
NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT DECEMBER 2016 – MARCH 2017

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

The beginning of a new year always brings an opportunity to meet with staff across the country. This year, we had productive conversations with staff about the NEB's renewed policy on collective bargaining, starting in Ontario and ending in Quebec.

The policy, adopted in December 2016, is titled "Collective Bargaining: Resisting Concessions and Two-Tier Proposals, and Defending Free Collective Bargaining – Moving Forward". It recognizes that bargaining is getting tougher, with more employers demanding concessions and seeking two-tier provisions at the same time as governments of all stripes are restructuring the services our members provide and looking for more ways to privatize those same services.

This policy is similar to one first adopted in 2004, and renewed in 2009. It sets out the broad parameters of CUPE's plan to resist concessions and two-tier contract provisions and defend our rights to free collective bargaining. It also puts a new focus on bargaining protections for our members who do not have access to full-time, permanent work and are forced to work in precarious jobs. And it asks locals to make addressing workplace violence a priority at the bargaining table.

I was struck by the dedication and experience shown by our excellent staff throughout these discussions. It is clear that they are prepared to support our locals and bargaining councils in the important work that lies ahead. At our first two division conventions, in Regina and Red Deer, I had good conversations with our members about this policy. I look forward to similar discussions at the remaining division conventions throughout the spring.

Key to the success of this renewed bargaining policy is ensuring our local leaders have the tools they need to implement the policy in their own locals, sectors, and regions.

Our **Building Strong Locals Conference** being held in April is a good starting point. Hundreds of local leaders will come together in Halifax to refresh the skills they need in a series of sessions focussed on engaging members, strength in bargaining, working with community allies, understanding leadership styles, and ensuring a well-functioning Local Union. Following the conference, we will be providing all locals and chartered organizations with the tools, resources, and reports developed for the conference.

Public Services International

In February, I attended the North America Subregion meeting of Public Services International, hosted by the American Teachers' Federation in Washington, DC. It was an opportunity to hear directly from our US counterparts about the impact of the first month of the Trump administration on public sector unions. In addition, we discussed preparations for the PSI World Congress being held in October.

Trade

We also discussed the status of various trade deals and the state of fightback campaigns at the PSI meetings.

There was much focus on the looming re-opening of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The continued protection of public services is of course a major concern for us in these negotiations, as is the fact that the US President seems to be targeting Mexico. CUPE has expressed concern that we must not allow this to pit workers against each other in a race to the bottom – instead, we should work in solidarity across borders to protect and support the interests of workers in each country. In early March, I joined the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in a meeting with Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland and took that opportunity to reinforce our concerns.

The Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) has been adopted by the Canadian government as well as the European Union, and therefore enters force, provisionally, in 2017. There are still several local and regional government votes that must occur across Europe, and there are pockets of opposition still. We continue to monitor CETA's progress, especially as it relates to the contentious investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism, which remains in limbo.

Federal Legislative Update

Bill C-4, which essentially repeals C-377 and C-525 (the worst of the anti-labour legislation brought into force by the Harper government), still languishes in the Senate as of the beginning of March. We are hopeful it will finally receive royal assent and come into force by April, but it is clear that this has not been a top priority for the Liberal government.

We remain incredibly frustrated that it has taken so long for these restrictions on our labour rights to be repealed. Watch for a final announcement on our website, and in *CUPE Today*, when the bill is finally passed.

Despite our best efforts, **Bill C-26** was passed in December, unchanged, still containing the “drop out” periods for child-rearing (used mostly by women) and the “disability drop out” period for those collecting CPP disability benefits. However, there is still time before the CPP expansion comes into effect for this to be addressed, and we are hopeful that will happen.

We have had some small success in convincing the government to reconsider **Bill C-27**, Harper-style legislation that attacks defined benefit pensions. Bill C-27 will allow federally-regulated employers to retroactively change a defined benefit pension promise into insecure “target benefits” by pressuring workers and retirees into surrendering benefit promises they have already earned.

Thanks to the work of dozens of pension activists across the labour movement, the minister responsible is consulting with stakeholders before proceeding to debate on this legislation. We hope to convince the government to withdraw the bill entirely and consider alternate legislation to address some legitimate instances where alternatives to a defined benefit pension plan may be the best viable option.

March is, traditionally, budget month for the federal government. Given the finance ministry’s challenge in fulfilling the Liberal’s promises to the “middle class”, we have provided them with some advice through a submission during their pre-budget consultation and a follow-up letter to Minister Morneau. Our belief is that the government has a revenue problem which can be addressed by closing a variety of unfair tax benefits and loopholes which almost exclusively benefit the wealthy. By addressing their revenue shortfall, they will be able to make progress on their many commitments to working families. Of course, we are not holding our breath.

Canadian Labour Congress

The triennial CLC convention is being held in Toronto from May 8 to 12, 2017, and we look forward to a strong CUPE delegation attending convention. Credentials were sent directly to CUPE locals by the CLC in mid-December. If, for some reason, your local did not receive a credential or did not receive the number of credentials to which you are entitled, you can contact the CLC directly or contact my office for assistance.

It was with great sadness that we said goodbye to Brother Bob White, former president of the CLC, and husband to former CUPE staff member Marilyn White. Throughout his life, Bob was a fighter for the rights of working people in Canada and around the world. He served as the first president of the Canadian Auto Workers, and was a key figure in the fights against the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement. Throughout his career, he was a strong ally to CUPE and a personal friend and mentor to many of us.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

There were eight disputes involving job action in this reporting period. All but three have now been settled.

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
Ontario	2974	County of Essex Library Board	58	June 25, 2016	235
Ontario	4914	Peel Children's Aid Society	435	Sept. 18, 2016	91
Ontario	2049	Nipissing and Parry Sound Children's Aid Society	127	Locked out Dec. 23, 2016	On-going
Ontario	32	City of Cambridge Outside Workers	171	Feb. 2, 2016	7 days
Ontario	1882	City of Cambridge Inside Workers	1,673	Feb. 17, 2016	7 days
Ontario	4155	Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien	283	Feb. 14, 2016	7 days
Ontario	2073	Canadian Hearing Society	227	March 6, 2017	On-going
Quebec	2500	Université Laval	1,800	Feb. 8, 2016	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. Shortly before the lockout, the employer requested a supervised vote on their last contract offer which was soundly rejected by the members. The employer is seeking sick leave concessions and refuses to address a real and persistent workload

problem. Members of the local work across a very large geographic area. Despite the geography, spirits and morale are high. Members have been engaged in a variety of activities in support of their strike, including holding blood donor clinics, contributing to local food banks, and meeting with politicians at Queen's Park.

Local 2500 – Université Laval – Quebec

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

The employer presented several astounding demands regarding staffing and job security and the union refused to make such overwhelming concessions. Negotiations are also deadlocked around the pension plan that has to be restructured in accordance with Bill 13 (*an Act respecting the restructuring of university-sector defined benefit pension plans*). The union wishes to maintain the indexation of retiree benefits, where the average pension annuity is about \$21,000 per year.

Strike actions took place at the end of February (one-half day on February 9, a two-day strike on February 15-16, and as of February 21). 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.

Local 2073 – Canadian Hearing Society – Ontario

Spread out over 20 offices across Ontario, the 227 members of this local gave their bargaining committee an unprecedented strike mandate after working without a contract during the past four years. The employer is seeking significant concessions to sick leave, vacation payout on retirement, and union representation. The employer wants staff positions to be removed from the collective agreement and has proposed 0% wage increases for the past four years.

The proposals on sick leave are the first step in a two-step attack. The employer has already moved to a short-term disability plan for out-of-scope positions. Members are frustrated with the employer, and for the first time in their history, they are taking the actions necessary to achieve a collective agreement that both values and respects their work.

Local 2974 – County of Essex Library Board – Ontario

Members of Local 2974 were forced to take strike action when their employer proposed to remove current sick leave provisions in the collective agreement to be replaced by a sub-standard plan. To resolve this dispute, the Local Union had put forward 10 different proposals on the contentious issue, to no avail. The employer had not moved from their opening position.

Faced with the fact that another trade union and another bargaining unit in Local 2974 had agreed to the employer's concession on sick leave much earlier, the Library Warriors were forced into accepting a sick leave provision they would rather not have. They minimized the damage, but were unable to escape the regressive language proposed due to a lack of solidarity with others. These members can hold their heads high as they fought an uphill battle.

The Essex County Council and the Essex County Library Board had shut down democracy by denying citizens the right to make deputations with respect to the impact of the lack of library services due to the employers' actions. Municipal elections should be quite interesting in Essex County.

Local 4914 – Peel Children's Aid Society (CAS) – Ontario

Members took strike action after 9 months of negotiations where there was little progress on key issues important to Local 4914. Over those 9 months, little discussion took place at the table as the employer's bargaining tactics were aimed at stalling talks.

In early November, the employer refused to submit the outstanding issues to binding arbitration. Instead, the employer tried to do an end run around the local's executive and bargaining committee when they mailed to each employee their supposed final offer. In a show of solidarity and strength, members voted 95% against submitting the regressive proposal to a vote. This tactic certainly showed the employer's unwillingness to find a mutual resolve to some very important issues.

By mid-December, the employer agreed to submit the contentious issue of workload to binding arbitration and end the strike. The local was delighted when, in late January, an arbitrator handed down a decision that restricts the number of new cases assigned each month for one group; and reduces existing caseloads caps for three groups of workers.

Local 32 – City of Cambridge Outside Workers – Ontario

Members of this local took strike action in support of their demand for wage parity with comparative municipalities in the area. These members were the lowest paid. After seven days on the picket line, the members achieved an immediate wage adjustment of \$1.25 per hour prior to general wage increases of 2% in each year of a four-year agreement. The agreement also sets out the parties' commitment to establish a joint job evaluation plan which will also look at market wages.

Local 1882 – City of Cambridge Outside Workers – Ontario

Following closely on the heels of Local 32's strike, the 171 members of Local 1882 took strike action against the same employer to resist concessions. During the immediate preceding round of bargaining, the local took a deal with 0% increases in exchange for a joint job evaluation program that would grandfather the members whose jobs were paid higher than the rating. These members would continue to receive wage increases.

In this round of bargaining, the employer tabled proposals to remove the grandparenting provision. The local was able to negotiate provisions that would see these members continue to receive wage increases at a lower rate than those at job rate. The joint job evaluation plan was amended and will incorporate a review of market wages. Wage increases of 1.7% retroactive to January 1, 2016, with a further 2% on each January 1st of 2017, 2018, and 2019 was also achieved.

Local 4155 – Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l’Est ontarien – Ontario

After nearly two and one-half years without a collective agreement, the 283 members of Local 4155 had no other option than to take strike action. This bargaining unit was the last of the 110 Ontario School Board locals to reach a collective agreement after seven days on the picket line and a marathon round of bargaining.

The employer brought in scabs to keep the schools open. In addition to settling the contentious issues in dispute regarding job postings, the local also ratified a contract extension that settles central and local agreements until August 31, 2019.

Regional Services Division Updates

ATLANTIC REGION

Newfoundland and Labrador

A new round of master bargaining has started with the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador that involves the English School Board, Eastern and Western Health Boards, the Provincial Library Board, NL Housing Corporation and transition, and group homes. The government is seeking concessions that would reduce our collective agreements to a labour standards level of protection, and proposing a four-year wage freeze. This government has an austerity agenda despite the urgent need to invest in the economy to stimulate economic growth. At the beginning of March, in an unprecedented move by the provincial government, Finance Minister Cathy Bennett undermined negotiations by going public with bargaining details. This is not what bargaining in good faith looks like.

CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador, along with Common Front NL, has communicated strong opposition to the economic direction government is currently pursuing. CUPE has made clear that a recession is not the time to be focused on balancing the budget and cutting jobs. The government has options to raise revenues to address the deficit and, at the same time, to reinvest in public services that act as stimulus to local economies.

CUPE insisted that the Ball government must change policy direction on two important files: the closures of provincial public libraries and use of the P3 model for the acute care hospital and long-term care facilities in Corner Brook.

Nova Scotia

The teachers' fight in Nova Scotia took on a new turn at the beginning of the year when the Liberal government of Stephen McNeil passed a bill to impose working conditions on the province's 10,000 teachers. After a third tentative agreement was rejected by Nova Scotia's Teachers' Union (NSTU) members, the government did not go back to the bargaining table. Instead, they held marathon sessions at the legislature to pass Bill 75, putting an end to any job action on the part of Nova Scotia teachers. Again, CUPE Nova Scotia stood in solidarity to defend free collective bargaining. CUPE members were present at rallies and at the legislature to make our voices heard. This move by the McNeil government is an attack on public services and on the fundamental rights to strike and bargain collectively. It affects thousands of public sector workers across the province by creating an atmosphere of extreme mistrust between union members and their government, especially given the fact that Bill 148 (*Public Services Sustainability Act*) continues to hang over the heads of our members in bargaining.

CUPE will be there to remind the voters of Nova Scotia in the coming provincial election how this Liberal government treated teachers and education workers, and how they created a crisis instead of bargaining in good faith to find solutions for the education system in the province.

In the health care sector, bargaining is at an impasse after the employers refused to table their proposals on key benefits such as sick leave and group health and life insurance plans. In order to end the impasse and resume bargaining on the health care agreement, the Council of Unions has filed a complaint with the Labour Board. That complaint asks that the Board order the employers "to prepare and table forthwith a comprehensive proposal for a collective agreement for the Health Care Bargaining Unit."

In January, the McNeil government took another step towards a public-private partnership model for the redevelopment of the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax, asking for P3 supplier qualifications as officials look into the design, construction, maintenance, and financing for the hospital. CUPE Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, and the Nova Scotia Health Coalition denounced this decision.

MARITIMES REGION

New Brunswick

A threat of privatization is still hovering over the New Brunswick health care sector. This time, food services, maintenance, and patient transportation in the province's health care establishments are being targeted by the Liberal government. They wish to contract these services to the firm Sodexo. This decision would directly jeopardise the jobs in question, but also the local economy, as Sodexo would not be required to hire and employ locally. CUPE is on the front lines denouncing this irrational direction being taken by the Gallant government.

At the end of January, New Brunswick experienced major power blackouts that affected tens of thousands of residents in the Northeastern sector of the province. I would like to thank all the public service employees who were called upon for help, as well as all those people who had to work under these difficult conditions.

In the Province's political arena, the leader of the New Brunswick NDP, Dominic Cardy, announced his resignation on New Year's Day. Mr. Cardy was no ally of the trade union movement. Since his announcement, the Party's membership has significantly increased; CUPE's efforts to recruit and rebuild our Party have been producing results. It will be important to have a strong voice in order to deal with the Liberal's austerity policies and their privatization aspirations and plans.

Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island's provincial government has announced a review process targeting both police services and public schools. I would like to thank the CUPE members and staff who participated in the consultations and defended the principle of public services and the working conditions of employees in these services.

Campaigns were conducted in PEI to draw attention to the violence experienced by school support staff, as well as to denounce the fact that many drivers don't respect the flashing red lights that keep students safe around school buses. These campaigns are important in order to ensure the occupational health and safety of our members, and the safety of students.

Quebec

The marathon union representation vote campaigns in the health care sector finished at the end of February and we're awaiting the counting of ballots across the province. CUPE members, activists, elected officials, and staff worked tirelessly to contact and engage as many employees as possible in the health care system, to respond to their questions, and raise their awareness about the benefits of joining CUPE. "A great adventure", commented one of our national representatives. Indeed, I know that this challenge was met with professionalism, devotion, integrity, and solidarity across our union. I'd like to thank everyone who invested time and energy into this campaign. We hope that the results will be commensurate with the talents of our team in the province of Quebec! Already, the counting of the ballots that occurred in early March have been very encouraging, with wins in Estrie and in Abitibi.

Meanwhile, negotiations continue to bear fruit in Quebec. I would like to especially highlight the agreement described as "historic" by Local 1375 at the end of the successful round of bargaining with employers at the ports of Trois-Rivières and Bécancour. Likewise, we congratulate Local 5197 (St-Georges de Beauce) and Local 5297 (Ste-Anne Hospital) who both reached a first collective agreement since their arrival at CUPE.

In the university sector, the students and members of the CUPE Provincial University Sector Council organized a rally to condemn the Couillard government's cutbacks in education and, in particular, in Quebec's universities. These cutbacks directly affect support staff and, accordingly, the services provided to the students.

Ontario

As you can see from the Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts section of this report, Ontario has been our most active region with so many strikes, lockouts, and bargaining going down to the wire. Our members are fighting the austerity agenda at the bargaining table where members are facing concessionary demands and two-tier proposals.

There's some positive results at the bargaining table; 55,000 education workers in Ontario recently ratified a contract extension through to August 31, 2019. The deal includes 4% in wage increases spread over the life of the agreement, and an inflationary increase to the benefits trust that was bargained in the previous round of talks. It also includes a significant investment in the areas of special education, early childhood education, clerical, and custodial work. This will help to maintain positions in some areas where boards have made harmful cuts. The deal also includes some funding for apprenticeships and professional development.

Greater Sudbury's local economy will take a yearly \$6.4 million financial hit, if the Sudbury Hospital Services laundry is closed and 50 hospital laundry workers lose their jobs. That's the finding of the independent economic impact analysis Greater Sudbury council asked for earlier in January to assess the effect of a Health Sciences North (HSN) decision to sever its local hospital laundry contract and use a provider in Hamilton. When HSN announced plans in the fall of 2016 to end its near 50-year laundry contract with Sudbury Hospital Service (SHS), the hospital claimed it would have roughly cut \$500,000 from its annual budget. Local 2841 and the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) has strong community support to keep the laundry open in a community that suffers from high unemployment.

In late 2016, I had the opportunity to attend a press conference to launch Local 416's "Kicked to the Curb" campaign. The campaign was aimed at defeating Toronto Mayor John Tory's proposal to contract out waste collection in Toronto. Tory directly targeted the members of Local 416 in his election campaign, promising to privatize solid waste collection on the eastern side of the city.

Since late November, Local 416 had been engaged in a campaign to bring the facts about solid waste privatization to the residents of Toronto. At the heart of their campaign were three key messages: the numbers presented by the mayor didn't add up, there are no savings in privatization, and any decision to privatize would be based on little more than ideology. This message was brought to residents through an ambitious ground campaign which had members, volunteers, and allies knocking on doors, making phone calls, and dropping leaflets across the city. Press conferences, radio ads, and high-profile speakers at city meetings kept the local's message front and center in the media.

With a groundswell of public pressure and support, Local 416 was able to reach out to councillors of all political stripes and convince them that the mayor's privatization plan didn't make sense. Realizing his plan was headed for defeat, Tory himself put forward a motion referring the city report back to staff. The report called for Scarborough collection to be put out to tender. The motion, which featured language highly favorable to Local 416, passed 40 to 4 at council.

During this reporting period, I have had the opportunity to attend and speak at the OCHU violence conference, Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee annual conference, and the Ontario Universities Workers Coordinating Committee annual conference. Our Ontario activists are engaged and have developed plans to support their sectors.

Manitoba

Brian Pallister's government continues to blame the former government for creating a fiscal crisis as a pretext for attacking public services and the workers who deliver them. He is threatening deep cuts to services in addition to wage rollbacks. With most provincial collective agreements set to expire, this is a significant challenge for the labour movement.

The premier has also mused openly about reorganizing health care, and many expect it's just a matter of time before his government also moves to reorganize the education system. This means representation votes are a possibility in both sectors.

I was pleased to join our local leaders from across Manitoba for an All Presidents meeting at the end of January, where we discussed the challenges that lie ahead for our members and began to lay the groundwork for a plan to fight to protect public services and against government austerity measures.

I look forward to returning to Winnipeg at the end of March to participate in the Manitoba Federation of Labour's mid-term conference, where labour leaders from across the province will come together to develop a plan to fight back against the Pallister government.

Saskatchewan

Premier Brad Wall doesn't have a former NDP government to blame, but he is still claiming a fiscal crisis and a \$2.1 billion deficit.

Of course, budgets are about choices. Rather than finding a solution to their revenue problem, the Wall government is instead floating cuts to public services and the workers who provide them. The premier has publicly contemplated public sector wage rollbacks, unpaid days off for workers, and, most recently, has written to union leaders in the province advising them the government will be looking for concessions equal to 3.5%.

At the same time, his government is threatening layoffs as they undertake a wholesale reorganization of both health care and education.

Thirteen health regions are being merged to form a single provincial health authority, which we expect will lead to representation votes for the nearly 30,000 health support workers in the province. The government also continues to contemplate forcing school board amalgamations, despite significant public opposition.

On a positive note, a rally planned by CUPE drew more than a thousand people to the Legislature in Regina on International Women's Day to protest Wall's destructive agenda. On the heels of a decisive by-election victory in Saskatoon-Meewasin the week before, it seems the tide of public opinion is turning against the government.

We had a significant victory at the Saskatchewan Labour Board (LRB) in January, when the LRB dismissed the application of the Saskatoon Public Library to remove employees with supervisory duties from the bargaining unit of Local 2669. The Board ruled that new legislation applies only when a union seeks to organize a new group of workers, and cannot be applied to current bargaining units, in part because doing so would deny employees of their rights to choose their union, and their fundamental rights to union representation.

Alberta

Of course, it's always a pleasure to spend time in a province with a friendlier political climate and a government that puts the needs of working families first, with measures like raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour; freezing post-secondary tuition; increasing education funding; scrapping an unfair health care tax; and cancelling the privatization of hospital lab services.

Of course, there is still much to be done to undo years of conservative rule, but the work being done by Premier Notley and her caucus serves as an inspiration to our members facing austerity agendas in other provinces.

I had the opportunity to attend an All Presidents meeting in Calgary at the beginning of February, and was pleased to hear directly from our local leaders about the challenges they face and the fantastic work they are doing in their communities and in representing their workplaces.

British Columbia

Local 7000, representing 750 SkyTrain employees in operations, maintenance, and administration, released a video highlighting the work its members do in serving up to 250,000 Lower Mainland commuters a day. “Making SkyTrain Work” features two SkyTrain attendants and three control operators talking about their jobs, some of the challenges they face, and possible solutions to those challenges, including recommendations to their employer.

The video was released following the ratification of a three-year collective agreement by Local 7000 members with British Columbia Rapid Transit Company. It puts a public face to the people who keep the SkyTrain system running, while giving voice to the members’ pride in the work they do and the challenges they face on a daily basis. The public is generally unaware of the aging infrastructure and system failures so the video is also about the future of SkyTrain.

After 16 years of policies that benefit the wealthy and well-connected while making life harder for low and middle-income British Columbians, the BC Liberals’ final budget before the May election makes only minor cosmetic changes and does very little to share the province’s economic prosperity. Measures to benefit the wealthy – such as a dividend tax credit for shareholders – take effect almost immediately, but the reductions to the Medical Services Plan (MSP) tax won’t take effect until 2018, a clear signal of the government’s real priorities. And, private schools again see a bigger percentage budget increase than public schools. Remarkably, this year’s budget makes no mention of the more than 900 British Columbians who died of fentanyl-related overdoses last year. Locals and activists are committed to bring about a change of government on May 9 when the British Columbia electorate goes to the polls.

Long-time Local 1936 activist and local leader Michael Lanier passed away on January 12. Michael served as a regional vice-president of CUPE British Columbia for more than a decade, representing Metro Vancouver. He first became a CUPE member in 1997 by organizing his workplace, which supported people with autism. He was elected as the first unit chair at Local 3999-34. He began participating in provincial coordinated bargaining in 1998 for the Community Social Services Sector and continued in that work until his passing. Michael later helped form Local 1936 (Greater Vancouver Community Social Services Workers) and was the local’s second president in its expanded form representing social services and childcare workers. Michael also served on the CUPE British Columbia Community Social Services Committee, the Childcare Working Group, and was co-chair of CUPE’s National Childcare Working Group. He also co-chaired CUPE’s first National Social Services Conference. A true leader! He will surely be missed.

Airlines

In mid-January, flight attendants at Sunwing gave their bargaining committee a strong mandate to go back to the bargaining table with a strike vote of 94.6%. A tentative agreement was reached and members of Local 4055 have now ratified a new collective agreement with a vote of 89.7%. The agreement, which substantially improves the working conditions of nearly a thousand flight attendants, will be in effect for five years.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

Just like their counterparts at CUPE BC, Hospital Employees' Union members are working towards getting rid of the British Columbia Liberal government to ensure a BCNDP government, led by John Horgan, takes power.

A Seniors Advocate report shows over 90% of the province's senior care facilities are understaffed, up from 82% in last year's report. The staffing crisis is only getting worse. The government failed to take the opportunity in February's provincial budget to inject the funding required to bring all care homes up to the province's minimum staffing guideline.

The staffing crisis in residential care will continue if we don't deal with the ongoing problem of contracting out and contract flipping, which is disrupting care across the province. Private operators can contract out and flip contracts at will, laying off entire staff teams in the process. It's a practice that destabilizes the continuity and quality of care seniors receive.

HEU has created two videos that are prominently shown on their website's home page. They are short but informative. One video describes how HEU works and the other is a three-minute history on the struggles and achievements of HEU since its founding in 1994. To view these videos, go to www.heu.org.

Organizing Report

During the period of December 1, 2016 to February 28, 2017, CUPE organized 284 new members in 13 bargaining units. Across the country, we organized 121 members in health care, 76 members in social services, 24 members in recreation, 24 members in the post-secondary sector, and 39 members employed in libraries. As well, we protected 250 existing CUPE members in one bargaining unit against a raid by CLAC. We welcome all of our new members into the CUPE family.

We are currently involved in 31 active campaigns that, if successful, would bring 2,715 new members into CUPE. At Labour Boards across the country, we have seven projects representing 218 new members waiting for certification votes to be conducted. There are two legislative restructuring projects that will affect an undetermined number of CUPE members. 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 five bargaining units representing 1,049 members who are under threat of raid or decertification.

We have discontinued 10 campaigns that represented a potential of 361 new members. These campaigns were discontinued due to a lack of interest.

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

- Daphne Sandoval Member of Local 966 – Ontario
- Michel Patterson Member of Local 831 – Ontario
- Gabe Kukuric Member of Local 5191 – Ontario
- Kathy Schmidt Member of Local 7575 – Ontario
- Lisa Balanowski President of Local 3166 – Ontario
- Bob Thompson Member of Local 1022 – Ontario
- Wayne Harland Member of Local 500 – Manitoba
- Ryan Thomas Grey Member of Local 2800 – Alberta
- Don Slobinyk Member of Local 30 – Alberta
- Ben Melong Member of Local 30 – Alberta
- Michael Lanier President of Local 1936 – British Columbia
- Bill Dobbyn Member of Local 459 – British Columbia
- Brenda Coombs Member of Local 15 – British Columbia
- Bob White Former President – Canadian Labour Congress

Retired Member

- Doug Kingston Member of Local 1252 – New Brunswick

Staff

- Véronique Dubé Secretary – Maritimes Regional Office

Retired Staff

- James Dowell Director of Education – National Office – Ontario
- Margaret Joan Smith Senior Stenographer – Ontario Regional Office
- Suzanne Beaudry Bookkeeper – National Office – Ontario

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized initials 'MH' followed by a more elaborate signature 'K'. The signature is written in a cursive, fluid style.

MARK HANCOCK
National President

:fb/cope 491