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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2020 – DECEMBER 2020

Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

At the beginning of 2020, none of us could have imagined what the year had in store for us. It has been a very long hard year, for all of us.

I am still so very proud of the work our members have done on the frontlines of the pandemic, of the way the leadership of our union at the local and provincial levels have fought to protect our members rights every step of the way, and of how our National Union and our staff have been there providing support whenever and wherever needed.

As we near the end of the year, there is light on the horizon with the promise of vaccines that will enable us to return to some semblance of normal as 2021 progresses. And that's a good thing.

There is little reason to think that next year will be easy for workers or their unions. We can expect government supports to begin to fade before all sectors of our economy are back on solid footing. And with fiscally conservative governments at the helm of almost all our ten provinces, it's only a matter of time until fiscal constraint agendas and attacks on public services are once again the flavour of the day.

As always, CUPE will be on the frontlines fighting to ensure that our public services and the vital roles they have played throughout this pandemic are recognized and continue to be valued. We will continue to push for investments in health care, fixing long-term care, finally establishing a national childcare program, building public infrastructure, and implementing a universal pharmacare program.

But first, we all need to take some time for ourselves this holiday season. While our celebrations with family and friends won't be the same this year, they will be more important than ever. I wish you all a restful, happy, and healthy holiday.

MARK HANCOCK

National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

BENOÎT BOUCHARD, PAUL FAORO, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

Federal Government

The public services our members provide across Canada, whether in health care, emergency response, social services, education or community services, have never been more visible in this country and have never been more important.

We continue to work with our allies in the NDP, in labour, and in progressive movements to demand a better deal for workers and our families as we look toward 2021 and a slow recovery from the global pandemic. And we continue to highlight the value of the services our members provide, and the need to continue to fight for better public sector jobs, a stronger system of public health care, investment in childcare, and a stronger social safety net.

The NDP, under Jagmeet Singh's leadership, has been able to significantly influence the government's approach to the pandemic. Last month, Edmonton MP Heather McPherson forced the government to extend the interest-free moratorium on student loan payments, which the Liberals had let lapse in September. And earlier this year, the NDP was able to force improvements to the government's pandemic response benefits, including expanding eligibility for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit to more workers, a supplementary payment to seniors on Old Age Security, and a commitment to federal paid sick leave.

The NDP is also pushing a robust legislative agenda. Labour critic Scott Duvall has introduced anti-scab legislation and legislation that would ensure workers' pension and health benefits are given the same consideration as banks and investors in the event of bankruptcy. House Leader Peter Julian has introduced legislation that would implement a universal, single-payer, public pharmacare program for all Canadians. And they recently forced debate on the concept of a wealth tax, which was of course defeated by the Liberals and Conservatives.

CUPE's submission to the federal pre-budget consultations for 2021 focused on the need to: continue funding a robust pandemic response and recovery; invest \$2.5 billion in early learning and childcare as the first step towards a public national childcare program; finally implement a universal pharmacare plan; bring long-term care under the *Canada Health Act* and replace the current patchwork of services with a well-funded, well-staffed, public long-term care system; implement substantial reforms to Employment Insurance; and reverse regressive tax cuts that have been implemented since 2000 which have eliminated more than \$50 billion from federal government revenues.

We had high hopes that at least some of these measures, along with a strategy to shore up the hard-hit airline sector, would form part of Minister Freeland's economic update at the end of November. Unfortunately, the minister's speech and the accompanying economic package failed to address any one of these issues in a meaningful way.

We will continue to fight for these investments to be included in the 2021 federal budget.

In the meantime, we must also turn our minds to the possibility of a federal election next year. Trudeau's minority government is not as stable as it may seem, and we very nearly ended up in a federal election this October. The 2021 budget is the next big confidence vote for this government and could very well trigger an election.

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

The CLC continues to play an important role in coordinating relations and communications with the federal government on behalf of and with its various affiliates, which has been very helpful on a number of key files.

Unfortunately, not all of their recent actions have been as helpful. On October 30, the CLC announced a joint endorsement (with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce) of former Finance Minister Bill Morneau for the role of Secretary General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). As a member of the CLC's Executive Committee, this came as quite a shock as there had been no consultation or forewarning of this announcement.

Most of you will have seen my statement rejecting the endorsement. Last month, the Executive Committee met and passed a motion to make it clear that we do not endorse Morneau for this position, a position which has been communicated to the Labour Secretariat at the OECD.

This action by the leadership of the CLC is one more reason why it is so important that we work to change the culture and leadership of the Congress. And we will have an opportunity to do just that at the upcoming CLC convention.

While exact details are still being worked out, it has been confirmed that convention will be held virtually in June of 2021. All CUPE locals are affiliated to the CLC through the National Union, and are encouraged to participate in this convention. More information will be sent to locals in January, once the dates and details have been confirmed.

Order of Canada

I want to take this opportunity to recognize and congratulate the following friends of CUPE who were appointed to the Order of Canada this fall: former NDP MP Bill Blaikie; Ed Finn, long time trade unionist and CCPA editor; and trade unionist and former NDP MP Peggy Nash.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
Ontario	5257	Blaisdale Montessori School.	130	November 16, 2020	14

Strikes and Lockouts

On the morning of November 16, 2020, the 130 members of CUPE 5257 commenced strike action against their employer, Blaisdale Montessori School, at seven campuses across Oshawa, Ajax, Pickering, and Bowmanville.

More than 55% of workers at Blaisdale Montessori School earn minimum wage and the employer is refusing to offer any wage improvements for the first two years of the agreement.

The workers, who have been without a contract since August 31, 2019, voted overwhelmingly to commence job action following a series of unsuccessful contract negotiation meetings with the employer.

CUPE 5257 reached an agreement on November 30, which was ratified at 89%.

Collective Bargaining

CUPE 3495, representing workers who provide peer support, education, counselling, social work, and fundraising services at QMUNITY, BC's queer, trans, and two-spirit resource centre, have ratified a new collective agreement that includes wage increases, various improvements to benefits, and other contract language.

The new collective agreement, retroactive to January 1, 2020 and running until March 31, 2023, includes wage matching to comparable classifications in the Community Social Services provincial agreement, applied to all three steps of each classification. It also includes a general wage increase of 3 per cent in the final year of the agreement.

The contract includes benefit improvements for bereavement and compassionate care leave, increases for parental leave, and an agreement to establish a joint review process for introducing an affordable pension plan by June 30, 2021.

On November 16th, the Syndicat des employé/e/s du transport de valeurs et des salles de comptage de Garda (SNCF-SCFP 3812) signed a new six-year collective agreement, which calls for wage increases of 14% for the period between 2018 to 2024.

The union achieved the objectives it wanted, particularly with respect to salaries and full retroactivity for all employees and major adjustments to schedules and statutory holidays. The agreement achieved 73.5% support.

In addition to maintaining and even improving their purchasing power, the union is particularly proud of regaining several things they had negotiated after rejecting an initial tentative agreement in April 2019. The employees subsequently voted more than 83% in favour of resorting to pressure tactics up to and including an unlimited general strike.

SNCF-SCFP 3812 represents slightly more than 1000 members.

Regional Services Division Updates

Maritimes

Prince Edward Island

At the end of November, CUPE PEI held its annual All Presidents' meeting, and both National Officers had the opportunity to attend virtually and hear reports from every local in the province. Many locals held membership meetings online in the fall, and were impressed at how many members participated, and were fully engaged. Even though in-person meetings are restricted because of the pandemic, it is more important than ever that our members feel connected to their union. It is very encouraging to see that locals and members have adapted and appreciated the opportunity to meet virtually.

Tentative agreements with the University of PEI for wage re-openers were ratified by the members of Locals 1870 and 501 in September. The two-year deal will provide wage increases of 2% each year.

Locals 1145, 1770, and 1775 went to interest arbitration and received wage increases of 7.5% over four years.

CUPE PEI continues to make submissions to improve public programs and services, as well as working with locals to promote contracting-in across the province. Promising initiatives are being pursued at the municipal level.

New Brunswick

Recently, the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity released an 86-page report bringing attention to the undervalued and underpaid work in community care. The report highlights the extent of the pay gap in this overwhelmingly female-dominated sector. The report's findings are wholly supported by CUPE's New Brunswick Community Service Unions and their 21 affiliated locals. The Coalition's report demonstrates that in 2020, in most classifications like direct caregivers, crisis interveners and home care workers, community care work remains seriously underpaid and workers don't have enough schedule stability and predictability. If the Government of New Brunswick really cared about women's equality, this would already have been addressed.

In the long-term care sector, Premier Higgs is refusing to cooperate with Ottawa to create and adhere to national care standards. Establishing standards is the best way to ensure all seniors have a basic right to live in dignity. With the current recruitment and retention crisis unfolding in the sector at the same time as we deal with a pandemic, it is imperative that governments cooperate to raise the bar for everyone.

In Higgs's first Throne Speech of his new majority government, workers and civil services' diligent response to the COVID-19 was rightfully highlighted. Government said they wanted to govern collaboratively and reinvent New Brunswick. If this statement is an honest one, public service workers must be at the table and be heard.

But this Conservative government fools no one. In the Throne Speech, we heard wishes for more private capital investment, but that was not accompanied by the necessary commitments to attract investments: strengthening the public sector means good roads, quality healthcare, and education. This is how a government can attract investment – by building strong communities and services that private investors need to thrive.

On the healthcare front, the government said more "optimization" must be done. This usually means cuts and austerity. But that shouldn't be the case. With bold, innovative governments, public services are part of the solution and investing to bring more work in-house, when it can be done better, should be a priority. To this day, New Brunswick is the province who invested the least in the fight against COVID-19 and to improve the working conditions of frontline employees.

Atlantic

Nova Scotia

The municipal sector in Nova Scotia continues to deal with the implications and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most municipal workers have now been recalled, and locals are continuing discussions with employers to ensure they have the proper protective equipment and sufficient supply if and when a resurgence of COVID appears in the province.

Bargaining continued and significant settlements were achieved in the sector, such as by CUPE 2694 who reached an agreement with the County of Victoria for a 12% wage increase over four years.

The challenges of having to deal with restrictions on gatherings prompted CUPE 1867 to find creative solutions to consult the membership on bargaining proposals. In person meetings took place outside, in sports fields or parking lots near community halls. In the end, they had input from across the province. The local held its annual general membership meeting at the Halifax Convention Centre, with social distancing measures to ensure everyone's safety. Thanks to video conferencing being accessible as well, I was able to join part of the meeting from the other end of the country. CUPE 1867 will be focusing on protecting their work with demands for no contracting out language and job security.

In the long-term care sector, we are in the process of finalizing proposals for the upcoming round of bargaining and a key priority will be to increase the care ratio to 4.1. The pandemic demonstrated how long-term care had been neglected by governments across the country, and Nova Scotia is no different. It's now time to make this a priority.

Newfoundland and Labrador

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is again proposing to amend the *Pensions Benefit Act* "to facilitate unlocking pension funds for financial hardship". The changes are being considered "for persons who have transferred funds from a registered pension plan into a locked-in retirement savings arrangement". The proposed changes to enable "financial hardship" unlocking is intended by government to be a public policy response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Many workers in the province faced financial hardships due to COVID-19, and we strongly advocated for income support programs for those facing various personal pressures due to the pandemic. But we strongly oppose the government's choice to pursue pension unlocking as a public policy response to the pandemic. Individuals should not have to resort to draining their retirement savings to sustain themselves during a historic public health crisis. Governments at all levels are much better positioned to respond to the challenges which individuals are facing. The Newfoundland and Labrador government should be vocal in public and active behind the scenes to push for increased federal social transfers, additional COVID-19 emergency funds, and access to federal borrowing capacity to provide a critical backstop for NL residents in this time of crisis.

Master bargaining in the public sector for school boards, health care, transition houses and group homes, as well as NL housing is still underway, with all groups except public libraries having completed their initial exchange of proposals with employers. A government proposal regarding further integration of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) with the Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP) remains the sticking point, as government is trying to pass their increased CPP contributions onto public sector workers by cutting into their pension plan. CUPE-NL has mobilized members around the issue and worked with two other unions to block the required amendment to the PSPP.

The new premier of Newfoundland and Labrador has introduced a new health care task force to “reimagine the health care system in order to best deliver services to meet the needs of people in communities across the province”. This “reimagining” is to take place on a ten-year horizon, with six committees to work on issues related to aging population, digital technology, hospital services, primary health care, quality of care, and social determinants of health. CUPE will be watching this work closely to ensure that no austerity and privatization agenda dominates the “reimagining”.

Quebec

CUPE members have scored another important victory in their fight for pay equity. University teaching assistants in the health sector have had the fair value of their jobs recognized following a complaint alleging that the government had incorrectly evaluated this job category. These workers are responsible for the administrative operations of university teaching and oversee both internal and external relations. Our members will be receiving a 4.75% salary increase retroactively to January 2011. One entire decade of salary discrimination, but finally a well-deserved adjustment!

The SCFP-Québec transportation sector recently launched a campaign to promote public transit, reminding us of the many excellent reasons to support the transit system and improve it. The campaign will be rolled out in our members' workplaces, and on social media in order to reach a larger audience. It will draw attention to some of the 1,001 reasons why we value public transit: encouraging local businesses, relaunching the economy, adopting a healthy lifestyle, showing respect for the environment, and travelling in an effective and safe way.

Members of CUPE 9875 (STEEN) who work in the northern electric power stations ratified a tentative agreement reached with the multinational Rio Tinto by a vote of 84.7%. The vote was held during a virtual membership meeting. The new contract provides an increase in the number of unionized employees in the company's electrical energy division. All jobs within the bargaining unit will be protected from outsourcing, thanks to various mechanisms set out in the negotiated agreement.

For the first time in its history, the Union of Merged Montreal Blue-Collar Workers (CUPE 301) held a general meeting in a drive-in theatre to obtain a mandate to exercise job actions, including the possibility of a general strike. A remarkable 2,846 members showed up to exercise their right to vote, and they voted in favour of the mandate by 97.2%. Unfortunately, discussions are dragging on with the City of Montreal who doesn't appear to be bargaining in good faith. These workers have been without a contract since December 2017. Since then, they have had 57 bargaining sessions, but the exchanges have not been particularly fruitful. The City doesn't seem to want to take into account all the efforts that our members have made in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis.

Ontario

CUPE Ontario continues to lead the fight to protect workers during the current pandemic. On October 6, the Chief Medical Officer of Health issued Directive #5, which provides clear guidance that N-95 or superior protection masks, face shields and other equipment are to be provided to health care staff working on the front line in long-term care facilities or hospitals dealing with COVID-19 outbreaks, among other improvements.

The enhanced standards direct that if a health care worker in a facility in outbreak comes in contact with a suspected, probable, or confirmed case of COVID-19 in a patient or resident where 2-metre distance cannot be assured, that health care worker can determine if a fit-tested N-95 respirator or approved equivalent or better protection is needed and if so must receive it.

OCHU-CUPE, SEIU and Unifor launched a Judicial Review to strike down the previous Directive. The improved standards mean that the application for a Judicial Review of Directive #5 will be withdrawn.

CUPE 4392, which represents workers at Community Living Guelph Wellington, has launched a new online campaign in response to an abrupt closure of six day program sites that support adults with developmental disabilities.

The abrupt closures have left many program participants and their parents and caregivers without much-needed support. Many of those impacted by the closures live in areas where there are simply no accessible support alternatives.

The new online campaign features a letter that concerned program participants, community members, parents of adults with developmental disabilities, and developmental service workers can add their names to. The letters will be distributed to Community Living Guelph Wellington's Executive Director, Laura Hanley, members of the respective Board of Directors, and MPP's in areas impacted by day program closures.

The OSBCU is preparing for bargaining that will commence in 2022. In late summer, OSBCU settled many grievances filed regarding funding negotiated in the last round of bargaining. Boards were to use \$78 million per year to create up to 1300 CUPE jobs but failed to live up to the agreement. Settlement would result in unused money from the first year of the collective agreement being carried over, allowing us to create several hundred more CUPE jobs.

CUPE members in Ontario have been leading the fight for a legislated care standard in long-term care for decades, ever since Mike Harris removed it in 1996. While the Ontario Liberals campaigned on bringing back a care standard in 2003, they did not follow through.

In 2018, the Ontario NDP reintroduced a 2016 private member's bill, Bill 13, which called for an amendment to the *Long-Term Care Act* to provide a minimum standard of care of four hours per resident per day. Rallies and workplace actions were held in support of Bill 13, with a lobby day in 2019. After a great deal of effort asking members from all sectors across the province to contact their MPPs, Bill 13 passed second reading with all-party support.

In early November, ahead of the budget, the Ford Conservatives announced they would be moving toward four hours of care. They are not planning to legislate this, which is something we have been adamant about – we don't want this standard of care to be signed away with the stroke of a pen. We need lasting change for long-term care residents in Ontario. We are also concerned about the government's timeline and that we have not yet seen the necessary financial commitment to this plan. But a public commitment, and assurances that we will be involved in the process moving forward, is a significant step forward.

The activism of members and allies on care standards has been supported along the way by recommendations of experts in the fields, the government's own experts, and external investigators. The movement we have seen in long-term care was made possible by the dedication of members and union leaders who have always kept this issue prioritized even as our focus is sometimes pulled in different directions.

Manitoba

COVID cases continue to rise in Manitoba, placing unprecedented stress on the health care system in the province. Capacity in Intensive Care Units has been under significant strain and capacity is lacking across the province. Recent outbreaks of the virus in private long-term care homes have had serious consequences for residents and staff, including the loss of a member, and required government intervention.

Throughout, we have been fighting hard to ensure our members' health and safety rights are observed and protected. We won rights for our homecare workers who now have the client information they need prior to attending at their homes. Policy grievances have been filed across the province to ensure access to the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE). And we continue to pursue the issue of understaffing in the sector.

In the meantime, we are moving closer to long-awaited bargaining in public health care for our 18,000 members. A provincial bargaining committee of members from our health care locals is working on finalizing proposals and bargaining training is ongoing.

Bargaining preparations are also underway in the municipal and school division sectors. While we have been successful at limiting layoffs, we expect bargaining will be difficult and are working to coordinate proposals across tables in each sector.

On October 23, it was reported that the provincial government will be mandating a two-year wage freeze for all Hydro bargaining groups. This was included in the mandate letter addressed to Manitoba Hydro from the Ministers of Finance and Crown Services. This comes as IBEW is in its second year of bargaining with the crown corporation, and does not bode well for CUPE 998, whose collective agreement expires on December 31, 2020.

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan went to the polls this fall, voting in provincial, municipal and school board elections.

The provincial election saw Premier Scott Moe and the Saskatchewan Party holding on to a majority government with 48 seats, and the NDP maintaining 13 seats. It was great to see two members of our CUPE family win their seats: CUPE 1949 member Meara Conway joined Vicki Mowat, a former member of CUPE 3287, in the legislature as NDP MLAs. Of concern, the Buffalo Party of Saskatchewan (a far-right and renamed version of the “Wexit” movement) received almost 3% of the votes and did much better in some races.

At the municipal level in Regina, while Mayor Fougere was defeated by Sandra Masters, who ran on a platform of bringing in 15% efficiencies, 5 new labour-endorsed council candidates were elected, including former CUPE researcher Cheryl Stadnichuk. In Prince Albert, CUPE representative Brother Tony Head joined two other CUPE members on council. In Saskatoon, Mayor Charlie Clark was re-elected and we have good relationships with a majority on council.

CUPE 5430 held a successful two-day annual general meeting via Zoom at the beginning of October and will be holding Zoom meetings for members in all five regions to continue nominations and the approval of bylaws. The local also welcomed 180 new members from the Roy Romanow Provincial Lab.

Bargaining continues in the municipal and education sectors. In the education sector there is a clear trend of resolving new agreements focused on wage and term with three locals agreeing to two-year extensions with 2% increases in each year. Municipal agreements have tended to longer terms with slightly lower wage settlements but have successfully fought off concessions and two-tier proposals and some have achieved language and benefit improvements as well.

Alberta

The pandemic has hit Alberta hard this fall, with caseloads rising on an almost daily basis and a provincial government reluctant to bring in restrictive measures to prevent the spread because of concerns for the state of the local economy.

It’s an odd approach, to say the least, but it is in keeping with other decisions made by the Kenney government. Like picking a contract fight with the province’s physicians and laying off 11,000 health care support workers, all in the midst of a global pandemic. Those layoffs will affect CUPE members, as their jobs are either contracted out or eliminated altogether.

And the government isn’t stopping there. Having already attacked unions with legislation that guts their rights under public service pension plans (Bill 22) and fundamentally undermines our existence through disruptive financial and political restrictions (Bill 32), we are now expecting legislation to cut public sector wages by 4%.

In the long-term care sector, additional wages promised for some classifications have been held up in legal challenges and red tape. We filed unfair labour practice complaints and have settled a number of them with financial settlements finally being passed on to members. The single-site staffing orders in Alberta are not as strong as in other provinces. As COVID cases increase, there is growing concern for the safety of workers and residents in long-term care.

British Columbia

Following an October provincial election, the BC NDP formed a majority government for the first time since 1996. With 47.7% of the popular vote, they gained an impressive 16 new seats in the legislature. The election results are significant for CUPE members across the country, as Premier John Horgan and members of his cabinet bring an important progressive perspective to the table when they meet with their federal, provincial and territorial counterparts.

CUPE 4078 member Lisa Beare and CUPE staffer Rachna Singh were both re-elected, and will be joined in the legislature by CUPE 3787 member Dan Coulter and former CUPE member and HEU Secretary Business Manager Jennifer Whiteside. Three more members were on the ballot, but were not successful this time: Sylvia Lindgren (CUPE 523) in Shuswap, Bryn Smith (CUPE 728) in Surrey-White Rock and Cory Longley (CUPE 2043) in Peace River South. I offer my congratulations and thanks to those who stepped up as candidates, and to the many CUPE members and staff who volunteered on the campaign.

There are also a number of local government by-elections underway across the province, with more to come. Our locals are engaged in the process, participating in the recruitment and endorsement of progressive candidates.

While our members in provincial sectors have all completed collective agreements for this round, bargaining continues across the province in the municipal and library sectors. Thanks to the hard work and commitment of our bargaining committees, we are reaching agreements that are in line with settlements achieved pre-pandemic. Our municipal and library locals continue to push employers to resume services and recall those members still on layoff, and are prepared to fight back against any employer who attempts to leverage the pandemic as a reason to cut or privatize our public services.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

In 2017, HEU launched a coordinated bargaining strategy for all 11 bargaining units in their health authority contracted support services sector, where we represent over 4,300 members in 4 health authorities. The goal was to win a fair contract, and eventually negotiate an employment security agreement with health authorities. To accomplish this the union initiated a wide-scale contract campaign, mobilizing thousands of workers.

In 2020, we have new challenges. COVID made it impossible to have a bargaining conference in the spring, but all of the collective agreements expired on September 30 and now, using electronic platforms, we have to elect 11 bargaining committees throughout Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley and on Southern Vancouver Island. This is a large and complicated project, exacerbated by the sector demographic.

After the bargaining committees have been elected, we'll canvass for bargaining demands and bring the bargaining committees together virtually to develop our coordinated approach. We have high hopes for this round of bargaining, which should open in early 2021.

Airlines

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, our members in the airline sector have been the hardest hit in terms of layoffs and furloughs. Since the spring, we have been urging the federal government to adopt specific measures to support the airline sector. Meetings between ministers, the CLC and affiliates representing workers in the sector took place, but despite our collective efforts, the Trudeau government remains tone-deaf to the needs of the airline industry.

Airlines have had to make difficult decisions to preserve their survival in the short-term and these short-term economic impacts now threaten the medium- and longer-term viability of the industry in Canada. The Trudeau government remains out of step with many other countries who are providing industry-specific financial support to this sector. The government should invest directly in the industry by receiving an equity stake in return, following the approach taken by European governments such as France and Germany. For example, Berlin's investment in Lufthansa will give it a 20% stake in the company and two board seats. Not only is this approach an investment rather than an expenditure, it also allows for access to information, and better capacity to supervise the use of public funds. Indeed, the government should place the interests of aviation workers at the heart of any sector-specific financial assistance to Canada's airlines.

CUPE called on Ministers Freeland (Finance) and Garneau (Transport) to bring industry stakeholders together to develop a Canadian aviation strategy to respond to the crisis and emerge from it, a strategy that should include sectoral labour-force planning and clear communication to ensure public adherence to health recommendations, but also to instill consumer confidence. Industry research suggests that the risk of inflight COVID-19 transmission is much lower than the public's perception. The government should work to counter false perceptions regarding risks incurred in passenger air travel.

Finally, CUPE has been advocating that in addition to providing proper protective equipment and procedures to prevent exposure to COVID-19, rapid and effective use of testing will be vital for the industry's recovery. However, aviation workers must not be expected to bear the cost of testing and quarantine requirements.

Organizing Report

For the period of October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, CUPE welcomed 626 new members: 58 members in the healthcare sector, 92 members in municipalities, 279 members in social services, 125 in the security sector, 22 in transportation, and 50 in the HEU.

There are currently 68 new campaigns underway that, if successful, would increase our membership by 14,815. There are six files at Labour Boards that could bring 1,493 new members into CUPE.

Despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, we are busy with new organizing initiatives across the country.

In the Atlantic region, we are updating our mapping in an effort to identify potential opportunities.

In the Maritimes region, the Faculty Association of the University of St. Thomas is showing interest in joining CUPE 5083. Lifeguards in NB have also approached CUPE seeking representation. We are exploring options to organize these workers.

We have many organizing drives underway in Quebec. An application for certification should be filed soon with the CIRB for the 12 foremen working for QSL. A campaign is underway to organize the 100 white-collar and professional employees in the Québec Division of the Red Cross and the 400 with the National Division. 40 employees with the Municipality of Oka have begun signing cards. And efforts are underway to include 450 Cogeco employees into CUPE 3624.

In Ontario, the pandemic has resulted in the Ontario Labour Relations Board finally accepting electronic evidence and accepting e-mail submissions.

The pandemic also brought to light inadequacies and unfairness in many workplaces that greatly increased the number of groups calling to inquire about joining CUPE. These included organizing drives at the University of Waterloo (2000-3000 potential members), a campaign to liberate four NOWU units at Mt. Sinai Hospital, and several drives in the 400-600 worker range, including Toronto hospitals, Peel Public Health, LOFT Community Services, and York Region District School Board.

Restructuring is ongoing in many sectors. Many of the current mergers and amalgamations are in situations where both workplaces are already represented by CUPE, but in sectors where we are likely to see representation votes in the near future. We are also beginning to see mergers of workplaces represented by CUPE and OPSEU and are active in campaigns to build support and protect existing membership in the municipal, healthcare, and social services sectors.

In Manitoba, organizing efforts are focused on anticipated representation votes in school divisions and additional healthcare sector votes. The region will continue, to address organizing challenges and needs in these sectors.

In Alberta, eight current drives could add 650 new members in the education sector, assisted living, and municipal rural areas. We continue to adapt to organizing in a COVID world. Zoom information sessions have been initiated, electronic card signing has been implemented, and PayPal is being used to cover initiation fee payments for more campaigns.

In British Columbia, we are pursuing opportunities to organize wall-to-wall in our existing workplaces. With the re-election of the BC NDP, we are optimistic that we will continue to see positive changes at the Labour Relations Board (LRB). We are also hopeful that a majority NDP government will re-introduce card-check certification.

After this spring and into the summer, organizing slowed down for HEU. As the second wave of COVID sweeps across BC's Lower Mainland and other parts of the province, workers are becoming concerned again about their health and safety and staffing levels, which have resulted in new organizing drives. In addition to organizing in long term care, assisted living and independent living facilities, there is a renewed interest in organizing from security officers who work for contractors in health authorities.

In Memoriam/Personal

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

Members

- Jean Claude Dianzenza Local 204
- Aurele Poirier Local 4721
- Diane Vandervelde Local 3403
- Traci Roy Local 2141
- Monique Buote Local 4270
- Robyn Crane Local 488
- Ingrid Salt Local 1329
- Richard Sangster Local 4184
- Malcolm MacKay Local 1867

Retired Staff

- Judith Wegren National Office
- John Malthouse Alberta Regional Office
- Susan Barton Maritimes Regional Office
- Richard Anderson Atlantic Regional Office

Friend of Labour

- Joseph Arvay Constitutional Lawyer

In solidarity,



MARK HANCOCK
National President

:tp/ceu