

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARCH 2019 – JUNE 2019

Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

The week following the March National Executive Board, CUPE held a very successful National Bargaining Conference in Saskatoon, where hundreds of CUPE members from across the country gathered to develop skills and share strategies to help them succeed at the bargaining table.

Since then, I have had the opportunity to attend another eight provincial division conventions, as well as meetings of our social services workers in Ontario, municipal workers in New Brunswick, Ontario, and the four western provinces, and the annual convention of the Ontario Council of Hospital Union (OCHU).

These conventions and conferences are always a reminder to me that in CUPE, our members really are our strength. We have hard, passionate debates about the substantive issues facing our members, and we resolve to make a difference in all those things. And we know that we truly can make a difference, but only if we do it together.

I want to acknowledge the dedication shown by our provincial and local leaders, our activists, and our staff at each of these meetings, and I congratulate the incoming executive members of our provincial divisions.

This spring I also joined our members from OCHU at a healthcare rally in Toronto, and members of CUPE 1505 on the picket line in Fort McMurray. I addressed the United Steelworkers National Conference in Vancouver, and I met with leaders from North America's public sector unions in Washington, DC.

CLC

The CLC's governing body, the Canadian Council, met in Winnipeg in May. In addition to reports and discussions on issues facing the Canadian Labour movement, we heard from federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, and also from Manitoba NDP Leader Wab Kinew. While in Winnipeg, Brother Fleury joined me and CUPE Manitoba members in a

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National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY
National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

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General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike, one of the most influential labour events of the 20th century.

In May it became apparent that the Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenters, an affiliate of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBCJA), was attempting to raid CUPE members working as Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in New Brunswick. We worked with the CLC to try and convince the Carpenters to cease their raiding activity but were unsuccessful. On June 17, the CLC applied sanctions against the UBCJA, which means they are not permitted to participate at any level of the CLC including federations of labour and labour councils. We continue work to counter the raid and are hopeful our LPNs will choose to stay in CUPE.

FCM

CUPE participated in the annual Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference again this June. In addition to participating in the trade show, where we had conversations with hundreds of local government officials from across the country, we hosted a very successful workshop on the affordable housing crisis. FCM delegates packed the room to hear from Selina Robinson, BC's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in British Columbia, David Wachsmuth, the Canada Research Chair in Urban Governance at McGill University, and housing activist Bruce Pearce from St. John's, Newfoundland.

As always, this was a great opportunity to highlight the importance of the work our members do in cities, towns, villages, counties and districts across Canada. I also appreciated the opportunity to speak with so many current and retired CUPE members and staff who serve their communities as elected officials.

National Convention

Preparations are well under way for the 29th CUPE National Convention, being held October 7-11 at the Palais des congrès de Montréal. As usual, Sector Council meetings will be held on October 6.

Locals and other chartered organizations have already received advance notice of convention, and will be receiving the official convention call in early July. Deadline for submission of resolutions and constitutional amendments is July 9. Nominations for our National awards are due the same date.

I encourage Local Unions to consider the diversity of their membership when selecting delegates to convention. National Convention is our highest governing body, and it is important that all of our members are represented in Montréal. I also ask you to review the awards applications and nominate a CUPE member who is deserving of the recognition.

Federal Election

Of course, our National Convention will be held in the midst of the federal election campaign, with Election Day set for October 21, 2019.

We know this will be a crucial election for working families across Canada.

Recent provincial elections have resulted in right-wing governments, and the Conservative Party of Canada is currently leading in the opinion polls. But those polls also point to the real possibility of a minority federal government, something Canadians are becoming more comfortable with – right now we have a record four provinces led by minority governments.

With 680,000 CUPE members across the country, engaging our members in this election can make the difference between electing one of two parties that put corporate interest in front of the interests of every day Canadians, and the NDP who will fight along side us.

Changes to the Canada Elections Act will place even greater restrictions on our activities in this campaign than it did in the 2015 general election. Look for information soon about how we will communicate and activate our members in the 2019 election, while making sure we follow the rules.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

There were two disputes involving job action during the reporting period, that are still on-going.

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
Quebec	1186	Université de Montréal	18	March 14, 2019	On-going
Alberta	1505	Wood Buffalo Housing	49	Lockout May 10, 2019	On-going

CUPE 1186 – Université de Montréal – Quebec

The building mechanic technicians and stationary engineers at the Université de Montréal were almost unanimous in rejecting the employer's final offer to renew their collective agreement. University management is systematically opposed to all of the union's demands, even the most reasonable ones.

The 18 specialized workers have been without a collective agreement since April 2015.

The main stumbling block in the negotiations is the university representatives' insistence on turning to private sector subcontractors to ensure that the machinery is in good working order, particularly at the new MIL campus in Outremont. The University is also refusing to pay a premium that the other bargaining unit is entitled to.

CUPE 1505 – Wood Buffalo Housing – Alberta

Wood Buffalo Housing (WBH) in Fort McMurray, Alberta served its 49 employees lock out notice meaning employees will be forced to hit the picket lines. WBH is a non-profit subsidiary of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo which provides housing to residents of Fort McMurray.

The main issue in the dispute is Wood Buffalo Housing's insistence on laying off groundskeepers, maintenance staff, and housekeepers and replacing them with minimum wage contractors without benefits, despite strong collective agreement language that protects these jobs.

Non Strike/Lockout Bargaining

CUPE 798 – City of Powell River – British Columbia

Workers with the City of Powell River, British Columbia represented by CUPE 798, have ratified a new five-year agreement following six days of bargaining.

The new collective agreement comes with wage increases of two per cent per year for the first four years, and a two- and one-half per cent increase in 2023, the final year of the contract. The parties also agreed on a range of improvements for part-time employees, benefits improvements and a conversion process to address precarious work, which will provide for the conversion of part-time workers into full-time workers.

CUPE 798 represents 220 workers at the City of Powell River, the Powell River Public Library and the Regional District.

CUPE 8443 – Saskatoon Public Schools – Saskatchewan

CUPE 8443 has ratified a new collective agreement with Saskatoon Public Schools. Over 450 members cast ballots, and the result was a 67% vote in favour of the proposal.

The four-year deal means a wage increase of 0%, 0.5%, 1.5%, 2% and includes other monetary improvements such as enhancements to vacation increments, a 0.2% increase in per capita benefits spending, uniform allowance for nutritional workers, and an increase in boot allowance for maintenance workers. All items will be fully retroactive where applicable.

In a huge step forward for precarious workers, casual and temporary employees will now accrue seniority. Previously, casual and temporary employees would only have seniority retroactively applied if they landed a permanent job, but now they can use their seniority for bidding purposes as well.

Bargaining Policy

During our recent bargaining conference, we released tools in the Strategic Planning workshop that will assist our locals in the preparation of bargaining and throughout the process to the conclusion of bargaining. We anticipate that our web portal for locals will be available in the fall. We are continuing to update all our associated bargaining documents including the Strike Preparation manual.

During bargaining a first collective agreement with Flair Air, Howard Levitt, a regular columnist on employment related matters in the Financial Post, wrote a column attacking CUPE's position on our rejection of concessions and two-tier contract provisions. Mr. Levitt was also acting on behalf of Flair Air at the bargaining table at the time. I found this to be outrageous and complained. The Financial Post recently printed my opinion piece on the case against concessions:
<https://business.financialpost.com/opinion/cupes-case-against-concessions>.

I am proud of the bargaining policy CUPE has adopted. Our role as your bargaining agent is to move forward not backwards. No worker joins CUPE to go backwards. As I write in the article, unions drive wage growth for low- and middle-income workers across Canada. We don't do it by laying down and accepting the erosion of our wages and working conditions, and the security of our jobs and our retirement.

Regional Services Division Updates

Atlantic and Maritimes

At each division convention in the Atlantic and Maritimes, Diversity Vice-President Gloria Lepine presented a proposal to form an Atlantic-Maritimes Indigenous Council with representatives from Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, PEI and New Brunswick. This initiative, which aims at increasing participation from Indigenous members in our union, was met with much enthusiasm. An Indigenous gathering will take place in Truro, Nova Scotia on September 5 and 6 with a view to establish this council.

Prince Edward Island

Voters in PEI have done away with the century-old two-party system, electing a minority government for the first time and handing the Green Party official opposition status. This could bring opportunities for a fresh approach and a new agenda for Islanders. We will be reaching out to the Green Party to make sure they understand the issues that matter to CUPE members, our families and our communities.

On April 28, PEI celebrated the Day of Mourning with ceremonies across the province. The Legislature and Charlottetown City Hall lowered their flags to half-mast and put up CUPE's Day of Mourning flag to remember workers who died, were injured or made ill from their work.

At the end of May, members in PEI gathered in Cardigan for the 39th annual convention of CUPE PEI. Delegates debated a number of important issues related to health and safety and violence in the workplace. They also heard a presentation on the legalization of the recreational use of cannabis and its implications in the workplace, and adopted a resolution to continue to oppose mandatory drug testing because the current tests do nothing to measure impairment. Locals also debated resolutions to fight precarity in the workplace, support literacy initiatives, and promote the Child Care Now campaign.

CUPE PEI also elected a new President and their first Young Workers Executive Officer. Congratulations to incoming President Leonard Gallant and Young Workers representative Kelsey Pollard!

New Brunswick

CUPE New Brunswick locals and councils gathered in Fredericton in mid-April for their 56th annual convention, where Brother Daniel Légère stepped down as President after 14 years in that role and close to 40 years of activism in CUPE. The good news is that Brother Légère's great leadership will now benefit affiliates of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, as he was elected President of the Federation at its convention in May. I wish to sincerely thank Brother Danny for the many years of leadership and hard work he has given to CUPE members, both in New Brunswick and at the national level, and look forward to working with him in his new role. I also congratulate Brother Brien Watson on his election as President of CUPE New Brunswick!

This spring was quite a roller coaster for CUPE members in New Brunswick as they mobilized and stood with nursing home workers who are fighting for a reinvestment in that sector, for more hours of care for residents and for better wages and working conditions to address labour shortages. The New Brunswick Council of Nursing Home Unions held major rallies, days of actions and an occupation of the Social Development Minister's office in Fredericton, which attracted much media attention. Nursing home workers have the full support of the public and of the opposition parties in the Legislature, but the Higgs government is refusing to move on its 1% annual wage package and is refusing to go to binding arbitration to settle the dispute.

The nursing home workers were stripped from their right to strike and the court battle on this issue is ongoing. A motion in favour of binding arbitration was adopted in the Legislature, but the government is acting as if it has a majority and is refusing to adhere to the motion. As we can see in membership meetings and on social media, this very important fight for bargaining rights has the full support of CUPE membership in New Brunswick, but also in the rest of the country and the broader labour movement.

The New Brunswick budget was presented with no major investment in any sector, and the government is pushing for performance-management indicators to justify cuts in most sectors. The austerity budget will leave working families further behind. The Conservative government is also maintaining a hard line on wage restraints, and CUPE is pushing back with the Breaking the Mandate campaign, coordinated bargaining, and strike preparation.

Fighting yet another privatization initiative, CUPE 1190 is calling on the Higgs government to change its decision to privatize Murray Beach Park and save the much-needed Park jobs. Employment in the area is already suffering, and this beautiful park is a great public asset for tourism and the local economy. It should be front and center of a regional revitalization plan. After the closures of visitor information centres in Cape Jourimain and Aulac, selling off Murray Beach Park is the worst idea the Minister of Tourism could have for South-East New Brunswick.

On a positive note, custodians at the Centre scolaire communautaire Samuel de Champlain, represented by CUPE 5179, were able to reach an agreement and secure good wage increases of 3% for the first year and 3.5% for the next two years.

Nova Scotia

CUPE Nova Scotia held its 56th annual convention in Membertou, Cape Breton, at the end of May. Delegates debated resolutions to address the crisis in the health care sector, to develop strategies to fight privatization and P3s, prevent violence in the workplace, support the LGBTQ2+ community in long term care and many more. Members also heard from a panel of experts on domestic violence and how union activists can address its impact in the workplace.

Nova Scotia NDP leader Gary Burill addressed the delegates and announced that the NDP executive board has created a new position called Vice-Chair of Labour and that position is currently held by Danny Cavanagh, former CUPE NS president and current President of the NS Federation of Labour.

A lot of work is being done in Nova Scotia to address violence in the workplace. Where the issue is not taken seriously, members are doing public awareness. In April for example, CUPE 3513 members held an information picket at the Breton Ability Centre (BAC) in Sydney River. Frontline workers who felt that their concerns were not being heard by their employer brought attention to the alarming increase in workplace violence that they are facing on the job.

On another front, government, employers and unions are working to develop a common code of practice to address violence in the health care sector. With joint meetings scheduled throughout the end of June, a first draft is expected in July.

CUPE 1867 (Nova Scotia Highway Workers) and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Nova Scotia (CCPA-NS) held public town halls on June 4 and 5 in Antigonish to discuss the twinning of a dangerous stretch on Highway 104 between Pictou and Antigonish.

The provincial government is proposing a P3 project, where they would hand over ownership and operation of this new highway section to a private for-profit corporation. The CCPA-NS released a report that examines Cobequid Pass Toll Highway in Nova Scotia and reveals that it cost \$232 million more to build, finance, operate, and maintain as a Public Private Partnership (P3) project than it would have as a government-financed, delivered, and maintained project. The report presents a similar prospective examination of the Antigonish stretch and indicates that extra costs due to the P3 model would amount to close to \$120 million, because it would cost more in interest payments than if the project is financed through government bonds. Also, construction costs under the P3 model are substantially higher than highway construction costs that government currently pays for constructing identical lengths of twinned highway through normal government procurement. CUPE 1867 is certainly right to say this is “highway robbery”.

Newfoundland and Labrador

On April 16, the Ball government released the 2019 budget for Newfoundland and Labrador and, without having the Legislature vote on it, the Liberals called an election for May 16. CUPE NL ran a campaign to encourage voters to choose the NDP, and it was a success! Three NDP candidates were elected, which held the other parties from forming a majority government. Labrador West was decided by a mere five votes, where NDP candidate Jordan Brown came out ahead of an incumbent cabinet minister. A recount will take place on June 19.

CUPE NL held its annual convention in Corner Brook before the election. Newfoundland and Labrador NDP Leader Alison Coffin was a guest speaker. She demonstrated clearly how the NL NDP’s priorities align with those of CUPE members, and that was key to having so many members volunteer on her successful election campaign.

The annual convention was a great opportunity to debrief on the last round of bargaining in the public sector and to strategize for the one to come in 2020. The division launched a mobilization campaign, with the first step being a contest to choose a slogan and holding a strike school to send a strong message to the newly elected government with “Boots on the Ground”. CUPE members are committed to fight for real wage increases, for respect, and are adamant they will not take concessions. On May 31, members attending the strike school marched on St. John’s to show what solidarity will look like in this next round of bargaining.

The CUPE NL Global Justice Committee held its first ever conference in Corner Brook before the start of convention. The event's theme was "Come from Away, Here to Stay". At the convention banquet, along with the traditional "screeching in" of guests, CUPE NL locals generously donated funds for the Association of New Canadians NL.

CUPE 1761 members working for the Town of Placentia voted 100% in favour of a strike on April 17. With this strong mandate – it could not be stronger – the bargaining committee entered conciliation with the employer. Information pickets took place and a public awareness campaign is underway. The local is fighting against employer demands for concessions that would set a precedent in the sector.

Quebec

SCFP-Québec delegates, at their Convention in Québec City in mid-May, welcomed several speakers who set the table for an interesting and productive exchange of ideas on the necessity of an ecologically-oriented turning point, public water resources, changes in technology and artificial intelligence, trade unionism in the social media era, and several other challenges and issues that make the headlines daily. On the first day of the convention, two exceptional women, Louise Harel and Manual Oudar, shared their experiences working behind the scenes to ensure the adoption of the *Pay Equity Act*.

The convention delegates also celebrated, with much emotion, the 40th anniversary of the Women's Rights Committee, along with the very first Presidents of the committee, as well as numerous activists who have played a key role in advancing the working and living conditions of women in CUPE, in the trade union movement, and in Quebec society as a whole.

The convention gave its enthusiastic support to CUPE 1186 striking members, who are dealing with a particularly hostile employer. Labour relations at the Université de Montréal have been deteriorating significantly for a few years now, and this strike, which has been dragging on, is an obvious symptom. The Labour Court had to intervene when the University made use of scabs. And in an attempt to intimidate our members, the employer refused to maintain insurance coverage at the union's expense and threatened to sue the Local Union for libel pursuant to messages that were published in the newspapers and in the Metro, which sought the support of the university community and the public at large.

In anticipation of the upcoming negotiations in the provincial health care and education sectors, the five major union organizations with members in the public sector recently agreed to a solidarity pact. In order to concentrate their energy on the next round of bargaining set to begin this fall, they agreed to not solicit members from each other's organizations. The government will be hard put to divide and conquer.

At the end of May, the Quebec Auditor General published her report on the activities of the Working Standards, Equity, Occupational Health and Safety Commission (CNESST). Her recommendations were greeted very favourably by CUPE, especially our locals in the health and social services sectors. The report advocates putting more emphasis on prevention, and recommends that the CNESST does more to organize itself effectively. In particular, the report notes that inspections in the health care sector have many shortcomings and the situation must be corrected. The Auditor General invites the Commission to be more proactive with regard to latent and emerging risks in terms of the psychological health of the workers in the system.

Outside workers at the Jean-Drapeau Park in Montréal, represented by CUPE 301, ratified a new collective agreement just in time for the Montréal Grand Prix that took place the weekend of June 8 and 9. A month earlier, they had given their local a strike mandate to fight against two-tier wages and benefits that affected the majority of members in the bargaining unit. The deal guarantees equal pay for equal work, a pension plan accessible to all, and offers significant wage increases.

Ontario

We are now one year into Doug Ford's mandate and life is getting progressively worse for workers in the province, and for Ontario's most vulnerable citizens. Rather than making life better for middle class, Premier Ford has made life better for those who are already better off. He may have run for office on the slogan "For the People", but his policies and actions are clearly "For the Rich".

Ford has created a so-called revenue crisis by cutting taxes for the wealthiest Ontarians. This has led to an endless string of policy announcements, legislation and funding cuts that make life more difficult for those who are already struggling just to get by. From cuts to autism services to public health to health care and education, there is not a public service that has been spared. These cuts mean job losses for those who provide front-line services. Ontario continues to have the lowest per capita revenue and the lowest per capita spending on health care and education.

Brother Charles and I have met with the CUPE Ontario Executive Board, and many other CUPE members in the province. We have heard the struggles our members face and the supports they require to fight back against their government. CUPE will be there, fighting side by side with Ontario members.

CUPE Ontario recently concluded their Convention with the theme "Be Bold. Be Brave. Build the Resistance." Delegates debated and adopted many resolutions and an aggressive action plan to defend public services and workers' rights, and to mobilize against the rising tide of hate and white supremacy. Doug Ford is more concerned about putting beer in corner stores, at the cost of \$1 billion to the taxpayer and the loss of 7,500 good paying jobs, while CUPE members are focused on protecting public services and our communities.

In early June, Doug Ford introduced legislation that restrains compensation and encumbers free collective bargaining for public sector workers. The legislation will cap compensation increases to 1% for three years effective immediately, or when a collective agreement opens next – this includes not only wages, but also benefits. With inflation running at 2% and the cost of benefits increasing at a higher rate, this legislation will hurt the public sector workers who can least afford the cut. CUPE is committed to fighting this legislation, as we are doing in Manitoba and Nova Scotia.

Manitoba

It has been more than two years since the Pallister government introduced legislation to restructure collective bargaining in the health care sector in Manitoba. The long-awaited representation votes have finally been called for August. Our locals continue to engage our members and promote CUPE as the best union to represent health care workers in Manitoba, and across the country.

At the same time, our health care members in Winnipeg are also dealing with the reorganization of healthcare services that has resulted in the disruption of services to the public, and much uncertainty for our members. A strong campaign by CUPE 204, assisted by significant public pressure, led to a partial back-peddle by government at Concordia Hospital where a complete closure of the emergency room has been retracted. There will now be an urgent care centre in its place.

Our members in the sector still face uncertainty, layoffs, and deteriorating labour relations across the province.

The provincial government has also initiated an education review in the province. We are concerned that they have predetermined the outcome and anticipate a report that proposes a reduction in the number of school divisions in the province, as well as removing their ability to collect taxes.

In the face of a threat that the provincial government has plans to privatize crown corporation Manitoba Hydro, CUPE 998 is working with other unions on a campaign to keep the utility in public hands.

While legislation establishes the next election date as October 6, 2020, all signs point to a provincial election in Manitoba as early as this summer. This will be an opportunity for us to shift the trend towards anti-worker right-wing governments.

Saskatchewan

CUPE has joined other public sector unions in a campaign to pressure the Saskatchewan Party government to commit to provide better, direct, and multi-year funding for Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) across the province. CBOs are non-profit groups that provide vital social services which fill in the gaps where direct government programs don't meet the needs of Saskatchewan's most vulnerable people.

Despite the critical role they play, CBOs lack the stable funding needed to continue providing reliable programming and support.

Despite provincial cuts which have hurt local government budgets, a new agreement between the Moose Jaw Board of Police Commissioners and CUPE 9 ensures our members receive decent wage increases, including an adjustment meant to address wage inequities with their counterparts across the province. The union also secured paid leave language to support survivors of domestic violence.

Pensions continue to be the stumbling block at the bargaining table with the University of Saskatchewan. The University has withdrawn their pension proposal and intends to make arbitrary, unilateral changes to the pension plan in the near future. CUPE 1975 is exploring legal options. In the meantime, we are before the Essential Services Tribunal fending off the employer's claims that our members' work be declared essential. We successfully organized new members at several Saskatchewan worksites into our union in the last few months: 44 personal support workers at Eden View in Moose Jaw, 54 staff at Yorkton Crossing Retirement Community, 16 municipal workers at the Town of Esterhazy, and 14 workers in the Prairie Spirit School Division who were not captured by the original certification. Welcome to CUPE!

Alberta

On April 16, Albertans gave Jason Kenney and his United Conservative Party a majority government, but ensured a strong opposition headed by the NDP's Rachel Notley. We know that the new government poses a significant threat to the public services Albertans rely on, as well as to labour and human rights. We anticipate significant tax cuts for corporations and the richest Albertans, which will in turn reduce spending on vital public services and will have an impact on our members.

The Kenney government's first attack on workers, in the form of Bill 2, included measures that reduce the minimum wage for young workers, require overtime hours to be banked at straight time, and make it harder to join a union. The government has threatened more legislative attacks later this year.

Buoyed by the provincial election results, Calgary City Council passed a motion to review all pension arrangements with city employees. The overwhelming majority of city workers, including CUPE members, belong to the provincial Local Authorities Pension Plan. Our members in Calgary are working to educate councillors and the public about the Plan and its benefits to workers as well as the community.

Our members in Fort McMurray have rallied behind, and with, 49 CUPE 1505 members at Wood Buffalo Housing who have been locked out by their employer. Many in the province see this as the first fight in what could be a long battle with employers and the government in this province. Nonetheless, spirits are high and there is significant community support for our members.

British Columbia

Delegates to CUPE British Columbia's 2019 Convention elected a new Executive Board, debated a wide range of resolutions, and passed an action plan to guide the union over the next two years. They also heard from a wide range of speakers, including a compelling address from author and LGBTQ2+ activist Ivan Coyote.

In his address to convention, Premier John Horgan spoke to the list of accomplishments his government has achieved since taking power less than two years ago. Progressive gains for British Columbia residents include more affordable housing, quality childcare, and teaming up with partners in education to give kids the best possible start. The government is fixing public health care, re-establishing the Human Rights Commission, and restoring workers' rights.

The government continues to pursue meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and taking actions to fight climate change. Horgan told delegates that these progressive changes have been accomplished while maintaining balanced budgets, a AAA credit rating and the fastest economic growth in Canada.

He asked CUPE for its continuing support and acknowledged that while we may have the occasional disagreement, his government has our backs and the backs of working people.

Following the first full review of the Labour Code since 1992, the BC government adopted legislation featuring a wide range of changes to the Code that restore fairness and improve access to bargaining rights. Some key changes include: contractors in health care, bus transportation, cleaning services, security and food services are bound by an existing collective agreement when a service is re-tendered; restoration of the right to strike for education workers; greater restrictions on employers activities and communications during organizing drives and penalties up to and including automatic certification; better access to facilitators and mediators, and improvements to the arbitration process; and a requirement to review the Code at least every five years.

The government also introduced progressive employment standards to better protect children and youth from dangerous work, make it easier for workers to get help when they feel their rights have been violated; provide more job protection to people dealing with difficult personal circumstances; and ensure people are paid the wages they are owed and that those that violate the law do not have an unfair economic advantage.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

The changes to the British Columbia Labour Relations Code were welcomed with much thanks from the 50,000 members of HEU. These changes include collective agreement protection for health care workers and others impacted by the re-tendering – or “flipping” – of service contracts, and will result in improved health care delivery in the sector.

Direct care and support services have been undermined by privatization and contracting out over the last 17 years. The workers impacted by contract-flipping in health care are highly racialized and overwhelmingly female. Workers may be invited to reapply for the same job with a new contractor but usually at a lower rate of pay, and with the loss of their union and any benefits related to the length of their service. In some cases, workers have been subject to multiple contract flips.

The lack of successor rights has made the work more precarious, lowered wages, and contributed to a growing recruitment and retention crisis as workers sought more secure and better paid work elsewhere. Stronger successor rights will provide more stability in seniors' care – and in health care generally – for workers and for nursing home residents and hospital patients.

The government has also announced that care aides, community health workers, and nurses will face fewer barriers to having their workers' compensation claims accepted for work-related mental disorders. The extension of the mental disorder presumption recognizes that these workers are at higher risk of violence and other trauma in the workplace that could contribute to a mental disorder such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other illnesses. It means that the burden of proof that a mental disorder is not related to workplace events is shifted to the employer or WorkSafeBC, and will make it easier for impacted members to have their claims accepted.

Airlines

Our members in the airline sector had a very busy spring. CUPE was pleased to welcome 600 flight attendants from WestJet Encore and 170 flight attendants from Swoop into the CUPE family. The Canada Industrial Relations Board granted the certification in early May for Encore and in early June for Swoop. All cabin crew members of WestJet and its subsidiaries are now represented by CUPE.

Meanwhile, spring has not been a walk in the park for our members in this sector. After the many difficulties caused by problems with the Boeing 737 Max8, the announcement of major financial transactions involving WestJet on the one hand, and Air Canada and Air Transat on the other, have raised many questions and concerns on the part of our members in the airline sector.

Investors are certainly eager and prepared, but these situations clearly demonstrate the importance of having union representation to defend the rights and interests of flight attendants who face increasingly powerful corporations in the sector. CUPE is well positioned with our expertise in the sector, our resources, and especially our passionate and devoted airline activists who are always present to ensure that corporate restructuring does not happen at the expense of airline workers.

Organizing Report

For the period of March 1, 2019 to May 31, 2019, CUPE welcomed 2320 new members in 24 newly-certified bargaining units. Staff and member organizers successfully

organized 1,219 members in health care, 52 members in municipalities, 76 members in universities, 133 members in social services, 51 members in the communications sector, 14 members in K- 12 and 775 members in the airline sector.

Currently there are 40 new campaigns underway that, if successful, would increase our membership by 10,237 new members. There are 9 files for certification at Labour Boards that could bring in 591 new members. Two restructuring projects have the potential to increase membership by approximately 14,400 new members and protect tens of thousands of existing CUPE members.

For the first time, the Nova Scotia Labour Relations Board certified casual employees on an application brought by CUPE. CUPE will seek to organize casual employees in our existing certifications across the province.

At time of writing, CUPE was fending off a raid by the Atlantic Canada Regional Council of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, who are seeking to Licensed Practical Nurses in New Brunswick, many of whom are members of CUPE 1252. A formal complaint against the Carpenters has been filed at the CLC.

Ontario is facing restructuring in health care, public health, municipalities, paramedic services, school boards, and developmental services systems. Organizing efforts are focused on working with sector committees to map affected workplaces, build lists of members and plan for the coming restructuring and the associated representation votes.

Dates representation votes in the health care sector in Manitoba have finally been set are now set. The campaign period will begin July 11 and end August 7, with voting scheduled from August 8 to 22, 2019. All organizing efforts in Manitoba are focused on these votes.

In Saskatchewan, CUPE and our partner unions in the health care sector (SEIU-West and SGEU) have been working towards a formal health care bargaining association, which has made the threat of representation votes less likely.

In Alberta, the election of Jason Kenny has resulted in an increase in organizing calls as workers worry about cuts to jobs and spending in the public sector. We are moving ahead with several campaigns and hope to organize more groups before the Kenney government reverses the progressive labour laws brought in by the NDP.

In British Columbia we have seen improvements to the Labour Code with the implementation of some of the Provincial Labour Code Review Panel's recommendations. Legislation to amend the Code received royal assent on May 30, 2019.

In Memoriam/Personal

Messages of Condolences

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

Members

- Ellen Frances Gillis Member of Local 5050
Nova Scotia
- Sylvio St-Pierre Member of Local 1087
New Brunswick
- Cole Timlin Member of Local 1000
Ontario
- Brenda O'Reilly Member of Local 1750
Ontario
- Tony "Slim" Paver Retired Member of Local 5167
Ontario
- Curtis Smith Member of Local 416
Ontario
- Derick Lwugi Member of Local 38
Alberta
- Tara Graf Member of Local 4060
Alberta
- Shelley Gerlywich Member of Local 4575
Alberta
- Del Zelisney Retired Member of Local 1622
British Columbia
- Mario Fruttarol Retired Member of Local 403
British Columbia
- Honey Barclay Member of Local 1858
British Columbia

Active Staff

- Lorne Trevors Servicing Representative
Atlantic Regional Office

Retired Staff

- Kelly Murray Servicing Representative
Atlantic Regional Office
- Edward Haggan Servicing Representative
Trail Area Office
- Clive Derham Servicing Representative
Manitoba Regional Office
- Renée Courville Executive Secretary
National Office – Legal Branch
- Lynda Neville ClerkTypist – Per Capita
National Office

Labour Movement

- Larry Hanley International President
Amalgamated Transit Union

In solidarity,



MARK HANCOCK
National President

:jv/ceu