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## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2016

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Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

Its fair to say that most of us were shocked by the United States' (US) election results, and many of us have no doubt spent much time pondering how a man with no prior political experience, who seems erratic and unpredictable, who is prone to derogatory and hateful comments about any and every one who is different than him, could have been elected President of the United States of America.

We have all been upset by the marked increase in racist, sexist and homophobic incidents across the US since November 8, and even more outraged to witness similar events here at home.

I have reached out to our sister unions in the United States and offered our support and our solidarity. I look forward to further conversations as they come to terms with the election of President Trump and a Republican-controlled Congress and Senate, and as they examine for themselves the entrails of the election.

There are lessons to be learned, for all of us, from the US election results, and I suspect there are similar lessons to be learned from the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom. While there is still much to be analyzed and much to be written, I believe there are two key things we, as a Canadian public sector union, must keep top of mind.

First, when workers become disenchanting and disheartened, when they feel neglected and ignored by those who are meant to be their champions, they are not going to be motivated to vote. More troubling, they may be enticed, by false promises, to vote against their best interests.

More than ever before, we must work to ensure that the issues of greatest concern to our members, and to working people across Canada, are reflected in our political discourse – at every level of government and in every region of this country.

Second, and perhaps more important: fear and hate are powerful emotions, and when used in the political arena they can produce surprising results – especially when they are not adequately countered with messages of hope, optimism and love.

I know that, in every community, CUPE members will stand up and speak out against hatred and discrimination in all its forms. We will continue our work for equality and inclusion, we will be allies for our neighbours, and we will ensure that our members are protected.

### **National Childcare Round Table**

At the end of September, CUPE gathered together child care workers, activists and advocates from across the country for a round table discussion on child care in Canada. Discussions focused on developing child care and early learning programs that meet the needs of our indigenous communities, the impact of parental leave policies and provisions on child care, and the political opportunities for change under a new federal government.

It was an impressive group of passionate people, and it was an honour for me to participate in part of the conversation.

### **Sector Council Conference**

More than 1,000 CUPE members gathered in Winnipeg in October for our second National Sector Council Conference. By all counts the conference was a big success and I want to thank those locals who participated.

I am especially grateful for the wisdom gained from delegate discussions on the union advantage and organizing opportunities in each of our sectors. No doubt that information will help guide the development of sectoral organizing strategies and a comprehensive national organizing plan.

### **Trade**

There have been significant developments on the trade file in recent months.

In October, the small Belgian region of Wallonia delayed the signing of the Canada – European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). They eventually conceded, and the document was signed, but only after negotiating changes that may mean the end of the contentious investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism.

CETA will enter into force, provisionally, in 2017, without the ISDS provisions in place.

Throughout the fall, we worked closely with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and our allies in Europe to raise concerns about CETA and the ISDS. We will continue that work to ensure that opposition to the ISDS provisions remain strong and that they are never brought into force.

On November 8, I was pleased to join Hassan Yussuff, Maude Barlow and a couple hundred activists from across Toronto for a town hall on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The three of us discussed our many concerns with the TPP and answered questions, and our

panel was followed by a conversation about taking meaningful action to pressure the Liberal government to abandon their support for the TPP.

On November 22, the US President-elect announced he will prioritize withdrawing from the TPP. Many believe that this will be the end of the trade deal, but we will continue to oppose it until we know for sure that it is well and truly dead.

Of course, we must also be wary of what the Liberal government will do next on the trade file – it is widely expected that their focus will shift to fast-tracking trade negotiations with China.

## **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) was passed by the House of Commons in October. It is currently before the Senate and we are hopeful it will become law before the end of the year.

While we are frustrated that it has taken so long for the federal government to repeal these restrictions on our labour rights, we are thankful that they have worked to ensure we were not negatively impacted by them in the meantime.

Watch for a final announcement on our website, and in *CUPE Today*, when the bill is finally passed.

**Bill C-26** implements the recently-won improvements to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). Unfortunately, the drafting of the legislation contains provisions which will disadvantage women and persons with disabilities. As written, the improved CPP benefits we all fought so hard for will not apply to the “drop out” periods for child-rearing (used mostly by women) nor to the “disability drop out” period for those collecting CPP disability benefits.

CUPE made a substantial presentation to the parliamentary committee studying the legislation in November, urging amendments that would ensure the CPP expansion is applied equally and provide better retirement security to everyone. We are working with other unions to push the government to fix the legislation before it is passed by Parliament.

We were shocked and dismayed when the Trudeau government introduced **Bill C-27**, Harper-style legislation that attacks defined benefit pensions. 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.

While it does not apply to provincially-regulated employers, if passed it will set a dangerous precedent, put more pressure on existing defined benefit pension plans, and may encourage provincial governments to follow suit.

We are working with the NDP, the CLC and other unions to oppose Bill C-27, and are developing a strategic campaign to stop this legislation in its tracks.

As part of the fall fiscal update, Finance Minister Bill Morneau announced the government's intention to create a **Canadian Infrastructure Bank (CIB)**. The move would entice private companies and pension funds to invest heavily in public infrastructure. The concept, put forward by the business-dominated council, presents some scary consequences for the potential privatization of public infrastructure and services that Canadians access daily.

While the government would only be putting a small portion of their infrastructure funding into the CIB as seed money, its creation is part of a troubling trend. Just two weeks after the announcement, the Prime Minister and several of his cabinet ministers met in Toronto with some of the world's largest investment companies to promote the idea.

The federal Liberal government continues to promote privatization of our public assets, no matter the cost. We have been countering them at every step, and will continue to do so.

### **Women United Against Austerity Conference**

At the beginning of November, over 200 women from Quebec, the Atlantic and the Maritimes gathered in Moncton to talk about a common theme in their regions: how their provincial governments' austerity agendas disproportionately affect women and equality seeking groups. Participants discussed strategies to face these prejudicial policies and oppose them successfully.

Brother Charles and I participated in the last day of the conference and I had the opportunity to hear women reporting back about their priorities for action, including: to reach out to the public and community allies to defend public services against austerity measures, to fight precarious work, especially in the care sectors, and to prevent violence at work in predominantly female workplaces.

### **Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)**

The CLC Executive Committee and Canadian Council met November 13 – 15 in Ottawa. There was much discussion on the federal legislative agenda and the work being done by the CLC and affiliates on various files, including Bills C-4, C-26, C-27 and the proposed Canadian Infrastructure Bank.

We also discussed future plans for the CLC's Together Fairness Works campaign, and received reports from their recent Rise Up Human Rights Conference and Young Workers Summit.

The next CLC convention is being held in Toronto, May 8 – 12, 2017. Affiliates should be receiving the convention call early in the new year. I encourage all CUPE locals to consider sending delegates to this important convention.

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

There are two disputes involving job action in this reporting period.

<b>PROVINCE</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>EMPLOYER</b>	<b># OF MEMBERS</b>	<b>STRIKE BEGAN</b>	<b>DURATION (days)</b>
Ontario	2974	County of Essex Library Board	58	June 25, 2016	On-going
Ontario	4914	Peel Children's Aid Society	435	Sept. 18, 2016	On-going

### **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 has put forward 10 different proposals on the contentious issue, to no avail. The employer has not moved from their opening position.

At day 40 of the strike, the employer did not understand their own proposal and received clarification from the insurance carrier. In a leaked e-mail between the Chief Librarian and the insurance carrier, the local found out that the proposed sick leave plan would only apply to those members working more than 15 hours per week. In effect, many bargaining unit members would be excluded from enjoying a benefit they now receive.

Both the Essex County Council and the Essex County Library Board have 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. The employer is spending massive dollars, and by their own admission savings by imposing this regressive sick leave language are 30 years out.

Spirits are high and morale solid with strong community support. There is no indication that this strike will end soon and we would request local unions make donations to support the strikers. Donations can be sent to Local 2974 care of CUPE's Windsor area office.

### **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.

The parties met October 26 when the local Bargaining Committee presented Peel CAS negotiators with an offer of settlement they believed addressed the employer's concerns, while respecting the membership priorities. Unfortunately, Peel CAS responded by walking away from the table. Instead of taking negotiations seriously and demonstrating their commitment to providing families in Peel with the support they need, putting children at risk, Peel CAS has wasted another opportunity to get to a deal.

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 latest tactic certainly shows the employers' unwillingness to find a mutual resolve to some very important issues.

### **Another Supreme Court of Canada decision on the right to collective bargaining**

The Supreme Court of Canada has finally ruled in favour of British Columbia's teachers in their battle against the British Columbia Liberal government. The government had unilaterally stripped articles from their collective agreement dealing with class size and composition and special education services. The government's action gave rise to significant decreases in the services provided to special needs students, while student-teacher ratios jumped considerably. The government had never negotiated in good faith with the Teachers Federation, and the file ended up before the Courts.

After numerous court appearance over a 14-year period, as well as a lengthy teachers' strike supported by CUPE members in British Columbia, the Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed that the legislation adopted by the province was unconstitutional, because it did not respect the right to collective bargaining, as protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In short, the Court issued the opinion that the British Columbia Liberal government had not been acting in good faith in this case and that the law constituted an unjustifiable obstruction to the teachers' freedom of association.

Last year, the Supreme Court recognized that the right to strike was likewise protected by the Charter, because collective bargaining must take place with an even-handed balance of power between the parties. These decisions reinforce our ability to oppose and contest governments that attempt to legislate our working conditions or to undermine our collective bargaining rights with laws that favour management – such as Bill 148 in Nova Scotia, Bills 15 and 110 in the Province of Quebec and Bill 115 in Ontario.

## **Regional Services Division Updates**

### **ATLANTIC REGION**

#### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

The City of St. John's is slashing services following a so-called program review. The latest round of cuts saw about 25 positions eliminated or with reduced hours – building inspectors, environmental technicians, traffic analysts and signage workers, humane service workers and others. CUPE Locals 569 and 1289, inside and outside workers, called on the city to treat its unionized workers with the same respect they give to management, whose wages and benefits were left untouched.

The fight against library closures continues. On November 8 CUPE members and other stakeholders attended the last consultation meeting, hopeful that Education Minister Dale Kirby would have the decency to show up. His failure to attend any of the roundtable consultations in October and November shows the Liberal government was only paying lip service to their review of public libraries in the province. The consultations were held by a private consulting firm at a cost of close to \$200,000. People spoke passionately about the importance of their library for their community, and about the fact that libraries act as equalizers in our society, but no one for government was there to listen. CUPE continues to call for a reversal of the decision to close 54 public libraries across the province.

#### **Nova Scotia**

Despite a difficult bargaining climate CUPE Local 108, representing City of Halifax outside workers, ratified a new contract following a lengthy conciliation process. They successfully pushed back concessions to their pension plan and were able to make some gains such as benefit improvements for seasonal workers and increased premiums for winter work.

In the long-term care sector, members continued to mobilize against the \$8.2 million budget cuts by the McNeil government. The cuts resulted in staff layoffs or reduced hours of work at several facilities in Middleton, Port Hawkesbury, Halifax, Dartmouth and Amherst. CUPE denounced the real effects on the quality of care, encouraged the public to contact their MLAs and rallied at McNeil's office in Middleton.

On behalf of 19,000 CUPE members in Nova Scotia, including 4,000 school board support staff, CUPE Nova Scotia stands in solidarity with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) in their fight against the Liberal government. After two tentative agreements were rejected by the membership, NSTU announced a work-to-rule job action starting Monday, December 5. The government's reaction was to literally lock-out the students, allegedly for security reasons, and announced that a contract would be imposed through legislation. The teachers and our members in the school boards went in to work on that same day, but the schools were empty. There were rallies where CUPE members, parents, students and teachers pushed back against this government's anti-union agenda, and Premier McNeill finally backed off. The legislation was not tabled and the schools re-opened the next day.

I want to congratulate CUPE Nova Scotia and our members for their mobilization and solidarity; this is an important fight for the union movement in Nova Scotia.

The recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada against the British Columbia government, for stripping teachers of their bargaining rights, should have helped the Nova Scotia government see the light and reach an agreement in good faith, instead of using the legislative hammer to tip the balance of power in their favour.

## **MARITIMES REGION**

### **New Brunswick**

An important member-led campaign was launched last September in New Brunswick: *Who Cares?* The campaign aims at raising the public profile of workers in the community care services sector. These are workers who take care of our most vulnerable: seniors, people with special needs, youth, women escaping domestic violence, and many more. Yet the vast majority of these workers are women who are not earning a living wage and their working conditions are unacceptable. The services are highly fragmented, with more than 650 units operating without public coordination; many of these agencies are underfunded. CUPE is asking the Gallant government to clean up this patchwork of services and integrate them under a centralised public administration for the benefit of all.

The situation at the Miramichi Emergency Centre for Women is one recent example of how this disorganised system makes it hard for workers to get the recognition they deserve. Members of Local 5243 have been trying to negotiate a first collective agreement with the centre for months. The employer is not bargaining in good faith and would rather spend charitable fundraising money on \$300+ per hour lawyers to fight off its own workers.

I had the chance to spend a day in Bathurst with home care workers of the Red Cross, members of Local 4598, at the end of September. It was an opportunity to reiterate CUPE's full support of the *Who Cares?* campaign, to seek the public's support via local media and to call on the Galant government to start caring.

### **Prince Edward Island**

Islanders voted in favour of changing their first-past-the-post electoral system in a plebiscite that took place at the beginning of November. A majority of 52.4% voted for a mixed member proportional representation. This is an historic first at an important time, as the federal government is engaged in its own discussion on electoral reform across Canada. Prince Edward Island's choice seems to be in line with what Canadians are telling the federal special committee on electoral reform: participants in the public consultations overwhelmingly support a move towards proportional representation.

Brother Charles and I had the opportunity to attend this year's PEI All Presidents meeting in Summerside, where we heard reports from every sector in the province. We had great news coming out of the University of Prince Edward Island where our Locals 1870 and



501 ratified a memorandum of understanding to move to a jointly sponsored pension plan. As well, local 3260 representing educational assistants and youth service workers had a good settlement with improved language on workplace violence and a 4% wage increase for year 1 of the agreement.

## Quebec

The Government has adopted Bill 110 that imposes a particular bargaining framework that will apply to the municipal sector. Although the new scheme is problematic in many respects, the mobilization of CUPE members helped avoid the worst: the Government of Quebec did not grant the municipalities the power to decree the working conditions of their employees and did not impose mandatory arbitration.

Negotiations in the municipal sector are continuing and we were once again able to demonstrate this fall that the current system works well: as satisfactory settlements were reached in Sherbrooke (Local 2729), Lachute (Local 2211), l'Estérel (Local 4787), Pohénégamook (Local 2473), Brossard (Local 306), Pointe-Claire (Local 429) and Témiscouata-sur-le-lac (Local 2537).

With regards to union organizing, new groups have joined CUPE in the Port of Montréal (the employees of Viterra and of Montréal Gateway Terminals) as well as Local 2310, the employees of *La Capitale Assurances*. I wish them all a hearty welcome! Also, the union representation campaign in the health care sector is going well. The executive of a CSN-affiliated union at the Maisonneuve Rosemont Hospital has decided to support CUPE, which bodes well for the next stages in this process!

CUPE has actively participated in the *Coalition Transparence* to denounce the *Caisse de dépôt et de placement du Québec* REM train project. This private infrastructure initiative generates several problems in terms of its integration with the public network and the project lacks transparency to the benefit of certain private interests.

Finally, we have some good news to report in terms of pay equity: the Quebec Court of Appeal has upheld an important decision that CUPE had won two years ago, where the lower court had declared a part of the *Pay Equity Act* reform unconstitutional. The Court thus confirmed that depriving employees of retroactive pay equity adjustments constituted a violation of their rights to equality.

## Ontario

It has been a very busy three months in Ontario. Support for striking members at Peel Children's Aid Society (CAS) and Essex County Library have been at the forefront of CUPE Ontario, activists and CUPE staff. I want to salute the members at Local 4914 Peel CAS and Local 2974 Essex County Library for standing up against concessions and two-tier contracts. Your solidarity and commitment is an inspiration to us all.

Congratulations to Brother Henri Giroux, National Executive Board (NEB) Regional Vice-President Northern Ontario and President of Local 146, who led a successful fight to keep Cassellholme Long Term Care Facility public. After months of debate in the community, the Chair of Cassellholme's Board readily admitted that the not-for-profit private model could not maintain the current level of care for seniors. Research shows that publicly owned long-term care homes provide the best quality service, on all indicators. Residents at Cassellholme will continue to benefit from additional care, supported by the financial contributions of municipalities.

CUPE Education Workers in Ontario are busy on several fronts. Work on due diligence of a provincial benefit trust continues. After winning a charter challenge to Bill 115, which trampled bargaining rights of our 55,000 school board workers, the Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee is in discussions with government on the appropriate remedy. Those discussions also include a request by the Ontario government to extend the current collective agreement. We are anticipating the government will introduce legislation in December that will change the way collective agreements are bargained in the education sector.

In 1997, the Ontario government transferred the provision of homecare services from municipalities and private providers to Community Care Access Centre. These employees, members of CUPE, were forced to change pension plans as a result of this transfer. The government asserted at the time that there would be no loss in pension benefits for our members who would now receive a pension from two plans instead of a single plan. This is not the case.

In 2013, CUPE filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of our members whose pensions were negatively affected by the transfer. Recently the court approved the class of employees and a settlement reached between CUPE and the government. The settlement is similar to settlements already reached between the government and other unions. Approximately 301 CUPE members will be receiving payments of \$2,500.

In recent months I have had the opportunity to attend a health care rally in Kingston, the Northern Ontario CUPE Conference, an OCHU bargaining conference, CUPE Ontario Trades Conference and CUPE Ontario Women's Conference. I have spoken at each of these events and more importantly I have had the opportunity to meet with delegates and discuss their issues and understand their concerns. These discussions have provided me an important insight into what is important to CUPE members.

## **Manitoba**

Bill 7, the Pallister government's first attack on labour, was enacted last month. The legislation, which will make it more difficult for workers to organize, is expected to be followed by other changes that negatively impact workers' rights and the ability of unions to protect and represent our members.

Indeed, less than two weeks after the passage of Bill 7, the government's Throne Speech signaled a move to an austerity agenda with a focus on cutting spending instead of investing in the economy. The speech included a commitment to legislation which would control the costs of public services, which will undoubtedly restrict our collective bargaining rights. The government also intends to gut legislation which ensures accountability and transparency for public-private partnerships.

The Premier has now clearly indicated that he is looking to re-open already negotiated public sector collective agreements with a view to rolling back the wage increases they contain. This is clearly a threat to our charter rights and will not be tolerated. CUPE, working with other public sector unions, will take whatever action is necessary to protect our negotiated collective agreements and our bargaining rights.

## **Saskatchewan**

I had the pleasure of spending a few days in Saskatchewan in October. I spent some time with the executive of Local 1975 at the University of Saskatchewan, who are ramping up their "Paws off our Pension" campaign while awaiting arbitration dates on the question of the employer's rights to make unilateral changes to their pension plan.

School board members gathered in North Battleford for their annual conference, to discuss bargaining and their "*Where's the Funding?*" campaign, designed to tell our members' stories about the negative impact of education funding cuts. It was an honour to spend some time with these dedicated members.

I spent an evening canvassing with CUPE staff member Ann Iwanchuk in her bid for re-election to Saskatoon City Council. In all, seven members of the CUPE family sought election to local government or school board positions on October 26, and four of them were elected. Congratulations to each of them for putting their names and ideas forward. Our political action efforts helped elect a number of progressive and labour-friendly candidates were elected in communities across the province.

Our members in health care continue to wait for the Wall government to indicate their restructuring plans, which we know will include the elimination or merger of regional Health Boards. While we work with other unions in the sector to discuss and promote alternatives to representation votes, CUPE's Health Care Council is ramping up communications with members to ensure their continued support.

## **Alberta**

I had the opportunity to meet with leaders of Locals 1505, 2157, 2545 and 2559 in Fort McMurray in October, and heard firsthand about the challenges faced by our members in that community. It was heartening to listen to stories of a community that is coming together in the face of such adversity, but troubling to learn just how hard our locals have had to fight to ensure our members rights have been respected and protected. CUPE is

proud of the work our members, their local unions, and our staff have undertaken to rebuild their community.

We continue to watch the progress being made by Canada's only NDP government, despite a challenging economy. CUPE welcomes the introduction of a pilot project creating 1,000 new public child care spaces, and hope the program can be expanded and made more affordable in future.

## **British Columbia**

CUPE British Columbia recently held a successful Education Sector Conference with the theme "A Better Future for All – Investing in Public Education". Workshops covered a variety of topics including: Workload and Unpaid Work; Violence in the Workplace; College Board of Governor's Training; Accommodation and Attendance Management; Effective Communications / Presenting to Boards; Creating a Regional Education Forum; Building Relations with First Nations and What you need to know about The School Act.

Brother Paul Faoro spoke about the 15 years of British Columbia Liberal destruction imposed on education sector, including the closure of 250 schools across the province. When Christy Clark tried to close an additional 40 this spring, people in communities like Osoyoos, in a Liberal-held constituency, rose up and fought back. Similar grassroots campaigns and parent groups have mushroomed across the province and they now have a considerable organizational influence on British Columbia politics.

Alberta's first NDP Minister of Education, David Eggen, shared with delegates some of the changes their government has introduced, including full funding for every new student and additional support for English-language learners and Indigenous students. They have opened 32 new schools since last September alone, with over 200 school projects on the go and they hired over 1,100 new teachers as well as nearly 300 support staff, while saving nearly 800 support staff jobs.

In a direct attack on democracy, British Columbia Premier Christy Clark fired the elected Vancouver School Board trustees for refusing to do the government's dirty work and close Vancouver schools in order to balance their budget – a decision they were forced into because of continued underfunding of the public education system.

CUPE Local 1858 at Vancouver Island University is the first union local in Canada to spearhead a Friendship Bench project. The project started in 2015 as a legacy piece to honour their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a local. A dedication plaque next to the bench provides information about how students can access mental health options and student counselling. Information is provided about counselling services available on campus and how to access services at the new Health Centre. By having a Friendship Bench on campus, Local 1858 hopes to raise awareness about mental health, to provide opportunities for those struggling with mental health to reach out to others, and to normalize discussion of mental health challenges within their community.

## **Airlines**

CUPE launched a new phase of its Safer Skies campaign, calling on the Trudeau government to improve passenger safety and air quality on airplanes. During last year's election campaign, the Liberal Party of Canada committed to "proper consultation with stakeholders and experts" on the question of passenger safety and the ratio of flight attendants per passenger seats, as well as on exposure to toxic fumes on aircrafts. CUPE is calling on the federal government to act immediately to bring together representatives of the airline industry, unions and the medical and scientific communities to identify and recommend all possible regulatory options to eliminate the harmful effects of toxic fumes.

CUPE's Airline Division flight attendants succeeded in meeting several members of the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to demand a full risk assessment of the 1:50 ratio, with parliamentary oversight and full consultation with the unions representing flight attendants across Canada.

After six months of negotiations Local 4055, representing Sunwing's flight attendants, reached a tentative agreement on November 8. Important gains were made and no concessions given, and the bargaining committee recommended ratification of the five-year deal.

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

HEU held its 30<sup>th</sup> biennial convention from October 31 to November 4 in Vancouver. The almost 700 delegates passionately debated issues and heard from a variety of speakers.

Advocates for public health care, Adam Lynes-Ford (British Columbia Health Coalition) and Dr. Rupinder Brar (Canadian Doctors for Medicare) gave an inspiring presentation. Their keynote address about the legal battle now underway in British Columbia's highest court, between private clinic CEO Brian Day and supporters of public Medicare, made it clear how disastrous losing this case may be for Canada's most cherished social program.

British Columbia NDP leader John Horgan gave a rousing speech. He shared with delegates his plans for the province if elected Premier in May 2017, and the cost to public sector workers and the healthcare system if the British Columbia Liberals were returned to office for another term.

"Christy Clark is out trying to convince voters that government has no choice, but I believe it's about the choices a government makes," said Horgan. "Christy Clark doesn't choose a strong public health care system. I'm as passionate about protecting public health care in British Columbia as you are, and I want you to know that we're in this fight together. The HEU is health care in British Columbia, and I'm proud to be standing here with you today."

Victor Elkins was re-elected president while Donisa Bernardo was acclaimed as the union's financial secretary. It will be Brother Elkins' third term, and Sister Bernardo's sixth

term. Delegates also ratified the Provincial Executive appointment of Jennifer Whiteside as HEU secretary-business manager. I offer my congratulations to the incoming Provincial Executive. I know HEU is in good hands.

## **Organizing Report**

During the period of September 1, 2016 to November 30, 2016 CUPE organized 491 new members in 18 bargaining units. Across the country, we organized 117 members in long term care, 205 members in social services, 86 members in municipalities, 2 members in the post-secondary sector, 12 members in K-12, and 72 members employed in transportation. We also protected 111 existing CUPE members in new certifications. We welcome all our new members into the CUPE family.

We are currently involved in 76 active campaigns that if successful would bring 8,547 new members into CUPE. At labour boards across the country we have 9 projects representing 511 new members and 176 existing CUPE members waiting for certification votes to be conducted. There are 15 legislative restructuring on-going projects across the country that will affect upwards of 35,000 current CUPE members. We also have 4 bargaining units representing 162 members who are under threat of raid or decertification.

Staff and divisions have been busy across the country involved in mapping and developing organizing targets. In keeping with strategic directions adopted at 2015 National Convention, work continues towards developing a comprehensive national organizing plan for delegates to debate at CUPE's 2017 National Convention

## **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**

- Nicole LeBlanc Member of Local 25 – Ontario
- Earl Zaroski Retired member Local 4000 – Ontario
- Enza Commisso Member of CUPE Local 973 – Ontario
- Richard Small Member of Local 1310 – Ontario
- Dan Boon Member of Local 1310 – Ontario

- Michele Dick Member of Local 7575 – Ontario
- Thomas “Tom” McGovern Member of Local 416 – Ontario
- Helen Daniel Member of Local 3396 – Ontario
- Joanne Neepin Member of Local 5021 – Manitoba
- Julie Salmon Member of Local 8443 – Saskatchewan
- Saturnino Sonson Member of Local 30, workplace fatality  
– Alberta
- Patricia McKenzie Member of Local 4728 – British Columbia
- Doug McNicol Member of Local 1004 – British Columbia

#### **Retired Staff**

- Egon Keist Retired Servicing Representative – Airline Division,  
Toronto, Ontario

## CONCLUSION

A little more than a year ago, I was elected as your National President. I have had the opportunity to travel far and wide, attending events and meeting CUPE members across our great country. While our membership is diverse, our values have a common thread: a deep concern for and great pride in the services you provide and the communities you serve.

In every corner of this country, in every one of our sectors, CUPE members are committed to providing high quality, publicly accessible, publicly funded and publicly delivered services. Your work is valued by all Canadians. It does not matter what the right-wing naysayers may say to the vast majority of Canadians your services are appreciated

I wish each and every CUPE member a joyous holiday season and hope you are able to enjoy this special time of year with your family, friends and loved ones.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH' followed by a stylized flourish.

MARK HANCOCK  
National President

:jv/ceu | January 6, 2017 – 12:31 pm