



# PEI Federation of Labour Newsletter Special Convention 2005 Issue

## Report From the Federation's 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention

☐ On Friday and Saturday, November 4 and 5, The Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour held its 41<sup>st</sup> annual convention at Howard Johnson "Dutch Inn" in Cornwall. This year's convention attracted 90 delegates. The theme of this year's convention was "Our World Our Struggle."

☐ Proceedings on Friday included:

-The President's Report which highlighted the federation's activities since last year's convention. A copy of which should soon appear on our website.

-Before the Minister of Labour spoke 3 resolutions were discussed and passed by the delegates. The resolutions were:(1) to continue to work to remove the 3 day waiting period from the WCB Act, (2) to remove severance pay as a collateral benefit from the WCB Act, and (3) to remove all overtime exemptions and lower the standard work week hours in the Provincial Employment Standards Act.

-A speech by the Minister responsible for Labour, Elmer MacFadyen was next, The Minister spoke on the upcoming review of the Employment Standards Act, proposed regulations his department forwarded to executive council on tip and gratuities which were drafted to address complaints from workers whose employers were taking a portion of or all of their tips to subsidize wages, his department's support for the federation's request to designate a parcel of land near the Coles Building for a Day of Mourning Memorial Monument, the increase in the minimum wage to \$7.15 effective April 1, 2006, what is happening to workers affected by Program Renewal, appointments to the Labour Relations Board, and what his department did in regards to the CBC lockout.

-Following his speech the Minister was questioned from the floor on the electoral reform plebiscite, two tier minimum wages, and Program Renewal.

-Next Federation President Carl Pursey (CUPW) gave the delegates an update on the status of the Day Of Mourning Monument. See November's regular edition of the newsletter for the current status.

- And finally a Sweatshop Fashion Show was held. Union members modeled clothing made in Sweatshops while Emcee Dawn MacDonald (PSAC) explained the deplorable conditions and circumstances that the workers faced during the making of the clothing.

☐ Proceedings on Saturday included:

-Sister Doreen Wall (CUPE) , a member of the Labour College of Canada Alumni Executive in charge of the Atlantic provinces, spoke on what the Alumni Executive is up to and their goal to raise money for the College and the scholarship program.

-Next Marie Clarke Walker, CLC Executive Vice-President spoke to the delegates. Sister Walker spoke on: the need to make our voices heard and continue to work to bring Labour's issues to the nation's attention; the recent Supreme Court decision to uphold the federal government's right to offer parental benefits through the EI program; the House Committee's 28 recommendations that would restore some equity to our EI system; highlights from this year's CLC's "Is Your Work Working for You?" Report Card; the Heads of State of the Americas' meeting in Argentina; Some of the other issues the CLC is working on to make gains in this Parliament including retraining workers, pay equity, and wage protection legislation; and the referendum on proportional representation. For a full copy of Sister Walker's speech go to [http://canadianlabour.ca/index.php/Marie\\_Clarke\\_Walker/Speech\\_to\\_the\\_PEI\\_Fe](http://canadianlabour.ca/index.php/Marie_Clarke_Walker/Speech_to_the_PEI_Fe)

-Next Sister Doreen Wall (CUPE) spoke about the East Coast Education Tour of Columbian Trade Union workers (which came to PEI on November 23).

-Next the delegates discussed and voted to accept 2 resolutions. The resolutions were **(1)** to send a letter to the Minister Responsible for Labour insisting that Brother Ted Crockett (IUOE) and Brother Ray McBride (IBEW) be reappointed to the Labour Relations Board and work to have the Minister removed if the letter is ignored or refused **(2)** that the Federation oppose trade agreements like the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas and the General Agreement on Trades and Services.

-Next Karl Flecker from the Polaris Institute gave a workshop on Globalization. Mr. Flecker discussed such topics as Corporate Globalization, the World Trade Organization, and The GATS Agreement.

-Next the delegates discussed and voted to accept resolutions. The resolutions were that the Federation: **(1)** support any efforts to secure a replacement for the Holiday Island ferry; **(2)** call upon the Province to enact laws and programs to encourage young Islanders and immigrants to remain on PEI; **(3)** pressure the Province to sign a Federal/Provincial child care agreement with accountability measures and lobby them to

establish a phased-in, non profit child care system based on the QUAD principles; (4) support organizations fighting poverty and organize a forum to look at ways to reduce poverty on P.E.I.;(5) lobby the provincial government to add Thanksgiving Day as PEI's 7<sup>th</sup> statutory holiday; (6) denounce any move to have a two-tier minimum wage and push to have the minimum wage increased to \$9.40 per hour; (7) call upon the province to recognize a 50% of Islanders plus 1 vote in favor of MMP and to restore funding to the plebiscite so that this plebiscite has the same resources as our previous plebiscite and provincial election campaigns; (8) write to the Minister Responsible for Canada Post and request that the federal government instruct Canada Post to stop the closure of the mail sorting plant in Quebec City and proposed closures in other locations; and (9) lobby the provincial government and Island MP's to ensure that temporary foreign workers are not allowed to be used to bring down Canadian standards, union bust, and take jobs from Canadian tradespeople and ensure that the real reasons for trade shortages are addressed by a long-term strategy for sustainability of the Island construction industry.

-After the Audit, Trustee, and Budget report's were read and discussed, Sister Eileen LeClair (UPSE) spoke to convention about the Silent Witness Project which creates awareness and promotes action against domestic violence.

-Next Mark Greenan, the coordinator of the Yes on MMP Coalition, spoke on the benefits of changing the current system and in supporting the Mixed Member Proportional electoral system. He also expressed his disappointment in the Binns Government's decision to raise the acceptance level from 50% + 1 to 60% in order for MMP to be accepted on PEI and thanked the Federation for our \$2,000 donation to the campaign.

-Finally, in election results, Brother Blair Penny (IBEW) Vice President by acclamation for a two year term Brother Chris Vessey (PSAC) was elected Treasurer by acclamation for a two year term, and Sister Linda Dockendorff (UPSE) elected by majority vote to the position of VP (women)for a one year term.

-The Federation would like to thank all of the many people who worked very hard to make this year's convention the success it was and we hope next year's convention will be as successful and well attended.

## **Letter the Federation sent to Minister Mac Fadyen in Response to the IUOE's Emergency Resolution and His Response.**

☐At our convention on November 4 and 5, IUOE Local 942 brought an emergency resolution before the delegates to have the federation send a letter to Minister

MacFadyen in regards to the Province's attempt to remove all experienced Labour Representatives from the Labour Relations Board and replace them with inexperienced representatives. The resolution was discussed at convention and the delegates voted to accept it.

-On November 7, 2005 in response to this resolution, the Federation sent the following letter to Minister MacFadyen.

Dear Minister MacFadyen:

-As per our discussion with your Deputy Minister, Ron MacMillan on Friday, November 4, 2005; the Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour would like to express its deep concern over the recent decision not to reappoint Ray MacBride and Ted Crockett to the Labour Relations Board. With their removal, the recent death of Brian Moriarty, and the retirement of Judy Goodwin this decision leaves a serious lack of experienced employee representatives on the Board.

-Due to the complexity of the issues that the Labour Relations Board deals with, we feel that the loss of board members with the knowledge and experience of Mr Crockett, Mr. Mac Bride, Mr. Moriarty, and Ms. Goodwin will not only hurt the Board's ability to make fair and informed decisions but also hurt new board member's ability to integrate into their new roles.

-It is our position that with the death of Mr. Moriarity and the retirement of Ms. Goodwin there were enough open positions on the Board to allow new blood to come in while still maintaining an acceptable level of experience and continuity on the Board.

-Thus, the PEI Federation of Labour urges you to reconsider your Department's decision and renew the terms of Mr. Crockett and Mr. Mac Bride.

-We also would like to remove Carl Pursey's name from consideration for placement on the board. The federation will submit a replacement name by the end of November. Paul Chaisson will remain as our second nomination.

Yours Sincerely ,  
Carl Pursey, President PEI Federation of Labour

On November 25, the Federation sent in Cathy MacKinnon (UPSE) to replace Carl Pursey's name for consideration for placement on the board

Here is the Minister's response to our letter:

November 18, 2005

Dear Mr. Pursey:

-Thank you for your letter of November 7, 2005, expressing the Federation's observations regarding the need for qualified Employee Representatives on the Labour Relations Board.

-I appreciate your concerns, and I am prepared to bring forth your request for the extensions of Mr. Crockett and Mr. McBride to Executive Council when the Department submits an Executive Council memorandum to fill the appointments that have expired.

Sincerely yours,  
Elmer MacFadyen, Minister

### **Response From Minister MacFadyen to the Federation's Letter on the Upcoming Employment Standards Review**

□ During his speech at our recent convention the Minister responsible for Labour spoke on the upcoming review of the Employment Standards Act. In response to this the federation sent out a letter on November 7, to get information on this review and to express our concern over the lack of a worker representative from organized labour on the review committee.

-Here is the letter dated November 16, 2005 the Minister sent in response to our letter:

-Dear Mr. Pursey:

-Thank you for your letter of November 7, 2005, requesting information on the pending review of the Employment Standards Act.

-The scope of the review will include a complete examination of the Act including:

- (a) addressing the changing nature of work;
- (b) globalization and increased pressure on workplace productivity;
- (c) new forms of employment relationships; and,
- (d) changing demographics of workplace diversity.

-The review will commence in the new year. and the actual timetable will be determined by the review panel; however, parties wishing to make a presentation to the panel will be provided sufficient lead time to prepare their presentation. In regards to the composition

of the Review Panel, Executive Council has decided that all members of the panel would be former members of the Employment Standards Board because of their knowledge of the Act.

-Again, I appreciate your observations and hope my letter addresses your questions.

Sincerely yours,

Elmer MacFadyen Minister

## **Letter the Federation sent to the Minister in charge of Canada Post in Response to CUPW's Emergency Resolution**

□At our convention on November 4 and 5, CUPW- Summerside brought an emergency resolution before the delegates to have the federation send a letter to the Federal Minister in charge of Canada Post, John McCallum in regards to the sorting plant closure in Quebec City. The resolution was discussed at convention and the delegates voted to accept it.

-On November 28, in response to this resolution, the Federation sent the following letter to Minister McCallum.

Dear Minister McCallum

-The PEI Federation of Labour would like to express its deep concern over the direction Canada Post is headed. Despite close to \$1 billion net profit over the past decade and significant increases being shown in mail volumes with letter mail volumes reaching 5.464 billion pieces in 2004, compared to 4.611 billion in 2002, it is inconceivable to us that Canada Post has decided to close the mail sorting plant in Quebec City, eliminating over 300 jobs and seems to be outright ignoring a moratorium on post office closures in rural and small towns having permanently or "temporarily" closed approximately 50 rural post offices since 2001 . These actions show that Canada Post is starting to head in a direction that is not beneficial to its workers or the Canadians it supposed to serve.

-For Canada Post to reward the employees, that have worked so hard to serve Canadians and create the profitability that Canada Post enjoys, with closures and job cuts is reprehensible.

-As a Crown Corporation, Canada Post should be using the profits that it has gained off the backs of its employees to look at new ways to increase service to Canadians and to find new ways to increase the number of stable, full-time jobs it can create. Because in the long term, stable full-time employment will do much more for Canadians and the Canadian economy than their current path of closures and job cuts will ever do.

-Thus the PEI Federation of Labour urges you as the Minister responsible for Canada Post to force Canada Post to:

1. Stop the closure of the mail sorting plant in Quebec City and other proposed closures.
2. Strongly enforce the moratorium on post office closures in rural and small towns.
3. Consult with the public, postal unions, and other major stakeholders to develop an uniform and democratic process for making changes to Canada Post's network
4. Maintain, expand, and improve our public postal network.
5. Reinvest profits into the workers and the services that make the post office profitable.

Yours Sincerely,  
Carl Pursey, President of the PEI Federation of Labour