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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT DECEMBER 2022 – MARCH 2023

Sisters, Brothers, and Friends:

A new year is always an opportunity to reflect on the past and plan for the future.

The last two years have shown just how much power workers have when we are organized, coordinated, and steadfast in our resolve. Time and time again, we have shown we can succeed and achieve real gains for our members – at local or province-wide bargaining tables, in the courts against regressive legislation, or at the ballot box.

It is important to celebrate each victory, but we cannot rest on our laurels. If we aren't continually learning, communicating, and organizing, we risk losing our momentum and falling behind.

Canada is a vast country with real regional differences, but many common threads run through it and there is always more that unites us than will ever divide us. Right now, we must unite to fight fiscal policies that have led to rampant inflation and high interest rates, governments and employers who are crying poor and insisting workers should pay the price, systemic inequality and discrimination, and the rise of intolerance and hate.

CUPE members are exhausted, but we are also ready to fight even harder for our rights, for recognition, and for fair wages and working conditions not only for ourselves but for everyone.

I look forward to seeing many of you in the coming months, at conventions, meetings, rallies or picket lines, and to celebrating our victories and planning for the battles yet to come.

Division Conventions

Provincial division convention season started at the beginning of March. I always enjoy attending these conventions to hear from our leaders and activists about their work over the past years and their priorities for the future. These are important opportunities to talk about the formidable challenges we have faced, to share the stories of our victories, and to make plans to tackle, together, what lies ahead.

MARK HANCOCK

National President/Président national

CANDACE RENNICK

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorière nationale

PATRICK GLOUTNEY, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER, LEE-ANN KALEN

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

I know these events don't just happen, and I want to thank everyone involved in organizing these conventions. I congratulate CUPE Saskatchewan and CUPE Alberta for holding inspiring and welcoming events and thank them for their hospitality. I am very much looking forward to seeing our members in the remaining eight provinces this spring!

National Women's Conference

More than 600 women and gender-diverse members from across the country gathered in Vancouver in March for our National Women's Conference. The conference opened with an inspiring address from Judy Darcy, CUPE's fourth National President, and our National Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick closed the conference with a rousing, forward-looking, speech.

By all accounts, the conference was a huge success. My congratulations and appreciation to everyone involved in its planning and execution.

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

More than 60 members of our National Executive Board and National Committees participated in the CLC's lobby day on Parliament Hill on February 7. This was an opportunity to deliver a common message from the labour movement to members of Parliament and Senators on key issues including the importance of investing in the care economy, ensuring good jobs as we shift to a more sustainable community, and the need for them to pass anti-scab legislation without delay. As part of these lobby efforts, I had the opportunity to meet with Minister of Labour Seamus O'Regan to reinforce the priorities of our union and the Canadian labour movement.

The Canadian Health Coalition organized a rally for the same day, and I was happy to join speakers there to call for an end to profit in the healthcare system and demand action on a universal pharmacare program.

I continue to work closely with the CLC officers on a variety of urgent and emerging files. As part of this work, I have been invited to join a new union-led advisory table to the federal government which is intended to provide input on the changing economy and its impact on workers. My hope is that our advice and guidance will be used by government to ensure workers are prepared and supported to navigate through the challenging and changing labour market ahead.

I look forward to seeing a strong contingent of CUPE delegates at the upcoming triennial convention of the CLC will be held in Montreal from May 8 – 12, 2023. This convention is an opportunity for us to work with private sector and other public sector unions to organize as a movement and set our agenda for the next three years. The incumbent officers (Bea Bruske, Lily Chang, Siobhan Vipond and Larry Rousseau) are seeking re-election and have been endorsed by the National Executive Board. Their "Team Unite" campaign will be launched in early April.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

Strikes and Lockouts

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	#OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION
Québec	5454	Société Québécoise du Cannabis	300	May 17, 2022	Ongoing
Québec	2614	Société des arrimeurs de Québec (SAQ)	81	Lockout September 15,2022	Ongoing
British Columbia	561	First Transit	200	Job action commenced February 2, 2023	Ongoing
Québec	301	City of Westmount	49	Job action, commenced February 7, 2023	Rotating job action, withdrawing services.
Ontario	4600	Carleton University	2548	March 27, 2023	Ongoing

CUPE 5454

CUPE 5454, employees of the Société Québécoise du Cannabis (SQDC) have been on strike for more than 300 days, since May 17, 2022.

Members are calling for salaries and benefits similar to those working in comparable t organizations, including the Quebec Liquor Corporation.(SAQ).

These SQDC workers barely earn \$17/hour upon hiring and the majority hold part-time or casual positions or with little job security, subjecting them to precarity. Yet, they are responsible for informing and educating consumers on how to minimize the impact of cannabis on their health, which is the official mandate of the SQDC. They would like their remuneration to reflect this.

Negotiations are at a standstill. In December, the union presented an offer from the employer to the membership. Members in 26 units voted 94% to reject the offer. The remaining 17 units voted unanimously against it.

CUPE 2614

On September 15, the Société des arrimeurs de Québec locked out 81 longshore workers, who, at the time, were negotiating clauses to protect work/life balance. The employer maintains its request to have employees work 12-hour shifts, but our members do not want these types of schedules. Like everywhere else, the Port of Quebec struggles with staffing shortages and the employer is determined to put the burden of this situation on the backs of the stevedores.

CUPE 2614 members are concerned about health and safety within their workplace and are speaking out about dangerous conditions on the wharves and the inaction on the part of port authorities and the federal government to fixing them.

The wharves have deteriorated due to a lack of investment in infrastructure. They have been neglected in federal budgets for the past few years, and members want this addressed to ensure that every worker gets home safely at the end of their shift.

CUPE 561

More than 200 transit drivers in the Fraser Valley, members of CUPE 561 began job action on February 2, 2023 by refusing to collect transit fares. Pressure tactics were escalated with a full service withdrawal, excluding HandyDART services, for two days in February, and another three days in March.

When further attempts at negotiations broke down, they began a full scale strike on March 20, 2023.

First Transit, a U.S.-based, for-profit company, is contracted by BC Transit to provide services to the communities of Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission, Agassiz, Harrison, and Hope. HandyDart is operating at essential services levels only during the strike. The employer needs to come to the table offering a pension plan, wages comparable to other BC transit workers, and improvements to working conditions.

CUPE 301

CUPE 301's last collective agreement with the City of Westmount expired on December 31, 2019. Last November, members voted in favour of job action.

On March 14, one month after waging a 48-hour strike, CUPE 301 members struck for another three days. Negotiations had reached an impasse over work schedules and wages.

CUPE 4600

After months of bargaining, including a final attempt to reach an agreement over the weekend, almost 3,000 members of CUPE 4600 at Carleton University hit the picket line on Monday, March 27.

These teaching assistants, sessional lecturers and contract instructors are seeking a fair wage increase, student ratios that would ensure quality education, and intellectual property rights for their work – something other workers in the sector have.

Wages at Carleton are among the worst in the province, and recent inflation has made the situation worse for these workers.

CUPE 4600 members teach approximately 30% of courses at the university.

These members are fighting for fair wage enhancements to offset historic inflation and rising interest rates that continue to plague the economy. The City needs to ensure that wages reflect the current financial climate, so these workers don't slide further into poverty.

The parties have entered conciliation, where the local notes a continued lack of meaningful progress.

Collective Bargaining

On December 12, 2022, 2,800 members of CUPE 3906, working as teaching and research assistants at McMaster University, ended a three-week strike and ratified a new agreement.

In a time of skyrocketing inflation, CUPE 3906 made important gains in achieving wage increases over the course of the agreement totalling \$6.32/hr (14.1% over the course of the agreement) for graduate teaching and research assistants. Undergraduate teaching assistants will see their wages increase by \$5.66/hr (21.7%) over the same period.

CUPE 774 and the City of Abbotsford have ratified a two-year collective agreement for the period of Jan. 1, 2023 to Dec. 31, 2024.

CUPE 774 represents approximately 500 members who provide quality public services to Abbotsford residents in public works, recreation, planning, and administrative services in accounting and payroll.

In addition to improvements to benefits and premiums, the financial terms of the new agreement include wage increases of 4.5 per cent in the first year, and four per cent in the second year.

CUPE 1816 ratified a five-year collective agreement they can be proud of, following productive negotiations with Pacific Blue Cross over a number of months. The deal includes a 20% general wage increase over the term of the agreement, plus cost-of-living adjustments applied to the first 2 years.

Members will have protection against future inflation with a new cost of living adjustment clause. New language will result in permanent status for temporary employees after a set duration in the same classification. The employer also committed to an ongoing hybrid work model, inclusion of leaves for domestic and sexual violence and paid gender-affirming leave, and a review of collective agreement language for better inclusivity.

Regional Updates

Maritimes Region

New Brunswick

In New Brunswick, Premier Higgs is trying to ride a wave of attention generated by his crusade against the provincial debt. Experts estimate that New Brunswick's debt has receded to 25% of the size of the provincial economy, which is the lowest in the Atlantic, and better than what Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba are achieving. But Higgs' crusade comes at a great cost for the community, and front-line workers are suffering. CUPE has called on the government to use the revenues from federal transfers and population growth to boost spending on crumbling services rather than shrink the economy through debt reduction.

CUPE New Brunswick is continuing its historic mobilization through a renewed campaign, "Bargaining Forward for Strong Communities". Local and provincial leaders are also busy fighting against the regressive anti-worker and anti-union Bill 23.

In January, I had the opportunity to attend the book launch of "Bargaining Forward: The story of the 2021 CUPE Strike in New Brunswick" and meet with the authors, professor Susan O'Donnell and journalist David G. Koch. The authors are experienced labour reporters and work with the NB Media Co-op. The book features an introduction by labour historian David Frank, with the conclusion penned by CUPE New Brunswick President Steve Drost and Maritimes Regional Director Sandy Harding. The book is available to purchase on CUPE's website.

The New Brunswick Council of Nursing Homes Union (NBCNHU) was successful in obtaining a favorable decision from the Superintendent of Pensions about the funding of their defined benefits pension plan. In June 2022, the NBCNHU had filed a formal complaint about the structural underfunding of the plan, arguing that the contribution cap imposed by government was illegal and should be lifted. The superintendent confirmed that the cap was illegal and outlined a summary of orders that must be adhered to. Pensions have been under attack for a decade in the province, and this victory is a step forward in protecting our members' rights.

Workers employed by Sodexo food services at University of New Brunswick were recently advised that their employment was being terminated as of May 31, because the university was about to change suppliers. Most of these CUPE 2266 members have decades of seniority, have been employed by successive contractors, yet have never received a notice of lay-off. Contracts with food services suppliers usually include a provision to protect the jobs of active employees, but this time the practice of contract flipping is putting our members at risk. Students and professors at the university have come out in support of our members. Labour laws in New Brunswick offer too weak a protection of bargaining rights in these situations and CUPE is working to address that gap.

Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island residents will go to the polls on April 3, thanks to an early election call from Conservative Premier Dennis King. The legislature was dissolved six months ahead of the province's fixed election date.

CUPE members in PEI were treated unfairly by this government when pay incentives were arbitrarily distributed to some classifications in the health sectors, while excluding many workers whose work is just as essential to the delivery of services. Members have been protesting in a number of ways, including wearing clothing with the message "Leave no healthcare worker behind" to attract the attention of the public to this injustice.

CUPE members also held a rally at Premier Kings' nomination meeting in support of the many healthcare workers that were excluded from the recruitment and retention bonus.

CUPE PEI organized town halls to meet with election candidates across the province. These town halls are a great opportunity to ask the right questions of politicians, such as: "are you committed to negotiating pay raises above inflation for public sector workers?" Putting workers' issues at the forefront of the campaign is key and hosting these meetings, which are open to the public, where candidates are invited to answer our members' questions is an excellent way to do just that.

Atlantic Region

Newfoundland and Labrador

The legislature will return at the end of March and the Liberal government will introduce their 2023 budget. Although reporting a major surplus in the fall, we expect the province will still table balanced budget legislation. Budget consultations are underway, and the finance minister has already announced the extension of the gas tax reduction until 2024. It doesn't look like this government is ready to invest in public services. In fact, the level of privatization in the province is increasing at an alarming rate. CUPE will ramp up its anti-privatization campaigns in an effort to raise both member and public awareness and push back against these measures that have repeatedly proven to be ineffective.

Public sector bargaining is underway in the province. Sectors represented at the provincial table are healthcare, group and transition homes, housing, school boards, libraries and Government House. Local tables have ended, and any remaining priorities have moved up to the provincial table where leaders continue to push for their sector specific priorities and our common provincial goals. Workers remain strong in their desire to move beyond any imposed pattern.

Following a prolonged strike last summer by Local 2099 in Mount Pearl, the employer turned its attention to attacking the bargaining unit and local leadership. The local president was wrongfully terminated and then layoffs began which impacted key members of the executive and bargaining committees. Grievances and unfair labour practice complaints were filed, and CUPE is fully committed to fighting tooth and nail for these members.

Nova Scotia

CUPE school support workers across Nova Scotia have voted 97.5% in favour of taking strike action if they cannot reach a collective agreement that lifts education workers out of poverty. Most CUPE education workers earn less than Nova Scotia's median wage of \$35,000 per year. They are not only underpaid and undervalued, they are also understaffed.

The Nova Scotia School Board Council of Unions held a day of action at the end of February to raise awareness about the issues that affect our members who drive children to school, keep libraries open, work one-on-one with students, repair equipment, ensure recess and lunch times run smoothly, keep schools clean and safe, and perform necessary administrative tasks. Workers are leaving the sector to find better paying jobs, which has created an unprecedented staffing crisis. The strike mandate sends a clear message to government: we will not accept this situation any longer. CUPE members deserve a deal that recognizes the valuable work they do.

CUPE Nova Scotia President Nan McFadgen spoke before the Standing Committee on Health to stress the importance of ensuring all long-term care facilities reach a minimum of 4.1 hours of hands-on care per day. Though some facilities have seen an increase in Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs), many nursing homes will not see improved care because government is requiring only 3 hours of care from CCAs. The hands-on care provided by CUPE members is essential to residents' daily lives, but to make a nursing home run smoothly and provide a good quality of life, a group effort is required. Each worker in the facility brings an invaluable element to that team.

To celebrate Black History month this year, CUPE Nova Scotia raised a beautiful African Nova Scotian flag over the CUPE Atlantic Regional office. The flag was designed by Wendie Wilson, an African Nova Scotian artist, educator, author, and community activist. The flag includes colours that represent sacrifice, cultural richness, fertility and growth, and black for the people, as well as a Sankofa that symbolizes bringing past knowledge to the present, a wave for the ocean and ancestors' journey, and a heart with a yin yang symbol to mean a heartbreak balanced with awareness. An incomplete circle represents those things yet to come.

After giving their bargaining team a strike mandate last December, members represented by CUPE 3912 working at Mount St. Vincent University ratified a new collective agreement in February. Improvements to the collective agreement include updated anti-discrimination language, an increase in professional development investments by the university, recognition of National Truth and Reconciliation Day as a holiday, and a total wage increase of 17.17% over four years.

CUPE 3912 also avoided a strike at Saint Mary's University, where a tentative agreement was ratified in January that includes improvements to financial support for professional development, pay for Health and Safety Committee members, improvements to job posting and hiring procedures, and a 26% wage increase over four years for new instructors and 11% for more senior instructors.

Québec

CUPE's Council of Health and Social Services (CPAS), along with the Quebec Federation of Labour, recently presented to a parliamentary committee a study showing that more than \$3.7 billion of public funds were squandered between 2016 and 2022 by the province's health institutions to the benefit of private job placement agencies. More than \$1.9 billion was disbursed for critical care assistants (CCAs) and para technical occupations, while \$1.3 billion was spent on nursing staff. The use of private agencies across the province's health sector has become routine. It's a significant source of inequity and has generated serious problems in terms of the organization of work. It's time to end this wasteful approach and reinvest in public services.

A CUPE delegation that represents the overwhelming majority of unionized workers at Hydro Quebec held a series of meetings with members of the national assembly (MNAs) to bring awareness to the major challenges and issues the crown corporation is facing. The discussions focused on the erosion of the Hydro Quebec model, due to direct and indirect privatization of many of the corporation's activities. This model, which was at the foundation of the nationalization of electricity in the province, sought to provide this essential service at the lowest possible cost to the population but also to ensure that the expertise and benefits of these activities remained in the hands of Quebecers and the Province of Quebec.

Successive neo-liberal governments have allowed private interests to muddy the waters for several years now, and we increasingly see questionable agreements being made between Hydro and private companies, because they've made friends with elected officials. The Québec Solidaire MNAs who met with our delegation aren't part of this group. They are fully aware of the immense benefits of a public Hydro Quebec and the need to keep it this way to effect the necessary energy transition and to ensure the survival of this Quebec model. However, the CAQ is an entirely different story.

At the beginning of March, 800 professionals working at the Quebec Infrastructure Corporation (SIQ) chose to be represented by CUPE. CUPE 5522 filed an application for certification and will join forces with CUPE 2929 that represents 500 members in the technical, office, and trades job categories. We wish them a warm welcome!

SCFP-Québec recently began discussions with the Regional Metropolitan Transit Agency (ARTM) regarding the funding crisis that is dealing a severe blow to the major public transit corporations in the Greater Montreal area. The purpose of these meetings was to clarify the ARTM's intentions with respect to proposed changes to regional public transit, a great concern for our members in the sector.

The 90 members of CUPE 2992, who work at the Quebec National Fine Arts Museum (MNBAQ) recently signed a collective agreement, after two and a half years of negotiations. The contract will expire March 2025 and includes numerous improvements, including a comprehensive reclassification of all job titles.

The Mont Saint Hilaire blue-collar workers, white-collar workers, and swimming pool attendants, represented by CUPE 2425, have also reached a new collective agreement. The contract includes salary increases of 18.5% over six years, improvements to vacation and parental leaves, as well as an allowance for professional care and sporting activities. The union also negotiated an increase to minimum staffing levels. The bargaining committee had developed a series of proposals designed to catch up with working conditions in other cities in the region, and made significant gains. Members ratified the tentative agreement, with 91% voting in favour.

Ontario

Doug Ford has a new Leader of the Official Opposition to contend with. Marit Styles, MPP for Davenport, takes on the role as Leader of the Ontario NDP with a resolve to focus on the party's roots with the labour movement.

As a former staffer with the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA), Marit understands the struggles of working people. We appreciate Marit's vision for Ontario – affordability, public services Ontarians can rely on without the threat of privatization, and a commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

Bill 60 – *Your Health Act* – now in its second reading since introduction on February 21, further highlights the need to protect our public services. The bill would see taxpayer money spent at for-profit surgical clinics for public healthcare. Current unacceptable wait times for surgical procedures would only get longer under this new model.

Bill 60 has the potential to result in the poaching of health care workers from public facilities to private clinics. Ford's government assures this won't happen, but we can't trust his reckless management. A two-tier system in Ontario could carelessly pave the way for other provinces to replicate it, and we know that health care battles are happening across the country.

In January, the CUPE Ambulance Committee of Ontario (CACO), met with France Gelinas, ONDP Critic for Health, to discuss ongoing issues paramedics in the province are facing. They highlighted continuing concerns about long wait-times for ambulances, offload delays at hospitals, and recruitment and retention issues.

On February 28, the provincial government announced the creation of a Section 21 committee for paramedic services, under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Section 21 committees are joint health and safety advisory committees that provide sector-specific advice to the minister on health and safety issues. These workers now have a venue to highlight problems in the field that need to be addressed.

On December 29, 2022 Doug Ford's government appealed the Ontario Superior Court of Justice's decision that declared Bill 124 unconstitutional. The bill, introduced by the Conservative government in 2019, imposed wage cap legislation and infringed on the *Charter* rights of workers to freedom of association and collective bargaining. CUPE played a pivotal role in a coalition of unions that challenged the bill in court. The appeal, which shows blatant disrespect for front line workers, will be heard in June 2023.

CUPE Education Workers were recognized for their precedent-setting victory against Doug Ford in last year's show down over fair collective bargaining. The 2023 Jack Layton Progress Prize is awarded annually to an individual or organization who has run a particularly noteworthy political or issue campaign reflecting the ideals exemplified by Layton, including justice, sustainability, and democracy. CUPE members from coast to coast to coast beamed with pride when Bill 28 was rescinded. The recognition this award brings reiterates that united, the workers will never be defeated!

Manitoba

Manitobans will head to the polls later this year, so it comes as no surprise that the latest budget from Stefanson's PC government is laden with vote-buying undertones. Public services have crumbled during the past two terms of Conservative leadership, and this budget does nothing to protect them.

In March, Premier Stefanson announced that new federal dollars will be spent on tax cuts, rather than investing in the province's chronically underfunded public services. This ploy to buy support isn't fooling anyone. CUPE members know the stakes are high in the coming election, and that an NDP government is the only way to ensure the necessary investment in public services so Manitobans can have quality health care, education, social services, and childcare they can rely on.

Following completion of collective bargaining last year, our work in the health care sector continues. Three committees have been established to deal with key issues arising from the negotiated agreement, including market adjustments and salary standardization, pension and benefit transition, and recognition and retention bonuses.

We have also filed a province-wide policy grievance because of the employer's failure to fully implement the new collective agreement. The employer advises it will issue a notice accepting responsibility for the delay. This is insufficient. CUPE is seeking compensation for the deprivation of its bargained rights and damage to its reputation.

We are also preparing for the next round of health care bargaining. Pre-bargaining surveys are being developed to seek member input in anticipation for the next round of bargaining scheduled for early 2024.

CUPE 1061 served strike notice in mid-March, following a 95% strike vote, to let the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) of Manitoba know that its members are prepared to take job action unless they achieve a fair contract. The WCB is an independent agency of the provincial government that has reported surpluses in recent years, amounting to \$277 million in refunds back to employers. Members were subject to a wage freeze in the last round of negotiations, and they refused to fall behind.

I am pleased to report that the bargaining committee reached a tentative agreement and it is being presented to the members for ratification. The concession-free agreement includes a wage increase in line with other public agencies, and breaks the original mandate set by the province. It also includes benefit increases and language allowing virtual work.

Saskatchewan

Congratulations to CUPE Saskatchewan on a successful and engaging convention. Delegates heard from speakers on reconciliation, organizing, and member mobilization. The panel discussion on "recognizing and addressing the structural barriers that many Indigenous, racialized and 2SLGBTQI+ members in our union face" highlighted the important work that we need to do to ensure equity in our union. CUPE SK welcomed aboard two newly elected officers. J.R. Simpson was elected as Vice-President and Erin Auchstaetter takes on the role of Recording Secretary. Congrats to you both!

CUPE 3364 waged a successful campaign to prevent the closure of Group Home Number Three in Preeceville, Saskatchewan. The eight staff, who provide round the clock care to residents with disabilities, were spared from lay-off as a result of media coverage, political pressure and collective action from CUPE 3364 and its allies. This victory is yet another example of the power of solidarity.

The Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan released a report in December 2022, and one of the key topics of the report was the ongoing staffing challenges across the provincial health care system. It anticipates Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) staff shortages of about 2,200 jobs in hard-to-recruit positions over the next five years. More than half of those shortages are in classifications represented by CUPE. It's obvious that recruitment and retention in health care is in crisis.

The auditor noted that not only are more jobs needed, but work must also be done to improve working conditions so that people want to stay in these important roles. Unfortunately, the SHA's solution to this crisis is to hire private contractors to fill temporary vacancies; we continue to push back on this short-sighted proposal in favour of a real and permanent solution to the staffing crisis in the sector.

Alberta

As Albertans prepare to head to the ballot box later this spring, the contrast between Danielle Smith and Rachel Notley becomes clearer. Notley and the NDP promise to invest in the public services communities rely on, and the people who deliver them. While Smith and the UCP have an agenda that will slash services, privatize them, and disregard CUPE members who provide these frontline services. It's high time that the UCP is sent packing, and in this looming provincial election we're counting on CUPE members to mobilize to do just that.

CUPE Alberta held its first in-person convention since the pandemic in Fort McMurray, from March 22-24. This year's convention was preceded by a full day dedicated to education, with a focus on anti-racism and Indigenous studies. Throughout a convention with the theme "Together We Can", delegates debated significant resolutions focused on protecting public services and the workers who deliver them. They also heard from Canadian Labour Congress Vice President Siobhan Vipond, and NDP MLA and former Minister of Labour Christina Gray. Congratulations to the division executive on a successful convention!

The Alberta Labour Relations Board (ALRB) recently ruled that DynaLIFE, a private for-profit company taking over medical lab services being contracted out by the province, must abide by existing collective bargaining agreements, including existing pension provisions. The company was trying to get out of contributing to the pensions of 900 workers, represented by CUPE and the Health Sciences Association of Alberta. The decision by the ALRB is precedent-setting, and sends a clear signal to employers that they can't attempt to maximize their profits on the backs of our members. Although we can be proud of this recent win, we know that there will be more fights ahead if the political climate in Alberta doesn't improve.

British Columbia

Collective agreements have been reached at most large provincial public sector tables in BC in recent months, with our members seeing historic gains. With inflation skyrocketing, and people struggling to make ends meet, our members in BC can breathe a little easier knowing that the political action work they did to elect a progressive government had an impact at the bargaining table.

Members of the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association voted 77% in favour of a 3-year agreement that includes a 12-14% increase for all members. The agreement benefits workers and the communities they serve by addressing staff shortages and vacancies, with new language on unsafe workloads, and by recognizing mental health as an occupational health and safety issue. Specific provisions address the recruitment and retention crisis and a new focus on support for Indigenous workers, patients, and clients.

The Community Bargaining Association (CBA) also ratified a new three-year agreement, with 94% in favour of the new deal. The deal includes wage increases that average 14-16% over the life of the agreement, and improvements to safety and psychological well-being.

CUPE 873, representing paramedics across the province, recently ratified a three-year agreement that addresses foundational changes to wages, benefits and staffing models across the province. Paramedics want to ensure that patients everywhere receive timely service they can rely on, and they believe the new agreement will have a positive impact.

A tentative agreement in the community and social services sector is being recommended for ratification, and our post-secondary locals continue to conclude bargaining.

In the local government sector, CUPE 23 has secured agreements with the City of Burnaby and Burnaby Public Library, setting a strong wage pattern for the sector, and locals in the lower mainland are coordinating their bargaining activities.

British Columbians listened intently as the province's Minister of Finance laid out her first budget. Significant investments in housing were announced, along with plans to address homelessness, healthcare funding and mental health and addictions. And a small financial commitment to reproductive health resulted in BC breaking ground as the first jurisdiction in Canada to provide free prescription birth control to residents of the province.

A pledge to increase funding to the Employment Standards Branch will benefit some of BC's most vulnerable workers. The BC NDP is putting funds into the Branch that was gutted years ago by the BC Liberals. Precarious, low-income, and temporary foreign workers should have better access to support and be able to ensure their rights at work are protected, thanks to this much-needed investment.

Although BC is in a better position than provinces led by right-wing governments, more work needs to be done. We were disappointed that there was not a stronger commitment to funding public child care spaces. The absence of sufficient before and after school spaces can be alleviated by building a proper public childcare system. CUPE BC's child care campaign is petitioning the government to create more spaces by leveraging public schools in communities across the province.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

Health care jobs privatized by the previous BC Liberal government continue to be brought back into the public service, following a move by the BC NDP government to return more than 4,000 housekeeping and dietary service jobs to employment under provincial health authorities. These workers will see improvements to wages and benefits, and will now have access to a pension plan.

Compass Canada – a private, multinational company – currently employs hospital cafeteria and retail workers in the Fraser Health Authority. Close to 100 workers at various sites will be included into the Facilities Collective Agreement when they return to public service in the coming months.

Housekeepers working in the Teck Building at BC Women and Children's Hospital (BCCW) weren't among those initially included in the government's repatriation efforts. But as thousands of workers have been brought back in-house over 2021-2022, health authorities continue to take steps to include workers from P3 sites into this initiative.

Another victory was celebrated in February when Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) signed an agreement to create 38 new lab transportation positions. Lab transport services had been contracted to outside companies, including LifeLabs and other private courier services. Starting May 1, this private delivery of health support services will end and 40 new HEU members will be brought under the recently renewed collective agreement.

Airlines

CUPE Airline Division members are working to end the practice of working for free. Nearly 10,000 flight attendants completed a survey that shed light on just how much unpaid work they are required to do. On average, flight attendants are expected to perform 34.86 hours per month of unpaid pre-flight duties, including boarding and other flight preparations. That's essentially a full week of work that goes unpaid.

Employers can't expect our members to be in uniform, on the job, and performing work duties on a voluntary basis. The work they do contribute to safe travel in the air, and it's high time they are adequately paid for all of their time!

Local and component presidents are planning a strong and united front across CUPE's ten different airline groups, representing over 18,500 flight attendants. Leaders and activists are mobilizing members as they prepare campaigns to raise public awareness.

Organizing

For the reporting period of December 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023, CUPE welcomed 988 new members in 23 bargaining units, including 98 in social services, 62 in the municipal sector, 26 in education (preschool, elementary, secondary), 348 in post-secondary, 25 in health and 429 new members in other sectors.

There are currently 129 active campaigns underway that, if successful, would bring 29,808 new members to our union.

Our Atlantic region currently has 9 active campaigns in various sectors including health, social services, education, and municipal, which would see 864 new members join our union.

In the Maritimes, there are currently 10 active campaigns which could bring 1,055 workers into CUPE, including 300 security guards from Paladin Security and 320 student employees at Mount Allison University.

Quebec welcomed 434 new CUPE members, creating 11 new bargaining units representing workers in the municipal and emergency and security services sectors. There are currently 15 active campaigns ongoing in the region that if successful would see 1,414 new members join our CUPE family.

The Ontario region currently has 28 active campaigns in various sectors that could see 10,256 new members join CUPE, including 3,500 at the University of Waterloo and over 3,200 members in healthcare.

Manitoba has 16 active campaigns, which could see 3,119 new members join our union, including 2,100 workers at the Winnipeg School Division.

Saskatchewan has 7 ongoing campaigns in various sectors, where we hope to bring 251 new workers into CUPE.

The Alberta region was busy with 12 active organizing campaigns that could bring in 2,249 new members into CUPE. Four of the ongoing campaigns are in the education sector where CUPE is looking to add 1,028 members.

In British Columbia, there are 30 active campaigns across various sectors including social services, recreation, culture and entertainment, and municipal, with the potential of welcoming 10,600 new members.

In Memoriam/Personal

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

Members

Debra Taylor	CUPE 723 – BC
Larry Mintzler	CUPE 8443 – SK
Jennifer Doucette	CUPE 1630 – MB
Catherine Flood	CUPE 1615 NL
Mary Cummings	CUPE 1328 – ON
Markos Krissilas	CUPE 416 – ON
Ron O'Brien	CUPE 416 – ON
Keith Taenzer	CUPE 500 – MB
Georges Jacques	CUPE 500 – MB

Retired Staff

Robert Clarke “Bob” Crockett	Regional Director Maritimes Region
Pierrette Lampron	Secretary Trois-Rivières Area Office

In solidarity,



MARK HANCOCK
National President

:sg/ceu