

## **NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2019**

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Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

As always, it's been a busy few months!

I know CUPE members and leaders across the country have been hard at work ensuring their members are well-represented, whether at grievance meetings or at the bargaining table, as well as protecting their interests at city council chambers and provincial legislatures.

Which is why I am grateful that so many of you made the trip to Montréal in October to participate in our 29<sup>th</sup> biennial National Convention.

### **National Convention**

Almost 2,200 delegates attended our 29<sup>th</sup> biennial National Convention in Montréal, October 7 – 11, 2019.

We accomplished a lot, including adopting 14 constitutional amendments that have helped modernize our union.

Many of these changes focused on longstanding practices that were generally understood by leadership but did not exist in writing and were therefore difficult for newer activists to learn. Clarifying these “unwritten rules” and enshrining them in our constitution brings transparency and accountability to our organization.

In particular, the process for electing our National Executive Board relied heavily on custom and tradition, rather than written rules. Delegates in Montréal voted to change that, by adopting amendments that clearly lay out how we elect our General Vice Presidents, Diversity Vice Presidents, and Regional Vice Presidents, and establishing clear roles and responsibilities for these positions. We also voted to use electronic voting at future conventions.

Convention also adopted significant changes to CUPE's Trial Procedure, which stemmed from a comprehensive review that involved consultations with members and chartered bodies.

**MARK HANCOCK**  
National President/Président national

**CHARLES FLEURY**  
National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

**DENIS BOLDUC, PAUL FAORO, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER**  
General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

The existing trial procedure wasn't working as intended. It was frustrating for locals, and too often being used for political purposes, which was never its intent.

Now, complaints will be dealt with outside of the local union, taking internal politics out of dispute resolution. An independent investigator will be assigned to cases and, if approved to proceed, trial committees will be composed of members from the surrounding region. Where complaints are rooted in harassment or discrimination, the complainant will have the option to proceed through an alternate dispute resolution process.

We also adopted 26 resolutions and Strategic Directions which, together, provide us with a solid mandate to continue our work in promoting and protecting the work our members do and the services they provide, while also recommitting us to our important work in defending the rights of working people across Canada and around the world.

We have already met with senior staff to review all the decisions taken by convention and are already hard at work on a plan to realize them. You will hear more about the role you can play in this plan in the months to come.

## **Federal Election**

In the October 21 general election, Canadians went to the polls and came out with a minority parliament – after two consecutive majority governments.

With 157 seats, Justin Trudeau retains the role of Prime Minister, with a much stronger Conservative opposition caucus of 121. The Bloc Quebecois achieved 32 seats, the NDP was reduced to 24, the Green Party has 3 seats and Jody Wilson-Raybould was elected as the lone Independent.

While it was devastating to lose so many NDP members of parliament, especially in places like Quebec, Windsor and Saskatchewan, the small but mighty NDP caucus includes some impressive new talent. It was a privilege to witness them as they were sworn in this November, and I look forward to working with Jagmeet Singh and his new team.

We especially look forward to pressing this new parliament for action on the issues that are so important to our members – a universal, public, pharmacare program and expanding health care coverage to dental care as well as mental health care, tackling climate change while ensuring workers can safely and fairly transition as the economy changes, making life's necessities (like housing) affordable and accessible for everyone, and finally pursuing meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The Liberal minority governments of the 1960s, with the NDP holding the balance of power, brought us universal medicare, the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans, Canada Student Loans program, and federal labour standards that included the 40-hour work week.

The Liberals also held power in a minority government from 2004 – 2006, which brought about equal marriage. The NDP was able to negotiate amendments to the 2005 federal budget which saw a reversal in corporate tax cuts in favour of a \$4.6 billion investment in social programs and public transit.

This new minority government presents a significant opportunity for progressive change, and CUPE will be working closely with labour and community allies to make sure we achieve it.

## **Colombia**

Following the federal election, I travelled to Colombia at the invitation of two organizations we partner with through our Global Justice Fund. It was an important opportunity to learn first-hand about the vital work they do.

We travelled with NOMADESC, a research and human rights organization lead by the fearless Berenice Celeita, into several different communities facing incredible challenges.

We went to the port city of Buenaventura, the hub of the country's most important trade routes, where development by foreign-owned resource companies has forced thousands of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples from their communities, into a city that doesn't have the housing, the services, or the jobs to support them.

Two years ago, these people banded together and shut the city down for 22 days, demanding safety, security and essential services like water, sanitation, health care and education for the over-grown community. We met with members of the civic strike committee, and heard about their continuing struggles, and watched as one of the leaders of that strike, Victor Vidal, was elected as Mayor of Buenaventura.

We also travelled into Bahia Malaga, and visited a community that has pushed back against government encroachment on their traditional territories. While they succeeded in establishing a protected marine reserve, they are still fighting the expansion of a nearby naval base.

We met with Indigenous leaders in the province of Cauca, and travelled to the community of Tacueyo, where just the day before five Indigenous leaders had been gunned down by members of a paramilitary group. There, we witnessed hundreds of members from the surrounding communities come together, to grieve but also to organize and determine, collectively, their path forward.

We spent time with SINTRACUAVALLE – the union representing workers at Colombia's only public water provider, who have been bravely fighting water privatization in Colombia in the face of sometimes violent opposition. We toured a water treatment facility, and attended a meeting the union hosted for community members who are fighting for public water services.

I found such deep inspiration in the remarkable courage of the women and men I met in Colombia, who organize and fight for human rights, and who stand against corruption, and corporate aggression in the face of such adversity and violent opposition.

Their courage reminds me that there are too many places in this world, still today, where it isn't always safe to speak out for the things you believe in, and where you risk your life just being a union activist.

### **Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts**

There were five disputes involving job action during the reporting period that were resolved.

<b>PROVINCE</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>EMPLOYER</b>	<b># OF MEMBERS</b>	<b>STRIKE BEGAN</b>	<b>DURATION (days)</b>
Alberta	1505	Wood Buffalo Housing	46	May 10, 2019	165
Newfoundland And Labrador	1761	Town of Placentia	15	July 16, 2019	42
New Brunswick	1282	City of Bathurst	25	July 25, 2019	61
British Columbia	441	Saanich School District	460	Oct. 28, 2019	20
Ontario	3625	Something Special Children's Centre	8	Nov. 1, 2019	17

### **CUPE 441 – Saanich School District – British Columbia**

The existing agreement for CUPE 441 expired June 30, 2019. The Local has approximately 460 members, is part of the K-12 President's Council and was party to the Provincial Framework Agreement which was ratified in the summer of 2018. Local bargaining, which largely centered on monetary items, began April 29, 2019,

and the parties reached impasse on June 26. This strike ended on November 17 when a new collective agreement was ratified that included the Framework wage increases of two percent increases per year in a three-year agreement, as well as significant steps to address the wage disparity in the region.

### **CUPE 3625 – Something Special Children’s Centre – Ontario**

CUPE 3625 were locked out by their employer on November 1. The employer was demanding concessions to health benefits from these eight workers. The lockout ended November 18 as a new deal was ratified that dealt with pushing back against the demanded concessions to sick time.

### **CUPE 1505 – Wood Buffalo Housing – Alberta**

Wood Buffalo Housing (WBH) in Fort McMurray, locked out its 49 employees on May 10, 2019; employees were forced to hit the picket lines. On October 22 after 165 days on the line a new two-year agreement was ratified by the membership. WBH is a non-profit subsidiary of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo which provides housing to residents of Fort McMurray.

### **CUPE 1761 – Town of Placentia – Newfoundland and Labrador**

CUPE 1761, workers with the Town Council of Placentia, Newfoundland and Labrador ratified a new collective agreement on August 28, ending their strike that started on July 16, 2019. The Local was able to push back against the employer’s insistence that wage increases be frozen for four years, and achieved a signing bonus plus increases in the third and fourth year of the contract. The Local was also successful at pushing back the town’s demand to control employees’ work schedules and made gains that include access to sick days for part-time and casual employees.

### **CUPE 1282 – City of Bathurst – New Brunswick**

CUPE 1282 ratified a new five-year collective agreement with the City of Bathurst after a 61-day lockout. The deal called for a signing bonus as well as increases for all classifications (the employer had proposed to freeze some out). Support across the country for this small local of 22 workers was strong and went a long way to promoting their solidarity on the line.

### **OSBCU**

Following a week of “work to rule” action by 55,000 members that commenced on September 30, following a 93% strike mandate, a tentative agreement was reached on October 6 after a full weekend of intensive bargaining. A three-year deal was crafted

with one percent per year as well as benefit improvements, statutory holiday improvements, and training improvements. Ratification votes were held from October 15 to the 31 and the deal was ratified by a 79% margin. Remaining now is the local bargaining.

### Non Strike-lockout Bargaining

#### **CUPE 2142 –The United Townships of Dysart – Ontario**

CUPE 2142 ratified a four-year collective agreement that encompasses the Roads Department employees, Equipment Operators, Mechanics and Foremen. The monetary gains are 8.25% compounded over four years. Included in this deal are increases to boot allowance, tool allowance and clothing, an increase in banking of overtime with it being renewable at any time during the year, and hours of work language incorporated into the agreement.

#### **CUPE 5512 – Prairie South School Division – Saskatchewan**

After a strong strike mandate from its 422 education workers, CUPE 5512 reached an agreement with the Prairie South Saskatchewan School Division. The union was able to achieve a number of monetary and non-monetary improvements, including a wage increase totaling 5.5% over the term of the agreement, a \$700 signing bonus, and maintained a retirement gratuity. The new term of agreement is from August 31, 2017 to August 31, 2022.

### Regional Services Division Updates

#### Maritimes

##### **Prince Edward Island**

PEI's minority government enjoys the benefits of relative economic and demographic growth. Premier Dennis King declared in October he would reinstate elected school boards. Implementation of a universal, public, half-day pre-kindergarten for four-year-olds has been promised. Plans to review recruitment and retention practices for all health-care workers and a plan to develop an Island-wide public transportation have been made. And this fall the government introduced domestic violence leave legislation.

At the same time, this favorable economic context is creating staff shortages in the public sector, especially for casual and part-time positions. Recruitment and retention issues are occurring in many workplaces on the island. CUPE PEI met with representatives of the Minister of Education and brought forward proposals to address staff shortages in a long-term strategy as well as in the short-term.

Locals 1145, 1770 and 1775 who were in conciliation this fall, were not able to reach a fair agreement and will be going to arbitration. We are confident that we will be successful in that process.

## **New Brunswick**

In New Brunswick, the Conservative's plan of calling snap provincial elections in December seems to have been warded off by the recent federal election results. CUPE, along with allies, are building an opposition momentum to the Conservatives, who are trying to rally their troops for an election this spring.

In the meantime, the *Bargaining Forward* campaign entered phase three, where locals are holding events in the workplace and molding the objectives of the campaign to their respective bargaining situation.

Members of CUPE 1190 (General Labour and Trades) and 1251 (Institutional Care and Services) walked off the job at Saint John Laundry on October 16 to protest poor working conditions and harassment by management. A complaint of unlawful strike activity was filed that day and, following a hearing the next day, the Labour Board issued a cease and desist order. Employees returned to work but their message was heard loud and clear: they will not accept a toxic work environment and the employer must act to dramatically change their management approach.

At the end of September, the New Brunswick Association of Nursing Homes communicated a final offer to the NBCNHU and filed an application to the Labour Board for an imposed final offer vote. The way the offer was put, without any communication with the union, amounted to an unfair labour practice and CUPE successfully filed a complaint to the Board. At the time of writing this report, three locals had already rejected the employer's final offer, with overwhelming majorities. The Conservatives' narrative that CUPE leaders are out of touch with their members was completely invalidated with these results. NBCNHU members deserve decent wages and they are determined to continue their fight for fairness and respect.

Respect is not what they are getting from the New Brunswick Government. The Province appealed the Labour Board's decision that the *Essential Services in Nursing Homes Act* is unconstitutional, but a unanimous Court of Appeal issued an oral ruling from the bench dismissing the Province's appeal. In response, the Conservatives table a bill that establishes mandatory arbitration but with conditions that are totally unacceptable to us and the labour movement. The Conservatives got clear messages both from CUPE members and from the courts: collective bargaining is a fundamental right, and you don't mess with that!

## **Atlantic**

### **Nova Scotia**

CUPE Nova Scotia's Long-Term Care Committee's *More Caring Hands* campaign was launched mid-October in Truro. Fifteen videos that feature member interviews are the centerpiece of the campaign, which also includes an email action directed at MLAs, the Minister of Health and the Premier, urging them to increase hands-on care to 4.1 hours per resident per day. Members of CUPE 2330 at Glen Haven Manor participated in a work-in campaign in November, to demonstrate the advantages of the 4.1 ratio.

Long-term care workers demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the residents they work with. They entered the field to enhance the lives of seniors and these workers derive great satisfaction when they are able to do that. But workers face unmanageable workloads and regularly go home feeling "defeated" by constraints in delivering the kind of care they want to provide. Most employers are attempting to correct the staff shortage problem however, many continue to leave the first sick-call unfilled (to meet budgets reduced by the government), as well as the practice of "mandating" staff to work overtime. In 2019, 44% of CUPE members had been mandated to work overtime shifts they did not want.

CUPE Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Health Care Coalition, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the NDP, other unions and community groups have been calling on the Liberal government to stop using public-private partnerships (P3s), especially when dealing with health infrastructure. Because of this pressure, the provincial government announced in November that it was reversing course and would not construct two new health centres in Cape Breton using the P3 model. This was the right decision: public funding, maintenance and operation of public infrastructure is in the best interest of Nova Scotians.

We now hope that the government will come to the same decision for the QEII redevelopment project in Halifax. As part of CUPE Nova Scotia's anti-privatization campaign, the CCPA-NS released a new report in October entitled *Shrouded in Secrecy: The Queen Elizabeth II Hospital Redevelopment and the Privatization of Nova Scotia's Health Care Infrastructure*. The report identifies a number of issues, including a lack of transparency and accountability, and private financing that is 125% more expensive than public borrowing.

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the September *Boots on the Ground* provincial tour was a great success! CUPE's team travelled 8,000 kilometers to 18 meetings, speaking with members from Labrador City to Burgeo, St. Anthony, Grand Falls-Windsor, Marystown and all points in between. CUPE members gathered to say that they're not taking one step back.

The next stage of the campaign was to hold a strategy session in November, where dozens of bargaining committee members attended from 23 locals across the province, representing 3,800 members who work in health care, school boards, NL Housing, Government House, NL Public Libraries, and transition/group homes. In addition, representatives from other sectors were also present at the meeting. The bargaining team discussed contract proposals, member mobilization and CUPE's no concession bargaining policy in preparation for upcoming negotiations with the province. The message to Government is: We're ready.

In October, members of CUPE 4745 at Bay St. George Long Term Care held a demonstration to protest extreme mandatory overtime and the provincial government's failure to address staffing shortages. Both the union and the employer asked the province to increase training opportunities through the College of North Atlantic, but this has not been addressed and now our members are suffering stress and exhaustion from this situation that has been going on for two years. The event was also attended by many community residents.

Workers at St. Patrick's Mercy Home and Glenbrook Lodge, members of CUPE 879, learned this fall that Eastern Health plans to move the bulk of laundry away from their facilities and cut jobs. This came as a surprise since Eastern Health has repeatedly said that they have had no problems with the current service and efficiency of the work being done by the in-house staff. The nursing home workers went public with how it feels to lose their jobs without a full explanation from Eastern Health, and held an information picket. The impact of these job losses will be significant to the communities in which these workers pay taxes, provide food and shelter to their families and spend their hard-earned pay in local businesses.

Across the country, we have seen employers consolidate and contract-out laundry services from nursing homes and hospitals, where they claim that there will be no negative impact on the services provided. In our experience, as the largest union in Canada, this has not been true. Any loss of laundry services performed by in-house staff always has a negative impact.

## **Quebec**

On the eve of the Federal Government's tabling of its new budget, SCFP-Quebec and two National Film Board (NFB) locals, CUPE 4835 and CUPE 2656, asked the Prime Minister to increase funding for this institution that showcases Canadian culture and know-how all around the world. Indeed, its artisans have won several international awards, and some of the most prestigious ones at that. However, notwithstanding its impressive results, the NFB is living on life support. Its success continues on today thanks to the devotion of its employees who have to make do with skimpy budgets and onerous work overloads. A shot in the arm is imperative to this cultural jewel.

The Legault government has recently tabled legislation designed to abolish the province's school commissions and to create shared services centres for schools in any given territory. This reform will eliminate any form of school-related democracy and will

disrupt the school system's stability. SCFP-Quebec's Provincial School Support Staff Council made a presentation on the matter to a parliamentary committee, alongside the QFL, to deliver the following message: Once again, the government is focussing upon organizational structures without understanding what's going on in the field. CUPE members who work in the education sector constantly feel the effects of all the cutbacks: work overloads, psychological distress and the deterioration of their working conditions. Rather than reinvest in the sector, the government heedlessly believes that it can still make further cutbacks by abolishing the school commissions.

There's more encouraging news coming to us from Quebec's municipal sector: CUPE 2566, representing the employees of Saint-Constant, recently negotiated a letter of agreement to bring back in-house some of the snow removal previously done by the private sector. Seeing as submissions for the work had increased on average by some 42%, the city contemplated other options and quickly observed that it could do the work, with substantial savings (about \$600,000 annually), by having the work done in-house. The city is also convinced that the work will be of better quality.

A new group of public transit employees joined CUPE's ranks in October: CUPE 5910 received certification to represent the 750 bus drivers and maintenance employees, working at the Outaouais Transit Corporation. More than 90% of the workers in the bargaining unit expressed their support for CUPE, and the Canada Industrial Relations Board was thus able to issue the certification order very quickly. Welcome to one and all! CUPE is now a force to be reckoned with in the Gatineau region.

In the provincial public sector, CUPE members are mobilizing to protest the government's erroneous and unfair application of the rules governing the integration and advancement of employees in the salary scales. A group of activists occupied the Treasury Board's offices in Québec City at the end of October. This action clearly sets the table for the start of negotiations in the public sector, which are taking place in a context of staff shortages and employee retention problems.

At the end of November, the "Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec" (FTQ) held its convention where elections were taking place for officers' positions. The good news is that CUPE's General Vice-President Denis Bolduc was elected as General Secretary of the FTQ. Denis' long experience in the labour movement, both in the private sector as President of Local 1450 at the Journal de Québec and in the public sector at the helm of CUPE-Québec, will be a great asset for the FTQ. Congratulations to Denis.

## **Ontario**

In September, the representation vote for service workers at Unity Health Toronto (UHT) took place. This was a vote between CUPE and SEIU. CUPE had 1,230 service members at St. Joe's and Providence and SEIU had 950 service members at St Mike's. The vote results were overwhelmingly in CUPE's favour. In addition, this local has a bargaining unit of 32 Chaplains and Spiritual Care Providers at UHT who we organized

leading up to the merger and representation vote. We welcome these new members into CUPE 5441, which now represents approximately 3,300 members.

On October 24, CUPE Ontario was made aware of proposed amendments to foundational OMERS governance by-laws to be voted on at the November 14, 2019 Sponsors Corporation (SC) meeting. Our initial impression is that these amendments would fundamentally re-write how OMERS governance has worked since workers and employers gained joint control of the plan in the *OMERS Act, 2006*. The proposed changes include eliminating the right of Sponsor Organizations to directly appoint and remove our SC members, removing the requirement for equal employee/employer representation on SC committees, deeming all SC board material to be confidential, and moving to a single Board Chair. A coordinated effort begun to push back against the November 14 date to give sponsor organizations an opportunity to make presentations against these changes. While this effort has been partially successful to date, the campaign is ongoing.

In mid November, Ontario's provincial government passed Bill 124 which empowers the Ford Conservatives to override collective bargaining and impose settlements that lock front line workers into wages that cannot keep up with inflation. Adapting the model that is being used in Manitoba, the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) along with a coalition of labour in the province, is poised to fight this draconian bill at every level.

At the end of November, I had the opportunity to join the CUPE delegation in Toronto for the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) convention. I extend my congratulations to Sister Janice Folk-Dawson, who was elected as Executive Vice-President of the OFL. Prior to her election, Janice was President of CUPE 1334 and also served almost two decades as a member of the CUPE Ontario Executive Board. She brings a solid history of labour activism to her new role in our movement, which I know will serve working people in Ontario well.

## **Manitoba**

Following this summer's health care representation votes, workers will be transferred to their new bargaining units this December. While we wait for the formal transfer, we are working diligently on transition matters and getting ready for collective bargaining, including drafting a bargaining survey for our members and preparing for essential services discussions with employers.

The legal challenge to the Pallister government's wage freeze legislation, *The Public Service Sustainability Act*, finally had its first day in court on November 18. CUPE is a member of the Partnership to Defend Public Services, which is leading the legal charge against this legislation that was imposed on public sector workers in 2017. As with challenges to similar legislation that we believe restricts our Charter rights in other provinces, we anticipate this is going to be a long fight.

It was my pleasure to return to Brandon in mid-November for CUPE Manitoba's annual convention – and a special honour to recognize CUPE 69, representing workers at the

City of Brandon, on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Convention delegates elected new executive members and I offer my congratulations to those who were elected, including incoming CUPE Manitoba President Abe Araya. I also thank Gord Delbridge for his service to our members in Manitoba as acting President of CUPE Manitoba.

## **Saskatchewan**

CUPE Saskatchewan held their 19<sup>th</sup> annual Aboriginal Conference in Regina in November. Participants heard from guest speakers about the benefits of intercultural and intergenerational exchange, and the history of the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous People – including the fact that Canada voted against the Declaration in 2007 and continues to lag behind other nations in its adoption, implementation and enforcement. Participants also elected two new members to the provincial Aboriginal Council.

The Education Workers Steering Committee has released a new report highlighting the increasing levels of violence facing their members. Over 1,000 workers in the sector participated in a confidential survey, which found that over 70% of them had experienced violence at work in the last three years. Almost half of respondents noted an increase in incidents in the last three years, which corresponds with budget cuts and an increase in the number of students in each classroom. The Committee has presented the report to provincial legislators and will push for province-wide action to address the report's findings.

CUPE joined with other unions to ramp up pressure on the government to provide guaranteed multi-year funding for the province's non-profit Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), which provide social services in communities across Saskatchewan. The current funding model, which provides funding one year at a time, leads to significant uncertainty for the people who rely on these vital services, and the workers who deliver them. The unions are engaging workers and community members with a petition campaign aimed at the Ministers of Social Services, Education, Health and Justice, and were in Regina on December 2 to deliver the first batch of signed petitions.

## **Alberta**

The attacks on public services, workers and workers' rights continue in Alberta.

Premier Kenney introduced a budget in October that slashed funding for public services across the board, with cuts in the neighbourhood of \$1.3 billion. In education, funding for class size reduction and Education Assistant services have been cut, which could result in job losses. Post-secondary institutions have also seen funding cuts, while tuition fees are expected to rise by 21% over the next three years. Municipalities have seen funding cut and costs downloaded, as well as money for much-needed infrastructure projects reduced by almost \$600,000, with other projects stalled. Health care will likewise see infrastructure projects delayed, and over \$200 million

in cuts to services and operations. In social services, Marshall House in Fort McMurray has lost its emergency shelter funding and will be forced to close, which means job losses for the CUPE 1505 members who work there.

Governing is about choices, and Kenney's government has clearly chosen a \$4.5 billion corporate tax cut over investing in the people of Alberta.

While they have stalled various health, transportation and municipal infrastructure projects, the government has also announced that five new schools will be built – and operated – under a public-private partnership model. They have moved control of investments for the three largest public sector pension plans to a crown corporation. And we anticipate they will either reverse recent legislation wins that gave employees joint control of these pension plans or “professionalize” the boards in an attempt to affect workers’ and unions’ ability to choose their representatives on the boards.

The government has already rolled back some of the improvements to workers’ rights achieved under the Notley government, and appears set to meddle further in our rights as unions to advocate for our members through anticipated legislation to restrict “political” activity.

## **British Columbia**

On November 7, the Faculty Association at the University of Northern BC took strike action. Members of CUPE 3799 and CUPE 2278 respected their picket line, and walked in solidarity with faculty members and other university workers for more than three weeks. The Faculty Association has since removed their picket lines, despite not reaching a collective agreement, so that students can complete the fall semester. While our members have returned to work, their support during the strike has built strength and solidarity on campus that will hopefully aid in resolving this labour dispute.

Bargaining continues across the province. All 57 of our K-12 bargaining units have successfully concluded agreements, as have four of our university bargaining units. The remaining university and college locals are at various stages of the bargaining process. And bargaining is well underway for municipal and library locals in Metro Vancouver.

On November 13, CUPE 2950 gathered at the University of British Columbia to celebrate the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their predecessor union, the Association of University and College Employees (AUCE 1). Following a presentation on the digitization project, attendees watched a video premiere of “A union for working women at UBC — AUCE 1.” The video celebrates the history of this feminist union, which was the first to achieve fully funded maternity leave through ground-breaking language achieved in their first contract in September 1974, and features interviews with five of AUCE’s founding members. During a Q&A session after the screening, audience members gleaned more details about the organizing drive and first contract from the three founders who were able to attend.

The event was the culmination of a project that began with 43 boxes of historic materials, which the Local took possession of and, with partial funding from the BC History Digitization Program, catalogued and digitized the documents. The digital collection is available to anyone through UBC Library's Open Collections at: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/auce>

On November 26, British Columbia became the first jurisdiction in the country to adopt legislation implementing the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The act, which will apply to all existing and new provincial legislation, requires that Indigenous peoples are included in all decisions that impact their rights. It was developed in collaboration with BC's First Nations Leadership Council. We hope that the federal government will soon follow suit.

### **Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)**

HEU continues to urge the provincial government to address the problems being created in long term care because of financial difficulties faced by China's Anbang Insurance Group, which bought Retirement Concepts in 2016.

Eighteen months ago, Anbang was put under direct control of a Chinese government regulator. On September 30 one Retirement Concepts facility, Comox Valley Seniors Village, was placed under administration by the province. In late November, following an investigation and continued pressure from HEU, Nanaimo Seniors Village also came under administration.

HEU had been raising alarm bells about continuing problems at both facilities, including systemic staffing shortages caused in part by low wages paid to care aides and licensed practical nurses at these private facilities.

### **Airlines**

The Airline Division held its biennial conference in October, before the start of CUPE's National Convention. It was an opportunity for the Division to review and make changes to its governance. As a result, the Division will now be better equipped to coordinate sectoral campaigns and initiatives. The Division leaders must be congratulated for the great amount of work that went into this important revision of governance and democratic rules.

Locals and components representing flight attendants at Air Canada, Air Canada Rouge, West Jet, WestJet Encore, Swoop and Sunwing joined in expressing their concerns to Boeing about the safety of the 737 Max. On behalf of the 14,000 CUPE members who may be called to work on board these aircrafts, the local and component presidents called on the President and CEO of Boeing to prove to them that the aircraft are safe to fly. Standing in solidarity with our American counterparts who have expressed serious concerns surrounding the 737 Max returning to service, CUPE requested that all information be disclosed and that Boeing provide factual, data driven

details of the measures that were taken to ensure the aircraft's safety. The underlying systemic breakdown of the safety culture at Boeing within the Max program is disturbing and the company must now regain our trust.

## **Organizing**

From September 1 to December 31, 2019, CUPE welcomed 2,645 new members in 22 newly certified bargaining units. Staff and member organizers organized 61 members in education, 78 members in the university sector, 115 members in long term care, 1,077 in health care, 251 members in municipalities, 224 new members organized into the HEU, 230 members in social services, and 710 in transportation.

Currently there are 27 new campaigns underway that, if successful, would increase our membership by 8,330. There are five files for certification at Labour Boards that would bring in 500 new members.

The fourth quarter of 2019 has been extremely busy across the country.

We continue to focus on organizing long term care and home support workers in New Brunswick, as well as wall to wall organizing in existing locals.

In Quebec, the 710 bus drivers, mechanics, garage and maintenance employed by the Outaouais Transit Corporation decided to leave the Amalgamated Transit Union and join CUPE. The CIRB issued its decision, in favour of CUPE, last October 30 and these workers are now members of CUPE 5910. CUPE also now represents the 83 blue-collar workers and school crossing guards employed by the City of Thetford Mines. These employees had previously been unionized with FISA (Independent Federation of Autonomous Unions). On September 5, a new bargaining unit covering 78 employees working at the Dam-en-Terre Tourist Complex was added to CUPE 2706.

In Ontario the Conservative government restructuring in most CUPE sectors requires that we remain focusing organizing resources on drives that will better position our union for upcoming representation votes.

Manitoba is actively preparing for the next anticipated round of healthcare votes.

After several months of organizing efforts, CUPE was successful in unionizing CBI Health Group residential and transitional care home workers in Saskatoon. This is a fast-growing new workplace which currently employs over 200 community support workers, childcare workers, LPNs and homemakers. CUPE won the secret ballot vote – counted on August 14, 2019 – by a near unanimous margin. The Labour Relations Board issued the certification order on August 21, 2019.

In Alberta we are seeing an increase in calls, from municipalities in particular, around the province asking for information on how to unionize their workplace.

In British Columbia we continue to work on projects to organize wall to walls in community social services. We also successfully fended off an attempted raid of over sixty members of CUPE 2262 in Castlegar by the Public and Private Workers of Canada (PPWC).

## **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**

- Ian Irwin Member of CUPE 2359  
Saskatchewan
- Ted Jager Member of CUPE 1505  
Alberta
- Debbie Onwu Member of CUPE 4731  
Alberta
- Dave Armstrong Member of CUPE 3007  
Alberta
- Warren St. Peter Member of CUPE 2157  
Alberta
- Paul St. Cyr Member of CUPE 2559  
Alberta
- Moreno (Mo) Cerra Member of CUPE 1004  
British Columbia
- Lucy Phua Member of CUPE 4879  
British Columbia
- Jenny VanHorne Member of CUPE 1858  
British Columbia

### **Retired Staff**

- Robert Gingras Secretary  
Quebec Regional Office

- Léopold Arseneault
- Sister Evelyn Wilson
- Stanley “Stan” Marshall
- Francis (Alex) Somerville

Representative  
Dalhousie Area Office

Secretary  
London Area Office

Managing Director  
National Office

Representative  
Atlantic Regional Office

### **Labour Movement**

- Douglas O’Halloran

President - Alberta  
UFCW 901

In solidarity,



MARK HANCOCK  
National President

:ms/cope 491  
January 8, 2020