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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARCH 2017 – JUNE 2017

Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

Since our March meeting, I have had the opportunity to attend another eight provincial division conventions, including my first in Quebec, and a number of sectoral and local meetings from coast to coast.

I am always inspired by the enthusiasm and dedication of our members as they participate in these division conventions and sectoral conferences. It was an honour to witness respectful debate on common issues across the country as our members face anti-labour legislation, fight against privatization, concessions, and precarity, and fight for fairness, equality, and diversity.

Thanks to our provincial and local leaders, to our staff, and to all of our members for the passion and commitment they showed at each of these meetings, to CUPE, and to our common goals.

Building Strong Locals Conference

Delegates from across the country joined us in Halifax in April for a national conference focused on the core strength of our union – our locals.

Workshops provided opportunities to share new ideas and best practices for governance, member engagement, bargaining, showing leadership, and working in our communities.

We also presented the results of our national leadership survey, heard from the Halifax Typographical Union, on strike for 15 months at that point, about the importance of member engagement in holding the line against massive concessions, and listened to former MP Megan Leslie deliver an inspiring message about the many faces of leadership and action and how it can affect change and make a difference.

MARK HANCOCK

National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

DENIS BOLDOC, FRED HAHN, DANIEL LÉGÈRE, KELLY MOIST, MARLE ROBERTS

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

Canadian Labour Congress Convention

Hundreds of CUPE members participated in the 28th Constitutional Convention of the CLC, held in Toronto this past May. The convention theme was #FairFuture, and delegates debated and adopted four theme-based policy papers focused on work, equity, organizing, and the environment.

It was an honour to attend a memorial service held for Brother Bob White prior to convention.

We wish Sister Barb Byers well as she retires from the CLC, and congratulate the newly elected officers.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Once again this year, CUPE participated in the annual Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference. 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 short workshop on infrastructure funding and a reception for conference delegates.

As always, this was a great opportunity to highlight the importance of the work our members do in cities, towns, villages, and regional districts, and to discuss the concerns we have in the sector with the infrastructure funding gap, the risks associated with privatization, and public-private partnerships.

I also appreciated the opportunity to speak with so many of our current and retired CUPE members and staff who serve their communities as elected officials.

Federal Legislative Update

Conservative senators out-maneuvered the Liberal government in April, and voted to gut **Bill C-4** (which repeals Harper's anti-labour bills C-377 and C-525) and send it back to the House of Commons. The House restored the legislation to its original form, and sent it back to the Senate. After weeks of further delay, the legislation was finally adopted. It has been beyond frustrating to watch the glacial progress of this bill, which was first introduced in January 2016.

Bill C-27, Harper-style legislation that attacks defined benefit pensions, is still on the order paper but has not yet been brought for debate. The Finance Minister was convinced earlier this year to consult with labour before determining how to proceed. CUPE, along with other unions, has made the case that the legislation needs to be withdrawn.

In a hypocritical move, the federal government introduced a Harper-style omnibus budget bill, **Bill C-44**. Part of this bill includes the new Canada Infrastructure Bank Act, which would create a \$35-billion entity aimed at reviewing and organizing major projects in partnership with major private institutions – the ultimate in P3s. Despite attempts by the opposition to sever this piece of the legislation for in-depth study, the Liberals rushed the 300+ page bill through the House without the careful consideration it requires.

It appears the Liberal promise to bring in **Electoral Reform** in time for the next general election has been well and truly abandoned. Last December, the parliamentary special committee on electoral reform recommended a process to move towards a system of proportional representation. On May 31, the NDP brought the committee report to a vote in the House of Commons, challenging Liberal MPs to keep their campaign promise. Unfortunately, only two Liberal MPs voted for the committee report; 159 voted against.

After more than 12 years of advocacy by the Trans community and allies, and many attempts by NDP MPs to introduce legislation enshrining rights and protections, **Bill C-16** has finally passed into law. Bill C-16 puts gender identity and gender expression into the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code.

National Convention

Preparations are well under way for the 28th CUPE National Convention, being held October 2-6 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Sector Council meetings will be held on October 1.

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 4. Nominations for our National awards are due the same date.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

There were five disputes involving job action in this reporting period. With the end of the Local 1600 strike, June 13 is the first day since June 25 of last year that Ontario is strike and lockout free.

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
Ontario	2049	Nipissing and Parry Sound Children's Aid Society	127	Locked out Dec. 23, 2016	123 days

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
Quebec	2500	Université Laval	1,900	Feb. 8, 2017	50 days
Ontario	2073	Canadian Hearing Society	227	Mar. 6, 2017	71 days
Ontario	1600	Toronto Zoo	308	May 11, 2017	33 days
British Columbia	1816	Pacific Blue Cross	601	May 13, 2017	On-going

Local 2049 – Nipissing and Parry Sound Children’s Aid Society (CAS) – Ontario

Locked out just two days before Christmas, this local of 127 members was prepared for a fight with their employer. Their solidarity was instrumental in moving this impasse to binding arbitration as recommended by a provincial mediator and the provincial government. The employer’s executive director, who by all accounts is very much anti-worker, attempted to cloud the issue by proposing a return to work agreement that would put in place the employer’s unreasonable sick leave demands.

The return to work protocol proposed by the employer would have also eliminated recognition of the union, the grievance procedure, and access to arbitration. As she did throughout this protracted set of negotiations, the executive director of the agency failed to recognize the resolve of the members to achieve a collective agreement that is fair and recognizes the valuable services the members provide.

Solidarity won over the day and all of the contentious issues, including term, wage increase, workload, vacation, health corresponding account, and sick leave, are off to binding arbitration scheduled for later this summer. The return to work protocol does not reflect any of the employer’s regressive proposals.

Local 2500 – Université Laval – Quebec

The Université Laval Employees Union (SEUL) represents some 1,900 support staff. The collective agreement expired in April 2016. The parties had been negotiating since mid-April 2016 and have been in conciliation since the end of November with the employer seeking significant concessions.

Strikes took place at the end of February (half day on February 9, a two-day strike on February 15-16, and then a strike from February 21 to March 1). The employer got the Superior Court to issue an injunction that limited picketing. Picket lines that slow down access to the campus are now prohibited.

The local was able to negotiate a settlement that sees the pension plan restructured based on the union's proposal, with no loss of benefits to retirees. Wage increases of 1.5% and 1.75% and 2% over three years were achieved. A new pharma care benefit for temporary employees, on a 50/50 cost share basis, was also achieved.

Local 2073 – Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) – Ontario

Two hundred and twenty-seven workers with the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) returned to work after spending 71 days on a province-wide strike that began March 6. Because of their toughness, because they were so steadfast, they were able to secure a fair contract that respects their work and allows the members to return to work to provide high quality services.

The key issue in dispute during the strike was sick leave, but the workers had also gone four years without wage increases. The new contract allows for wage increases in each of five years and a modest pension improvement. Crucially, it also replaces the existing sick leave plan with a comparably good plan.

The employer attempted to force the local into a bottom-of-the-barrel sick leave plan that was not reflective of a workplace that's been unionized for 40 years. On this point, the local prevailed.

Local 1600 – Toronto Zoo – Ontario

Members of Local 1600 were forced out on the picket line when their employer proposed to remove a minimum staffing provision in the collective agreement that this local achieved through a previous strike 21 years ago. The employer also tried to attack the strong no contracting out language the 308 members enjoy.

After 33 days on the picket line, members achieved a collective agreement that retains their strong minimum staffing guarantee. While the employer was able to impact on the no contracting out language, Local 1600 refused to agree to a two-tier provision. In return, the local gained some solid layoff and redeployment language, the strongest among the City of Toronto agreements. The agreement is four years long with wage increases of 1.25% in each year and health care benefit improvements.

Local 1816 – Pacific Blue Cross – British Columbia

The 600 members have commenced job action in the form of work-to-rule, an overtime ban, and small group study sessions in an effort to move towards a settlement prior to taking full out strike action.

The employer refuses to retreat from a concessionary package that targets retiree benefits, extended health care (including prescription drug coverage), paramedical treatments, and dental care. Failure to remove the concessions from the table will result in the local taking full strike action in mid-June.

Organizing Report

During the period of March 1, 2016 to May 31, 2017, CUPE leaders, activists, and staff have been very active.

Legislation in Quebec forced restructuring in the health and social services sector where representation votes concluded in March. For CUPE, who was outnumbered substantially in most votes that took place, we were able to increase our membership overall by approximately 3,500 new members and protect an additional 5,200 members. We saw about 8,500 members leave CUPE, but welcomed over 12,100 new members. We were up against extremely difficult odds. We are sorry to see so many members leave but pleased to gain many more new members. Congratulations and thank you to all who worked so hard for the last year on this campaign.

Elsewhere across the country, we organized 216 members in health care, 70 members in social services, 51 members in K-12 schools, 58 members in the transportation sector, and 235 members employed in municipalities. We welcome all of our new members into the CUPE family.

We are currently involved in 37 active campaigns that, if successful, would bring 2,854 new members into CUPE. At Labour Boards across the country, we have 12 projects representing 580 new members waiting for certification votes to be conducted. We will not know the numbers until we get to the Labour Board, as there are three employers and numerous trade unions involved in one of the restructuring. We also have 10 bargaining units representing 922 members who are under threat of raid or decertification.

There are eight legislative restructuring projects that will affect, at a minimum, over 7,800 CUPE members. CUPE health care workers in Saskatchewan, 14,000 strong, are currently preparing for potential votes in the very near future as the government there is moving to restructure and realign hospital services.

We have discontinued nine campaigns that represented a potential of 647 new members. These campaigns were discontinued due to lack of interest.

Regional Services Division Updates

ATLANTIC REGION

Newfoundland and Labrador

CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador held its convention in Corner Brook at the beginning of May. Convention delegates and community members came together at a lively town hall organized by Common Front NL. The forum focused on the Ball government's proposal to privatize a long-term care facility and hospital in Corner Brook through a public-private partnership. Working together, CUPE members and residents of Corner Brook can protect seniors and patients and keep their facilities public. CUPE NL plans to take the issue to the streets, to doorsteps in the community, and to the offices of MHAs and push the Ball government back.

The long-awaited Ernst and Young report on the review of library services was finally released on May 18. The report recognizes that the system is underfunded and understaffed as a result of years of neglect by successive governments. However, it does not provide a role for Local 2329 members in the upcoming decision-making regarding future funding, and there are no specific recommendations regarding library closures; rather, there are vague observations about establishing location parameters to decide which libraries should close or be amalgamated. CUPE members are expected to wait longer still to discover what the fate of their employment will be.

As for bargaining in the public sector, CUPE is currently in conciliation with the Labour Relations Board. Again, the finance minister made comments in the media, which brought confusion about the bargaining process.

Nova Scotia

Nova Scotians went to the polls on May 30, during the CUPE Nova Scotia Division Convention. Despite the reelection of McNeil's Liberals, who tabled a number of regressive anti-union bills and legislated teachers back to work at the start of 2017, some good news came out of the Nova Scotia elections. Two CUPE sisters were elected: Sue LeBlanc will be MLA for Dartmouth North and Tammy Martin, MLA for Cape Breton Centre. NDP Leader Gary Burrill, who did not hold a seat in the legislature at dissolution, won his seat against a Liberal incumbent in Halifax Chebucto.

This year, CUPE Nova Scotia's Convention was held in Truro at the end of May. One of the highlights of that convention was the luncheon and panel discussion organized by the women's committee to discuss diversity in the union and in the workplace.

Again this spring, the austerity measures decided by the Liberal government had devastating effects in the delivery of public services in the province. Layoffs were announced at the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board while board members voted to increase their own wages. In the wake of the provincial elections, CUPE Nova

Scotia continues to mobilize with coalition partners to warn the public against the Liberal's austerity and privatization agenda.

MARITIMES REGION

New Brunswick

Local 1188, representing the employees of the Town of Sackville, put up a good fight to resist concessions with respect to seniority rights and a two-tier provision put on the table by the employer. Facing the threat of a lock-out, the members reached out to the community and to the regional action committee for support. The mobilization and support from other CUPE locals and activists helped members of Local 1188 go back to the bargaining table and reach a settlement that did not include any concession on seniority rights.

During the division convention in April, delegates celebrated the 25th anniversary of the 1992 general strike in New Brunswick. In 1992, the Frank McKenna government had tried to break signed contracts with major CUPE locals. An eight-day province-wide illegal strike by CUPE members forced them to back down and honour signed collective agreements. Delegates were delighted to hear from a panel of union leaders sharing their personal experience on the front lines of that hard-earned victory.

Delegates also attended an anti-privatization demonstration at the legislative assembly in Fredericton. Privatization remains an important concern in the health sector, where the Gallant government is planning to privatize services in hospitals of the Vitalité and Horizon networks. Local 1252 lead a Public Healthcare Summit, fighting privatization and contracting out and inviting citizens to join their voices with health professionals, economists, and labour leaders in the charge against the planned Sodexo deal in healthcare.

Prince Edward Island

CUPE PEI held its convention in beautiful Brudenell River this year. Delegates had the opportunity to discuss the attacks on defined benefit pension plans and the fightback that happened at the University of Prince Edward Island, where unions resisted concessions in their pension plan in an unprecedented show of solidarity. Members also discussed the next steps on the provincial political scene, after the Liberal government announced it would not go forward with electoral reform, despite the wishes of Islanders as expressed in the proportional representation plebiscite held last fall.

Quebec

While we were drafting the March report, we were awaiting the results of the union representation votes to be completed in the Quebec health care sector. It was worth the wait, seeing as CUPE attracted a wave of unparalleled support. At the outset, CUPE had a little more than 14,000 members who were in play in this campaign, and at the

end of the day, we will be representing nearly 18,000 members. Of all the Unions who were involved, CUPE was the only to receive more votes than the number of members it started out with at the beginning of the campaign.

This wide-ranging campaign kept our activists and Quebec staff team busy throughout the winter. Local Unions from other sectors also played a key role in many ways to help us achieve success and everyone deserves our warmest expression of thanks.

Other good news from the Province of Quebec involves the settlement of the labour dispute at the Université Laval, where Local 2500 was on strike primarily to oppose the employer's demands to reorganize their pension plan. The excellent agreement won by our Union should be applauded, and was ratified by 93% of the members.

Right in the midst of Montréal's celebrations of its 375th anniversary, the municipality's white-collar workers, members of Local 429, have embarked upon a major campaign to denounce the employer's non-compliance with their collective agreement. The key issue: the City is refusing to apply the flexible schedules that had been negotiated for nearly 3,500 members, a majority of whom are women, and who are thus being deprived of a duly negotiated accommodation to their working conditions. This has a major impact upon their capacity to achieve a work-family balance, with regard to caregivers and others who have special medical needs.

Finally, CUPE participated in the parliamentary commission to denounce the PPP Metropolitan Electrical Network (REM) infrastructure project. This public transit project using electric trains opens the door to privatization based on a financing model that inspired the federal government's creation of an infrastructure bank.

The SCFP-Québec Biennial Convention attracted over 700 delegates to Québec City in mid-May. Amongst the numerous issues that were debated, there was a discussion on the excesses of Québec City's populist radio stations, that disseminate prejudice and hate speech, nurture a climate of fear, and influence politicians. Also, the delegates exchanged and debated the under-representation of women in the political arena, as well as in trade union governing bodies.

Ontario

On behalf of education workers in Ontario, I recently appointed the trustees to the Canadian Union of Public Employees Education Workers' Benefits Trust. Appointed were Bill Campbell – Local 977, Jim Glavan – Local 2544, Terri Preston – Chair of OSBCC and Local 4400, Dan Crow – CUPE Research, and Gary Goddard – Expert Trustee. Much of the work necessary to start up the trust has been completed and the trust will be fully functional in the very near future.

There has been a tremendous number of announcements by the Ontario Liberals affecting CUPE members as they move to gain political support from the electorate and combat negative effects from their ill-conceived plan to privatize hydro. Some of these

announcements are implementation plans for already approved legislation and others set out plans that still need to be enshrined in legislation.

Fourteen regionally based Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) have, for over a decade, been responsible for planning and funding hospitals, long-term care homes, community services, and mental health and addiction services. Unlike regional health authorities in other provinces, LHINs do not directly deliver these services and so do not employ hospital, LTC, or other employees who directly provide health care. With the passage last year of Bill 41 (the *Patients First Act, 2016*), LHINs will now also be responsible for home care planning and funding, LTC placement, and primary care planning. They will also coordinate with public health units. Previously, home care planning and funding was the responsibility of 14 Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) which have identical geographic boundaries as the LHINs. As a result of these reforms, CCACs are currently merging with the LHINs. The mergers should be completed shortly.

The Liberals announced plans to revamp its ambulance system to redirect some patients with less pressing needs to places other than emergency rooms. The plan is to be put in place by March 2018. Premier Kathleen Wynne took the time to attend the Ontario Professional Firefighters Association annual conference where she announced that the province would embark on a plan for two test sites putting fire medics into place. The announcement would appear to be a pay off for the OPFFA support in previous elections. These plans will not improve response times and patient care; what is really necessary is to increase paramedic capacity by putting more trained paramedics into the field.

The government's "changing workplace" announcement provided some welcome news, including a move to a \$15 per hour minimum wage. However, the changes fail to address the imbalance between employers and employees. We were unable to achieve the much-anticipated card based certification for all workers, as it will be limited to only three sectors. Hundreds of thousands of workers will still find it difficult to organize.

Against this backdrop, the Ontario Division held its annual convention. Delegates debated and approved many resolutions and constitutional amendments; they heard from speakers on topics of interest and relevant to today's workers, and they have approved an ambitious action plan that will guide the work of the division over the next year.

Manitoba

In March, the Pallister government introduced two pieces of legislation that directly attacked the Manitoba labour movement. At the beginning of June, the government pushed both bills through the legislature on the last day of session – although it is unclear when the government intends to bring the legislation into force.

Bill 28 is a wage control bill, setting out public sector compensation rates for the next four years. Even though it has not yet been proclaimed, it is already having the intended affect, as employers table wage proposals based on the legislation. CUPE has joined with other unions in a coalition, the Partnership to Defend Public Services, to fight the legislation in court.

Bill 29 sets out a process to amalgamate the many different collective agreements and bargaining units in health care, forcing them into just seven agreements based on classification. Despite the labour movement proposing the creation of a council of unions, the government seems determined to force representation votes. In anticipation of these votes, our health care locals in Winnipeg are in the process of merging into one Local Union.

There is some concern the government will turn their sights to the education sector next.

It's a difficult time for our members in Manitoba, but I know the newly-elected President of CUPE Manitoba is up to the challenge. I thank Sister Kelly Moist for her years of service in that role, and welcome Brother Terry Egan as the new division President.

Saskatchewan

The provincial budget, released on March 22, was a particularly harsh and punitive one. Public libraries, school divisions, municipalities, and post-secondary institutions were all hit with significant and unexpected funding cuts. The government announced the elimination of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company, a public bus service to and between rural communities. And, they ended the long-standing practice of paying for funeral services for those on income assistance. These funding and service cuts were coupled with a 1% increase in the provincial sales tax.

The budget seems to have been the last straw for many in Saskatchewan. Protests and rallies have become commonplace. And despite government backpedalling on a few things – including restoring funding to public libraries – the Saskatchewan Party government is plummeting in the polls.

While the government appears to have backed away from talk of amalgamating school divisions, they are proceeding full steam ahead with the creation of a single provincial health authority. Our health care locals are facing a very difficult round of bargaining, and at the same time are working towards forming one provincial Local Union, in preparation for representation votes. They are doing this under new leadership. Long-time Health Care Council President, Gordon Campbell, retired in May. I wish him well in his retirement, and congratulate Sister Sandra Seitz on her new role.

Alberta

CUPE Alberta has taken a strong stand for public education and joined forces with Progress Alberta. This coalition is working to phase out public funding of private schools and reallocate that funding to strengthen the public, catholic, and francophone school systems. The coalition's proposal calls for the phase out of funding over three years, using the funds to reduce class sizes, school fees, and increase staff and resources to deal with the increasing complexity of Alberta's classrooms.

In the meantime, the Notley government finished a busy legislative session at the beginning of June. Initiatives included improved and expanded whistleblower protection, cutting school fees for instructional material and busing, and long-awaited revisions to the labour and employment law. While changes to the labour code were not as robust as we would have wanted, progress was made on certification and first agreement arbitration. On employment standards, the government has expanded protections and access to leave for employees and strengthened youth employment rights.

British Columbia

CUPE BC's 54th Annual Convention wrapped up in Victoria, with delegates electing a new Executive Board (including two new Diversity Vice-President positions), approving a new two-year Action Plan and passing resolutions to guide the union's activities and priorities over the next two years.

Cindy McQueen, Tanya Paterson, Karen Ranalletta, and Michelle Waite were elected to serve as General Vice-Presidents. Delegates also elected four Diversity Vice-Presidents (DVPs), two of which are new positions on the Executive Board:

- DVP, Indigenous Workers: Debra Merrier (Alternate DVP, Danica Hansen-Hughes);
- DVP, Persons with Disabilities: Frank Lee (Alternate DVP, Sunera Samarakoon);
- DVP, Pink Triangle: Kathy McMahan (Alternate DVP, Dean Coates); and
- DVP, Workers of Colour: Michelle Alexander (Alternate DVP, Drew Parris).

Delegates in caucus also elected 10 Regional Vice-Presidents and alternates.

Preliminary results from a survey of CUPE custodians throughout BC indicate that a startling number of janitors – 55.4 per cent – are not able to maintain schools to meet their own expectations for a clean, safe, and healthy school environment.

Many school caretakers have detailed degradation in cleaning standards as a result of chronic cuts to public education. Some of the issues they identified include not having enough time to complete their work (47.6 per cent); larger areas assigned with less time allotted (57.5 per cent / 50 per cent); and little or no coverage or work insufficiently done when custodians are absent (83.3 per cent). As well, more than half of respondents reported experiencing stress-related injuries and illness.

A whopping 72.4 per cent reported that some cleaning is simply left undone because of increased or unrealistic workloads. Many custodians reported doing unpaid work because it is personally important to them that schools are clean.

CUPE BC, CUPE BC's library committee, and many CUPE library workers from around the province participated yet again in this year's BC Library Association's (BCLA) annual conference. The CUPE BC library committee also had a booth at the tradeshow which provided an excellent opportunity to connect and visit with other library workers, and have conversations with management and trustees.

CUPE BC also facilitated a very successful conference session with more than 150 attendees that featured a panel discussion on "Measuring Value Beyond Walls". The panel encouraged BCLA delegates to think beyond quantitative measurements and to develop new ways to measure the social and moral impact library services have on communities.

BC politics continues to live up to its reputation as unusual and unpredictable. Despite the election having been held on May 9, we may not know who will form government until July.

On election night, the incumbent BC Liberals were leading in 43 seats, the BC NDP in 41 seats, and the BC Green Party in three seats. With an 87-seat legislature, no one Party held the majority. With up to 10% of ballots not yet counted, and several very close races, everyone waited for the results of the final count, held May 22-24. The results remained the same.

Since then, the BC NDP and BC Greens have signed an agreement that would see the three Green MLAs support a BC NDP government for the duration of the term. But first, BC Liberal leader Christy Clark has the opportunity to call a legislative session and attempt to govern. It is widely expected that she will lose a confidence vote in late June, and the BC NDP will then be invited to form government.

My congratulations to our members and staff in BC who put so much passion and energy into this election – to those who worked or volunteered in campaigns, and especially to the eight CUPE sisters who ran for public office: Lisa Beare, Judy Darcy, Natalie Fletcher, Stephanie Goudie, Sylvia Lindgren, Barb Nederpel, Tracey O'Hara, and Rachna Singh. Congratulations to Sister Lisa, Sister Judy, and Sister Rachna who were all successful.

Airlines

At the beginning of April, CUPE presented to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities of the House of Commons and revealed that rules that allow for airlines to cut the number of cabin crew were implemented by the Conservatives against the clear advice of Transport Canada's assessments and experts.

An uncensored Transport Canada decision regarding Flight Attendant Requirements, which proposed a 1:50 ratio, concluded that: “The arguments and issues raised by those who oppose this measure are persuasive that further reduction in the number of cabin crew can have a negative affect [sic] on safety and certainly will not enhance safety”.

In correspondence related to the issue, Transport Canada’s Chief of Cabin Safety at the time remarked that “if the ratio was changed to the US rule, there are definite safety implications and it would be a lowering of safety standards and that change becomes more and more evident as the aircraft size increases”. She added that she has been persuaded by the facts, the safety studies, and the research: “We do have the higher safety standard (1:40) and we should stay there”.

If the Liberals are not willing to scrap the 1:50 ratio immediately, they should at least respect their election promise to hold appropriate consultation with stakeholders and experts.

Hospital Employees’ Union (HEU)

Under the theme – Rising Together: Roots, Struggle, Strength – more than 120 HEU members gathered in Vancouver earlier this month for the union’s 2017 Equity Conference. Members received an important update on HEU’s equity program and future equity audit from consultant Natasha Aruliah. The important differences between equity, equality and liberation, and how economic justice cannot be achieved without racial justice and gender justice, were explained.

Participants heard from several speakers on equity issues. They included Angela White and Adeline Brown of the Indian Residential School Survivors Society, Dr. CJ Rowe from Qmunity, Yuly Chan of Chinatown Action Group, Carol Arnold of the B.C. Teachers’ Federation, Carissa Ropponen of WAVAW, Byron Cruz of Sanctuary Health, Jane Dyson of Disability Alliance BC, and Jane Ordinario of Migrante BC.

Delegates elected four members and four alternates to each of the union’s five equity standing committees – Pink Triangle (LGBTQ+), Indigenous Peoples, Women, Ethnic Diversity, and People with disAbilities. The remaining three members and three alternates to each committee will be chosen through an upcoming selection process.

In Memoriam/Personal

Messages of Condolences

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

Members

- Judy Lavallee Member of Local 1550 – Manitoba
- Lisa Langridge Member of Local 148 – Ontario
- Ron Bodenham Member of Local 504 – Ontario
- Diana Chicoine Member of Local 416 – Ontario
- John Dillon Member of Local 4557 – Ontario
- Heather Williams-Patterson Member of Local 7575 – Ontario
- Susan Scollen Member of Local 1858 – British Columbia
- Michael Webb Member of Local 30 – Alberta
- Greg Friesen Member of Local 30 – Alberta

Retired Staff

- Clarence Lacombe Servicing Representative – Red Deer Area Office – Alberta

In Closing

I want to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a safe and enjoyable summer. While our work continues during the summer months, I am hopeful that you will find some time to spend with family, loved ones, and friends. I look forward to seeing you all at various events throughout the summer and at our National Convention in Toronto the first week of October.

In solidarity,



MARK HANCOCK
National President

:fb/ceu