPE 5430 is dealing with numerous structural issues at the new P3 hospital in North Battleford. A number of sections of the hospital have been closed and patients have been moved as a result of water leaking from the ceiling, moisture and mold issues, and water quality problems where lead is the predominant factor. There is a genuine concern for the safety of our members as well as patients, and the local is raising these concerns.

CUPE 3766 and CUPE 650, representing workers at the Regina Public School Board, are continuing to fight for a fair contract. After two years of bargaining, the locals both received a strong strike mandate last fall. Bargaining has been challenging across the K-12 school system due to drastic cuts from the provincial government, but this employer is alone in pushing for significant concessions. With the possibility of strike action by the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, CUPE is working closely with them to coordinate our efforts.

Alberta

The political climate for workers in Alberta has gotten worse this winter, and we have no reason to expect it to improve when spring finally arrives.

In January, the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA) exchanged proposals with Alberta Health Services (AHS). The employer tabled devastating concessions, including a four-year deal with no general wage increase, the elimination of education allowances, designated days of rest for part-time employees, a reduction of the overtime rate, a reduction to shift premiums, a reduction of recall rights, and many other serious concessions. We expect to see similar proposals tabled with other unions, including our locals at Covenant Health.

School districts have already seen funding reduced dramatically by the Kenney government. While many school districts have used reserve funds to put off the inevitable mass layoffs, CUPE members have already lost their jobs. Many of our members in this sector, as well as the teachers, will see their collective agreements expire at the end of the current school year. We are preparing strategic plans to coordinate an effective fightback against the provincial wage mandate and the inevitable concessions we expect to face in this round of bargaining.

Municipalities across the province are facing financial challenges in the form of provincial funding cuts and delays for public infrastructure projects, including roads, hospitals, and transit. The Alberta government is no longer paying municipal property tax, and is collecting a higher share of traffic fines. Small municipalities will go from not paying for policing to paying 70% of policing costs. As a result, City of Calgary councillors have asked CUPE and other unions to voluntarily take rollbacks (which all locals have refused to consider), and are targeting workers' pensions and long service.

Fortunately, only 11 of 60 municipal locals are in bargaining this year as most of our locals settled before last year's election. In light of these challenges facing local governments, the Alberta Municipal Employees Committee is holding a Political Summit this spring to begin preparations for the 2021 municipal elections.

British Columbia

Bargaining in the K-12 sector has finally come to an end, with all 57 of our bargaining units in the sector having successfully concluded agreements without concessions. The Provincial Framework Agreement resulted in work for several joint committees, including the Safety in the Workplace Committee, the Support Staff Education Committee and phase two work for the Job Evaluation Committee.

Bargaining continues in other sectors. All locals in the college sector are at various stages of the bargaining process, but none have yet reached an agreement. A recent agreement reached by CUPE 3886 at Royal Roads University saw the lowest paid classifications achieve wage increases that bring them above the regional hourly living wage of \$19.39. And the first agreement reached this round in the Metro Vancouver municipal sector saw CUPE 394 and CUPE 718 negotiate a four-year agreement

significant benefit improvements and wage increases of 2% in the first, 2.25% in the second, and 2.5% in each of the last two years of the contract.

The BC government recently introduced legislation which will provide more options for before- and after-school care, by making it easier for public school boards to directly deliver licensed child care. This is an important step towards increasing the availability and accessibility of high-quality, public, and affordable child care for workers with school-aged children, and will help ensure more seamless services from child care to early learning, and into K-12 system. CUPE BC has long advocated that public schools are a natural home for child care spaces, and applauded the government for recognizing and acting on this opportunity.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

In February, HEU welcomed a new report from BC's Seniors Advocate, which found that the province's for-profit care home operators are pocketing big profits while shorting seniors of more than 200,000 funded care hours per year. The report also concluded that under the current funding scheme, for-profit operators spend far less on care aides and other front-line staff than their not-for-profit counterparts.

Our members know firsthand that the system is broken, and BC seniors and those who care for them are paying the price. Legislative and policy changes made by the former BC Liberal government opened the doors to more for-profit care homes. Those policies have led to substandard wages across the long-term care sector and contributed to severe staffing shortages across the province.

HEU applauded a commitment in the recent provincial budget to increase hours of care in the sector, as part of a three-year plan to improve staffing levels and reduce workload-related injuries. They continue to call for a robust capital plan for the construction of public and non-profit long-term care homes and greater oversight of all publicly-funded facilities.

Airlines

In December, CUPE was certified to represent forty-four flight attendants at PAL Airlines, which is headquartered in St. John's, Newfoundland. I welcome them all and look forward to working with their local leaders. PAL was the third airline to be unionized by CUPE in 2019, after WestJet Encore in April and Swoop in May. Since July 2018, CUPE has welcomed thousands of previously non-unionized flight attendants into its ranks.

Also in December, the Presidents of the Air Canada and Air Transat Components, along with CUPE staff, participated in consultations and met with Transport Canada representatives to share our members' concerns over the purchase of Air Transat by Air Canada. The transaction is still in the midst of a public interest assessment.

As workers who serve the public on a daily basis, CUPE members find themselves on the front lines of public health crises, and the current coronavirus outbreak is no different. The airlines sector has been particularly affected since the Canadian government updated its travel advisory for China, advising the public to avoid non-essential travel to China. I extend my gratitude to the flight attendants, and other workers, who are working through this outbreak despite the risks. I understand the stress and confusion that this situation is causing, and I encourage our members to make use of the union's resources and expertise. Our airline locals and components have been closely monitoring the situation, communicating with our members and, with our health and safety's specialists' support, advising them to the best of their ability.

Organizing Report

For the period of December 1, 2019 to February 29, 2020, CUPE welcomed 1,006 new members in 21 newly certified bargaining units. We organized: 165 members in the university sector; 64 members from private health contractors into HEU; 41 in health care; 488 members in municipalities; 125 members in the security sector; 77 provincial employees; 8 members in social services, and; 38 in transportation.

There are 40 new campaigns currently underway that, if successful, would increase our membership by 22,454. There are 5 files for certification at Labour Boards that would bring in 821 new members.

Heading into 2020 we remain extremely busy with new organizing initiatives across the country. We continue to focus on including casual employees into the existing bargaining units in the Atlantic region, and have so far been successful adding 51 new members.

In New Brunswick, LPNs from CUPE 1252 are attempting to leave CUPE for the Atlantic Canada Regional Council of Carpenters, Millwrights and Allied Workers (ARCR). An application has been filed at the Labour Board by ARCR, with a confirmed 80% and possibly more who have signed cards to join ARCR. CUPE has filed as an intervener on the application. Board hearings are taking place at this time.

New Brunswick Council of Nursing Homes campaign had been started to be proactive regarding a possible raid of LPNs in the nursing home sector given the current situation with the LPNs within CUPE 1252 in New Brunswick.

In Quebec, we're preparing to organize the 60 employees working at the Private Security Bureau.

In Ontario there are currently two organizing drives coming out of the Kingston Homecare Pilot Project, one at St. Elizabeth's (260 employees) and one at Paramed. We are holding information meetings, leafletting LTC and retirement homes where homecare PSWs also work. The next step is to develop and launch a more public campaign to help us reach out to these workers.

Ontario

Retired Staff

- Lorne Saunders
- Yvonne Fast

Representative
Saint John's Area Office

Regional Director
Alberta Regional Office

In solidarity,

Handwritten signature of Mark Hancock in black ink.

MARK HANCOCK
National President

:jv/ceu
March 19, 2020 – 1:25pm