



PEI Federation of Labour Newsletter Issued on February 5, 2007

Current News In Brief

Call For Input Into the Federation's Submission to the WCB Act Review

□The federation is currently preparing its submission to the Workers Compensation Act Review. There is currently no official deadline set for submissions however we have been told that it could be set for as early as mid March. Therefore, If any of our affiliates have any issues they wish us to bring to the Review Committee please contact our office **asap** at 368-3068; fax at 368- 3192 or e-mail at: peifed@pei.aibn.com.

Call For Input Into the Federation's Brief to Cabinet

□The federation is also currently preparing its Annual Brief to Cabinet and the Opposition. There is currently no date set to meet with Cabinet however we will be looking to get one for late March or Early April. Therefore, If any of our affiliates have any issues they wish us to bring to the Provincial Cabinet please contact our office **asap** at 368-3068; fax at 368- 3192 or e-mail at: peifed@pei.aibn.com.

Federation to Hold Women's Day Event

□On Thursday, March 8, the Federation will hold an International Women's Day Event from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm at the Murphy's Community Center (former Basilica Rec Center) 200 Richmond Street in Charlottetown. Alejandrina Ibanez, a Bolivian Social Activist who is on an International Women's Day 07 Maritime Tour organized by CUSO Atlantic and CUPE's Global Justice Fund will be a speaker at the event. Also speaking will be Donalda MacDonald President of CUPE's PEI Division who will speak on the impact of the Harper government's cuts on Island Women. A lunch of soup and sandwiches will be provided and door prizes will be drawn for. Tickets to the event will cost \$10.00 each and are available by contacting the Federation's office at 368-3068.

Please note that the event will occur during the lunch break of our March educational therefore there will be no cost to attend the event for all participants of the educational.

Unemployment Rate For December

□On Thursday, January 11, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI

for December was 12.4% up 1.2% from November's 11.2%. You currently need 490 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.

Quebec and Ontario to Raise Minimum Wage

□ On Saturday, December 30, it was announced that the Quebec government intends to increase the province's minimum hourly wage by \$.25 to \$8, effective May 1, 2007. They will also raise the minimum wage for workers who get tips by the same amount to \$7.25/hr on the same date. The increases are expected to directly affect more than 129,000 Quebecers, about 4% of the province's workforce. Ontario's minimum wage is also scheduled to rise to \$8 an hour on Feb. 1, 2007. On PEI the minimum wage will increase from \$7.15 to \$7.50/hr on April 1, 2007.

Atlantic Beef Vote Delayed

□ On Friday, December 22, it was announced that the vote count to decide whether the CAW or the UFCW will represent the workers at the Atlantic Beef Plant in Borden-Carleton will be delayed until the P.E.I. Labour Board rules on complaints brought by both unions about how the vote was conducted. The P.E.I. Labour Board is expected to rule very shortly on the two union complaints, and then announce which union has won the right to represent workers at Atlantic Beef.

UFCW Members Vote to Accept a New Contract with Cavendish Farms

□ On Thursday, December 21, it was announced that unionized workers at Cavendish Farms represented by the UFCW voted 67% in favour of a new 4 year contract with their employer. The contract, effective Jan. 1, 2007, includes a 14% increase in wages over 4 years; an improved medical plan and life insurance; RRSPs; more single-day vacations; and an increase in the safety boots/glasses allowance.

Federal Government Issues Directive to Restore Rural Mail Delivery

□ On Wednesday, December 13, the federal government issued a directive to Canada Post to implement a plan to restore and maintain mail delivery to rural roadside mailboxes within 18 months while respecting all applicable laws. They have also told Canada Post to continue funding the Publications Assistance Program which is a fund that subsidizes postage for Canadian magazines for up to two more years. More than 50,000 rural homes across Canada have lost direct mail delivery due to safety concerns. The concerns relate to traffic safety and ergonomics as letter carriers are forced to reach and lean to deposit mail into rural boxes. CUPW has been attempting to negotiate a memorandum of agreement with the employer on a national review of rural mail boxes that involves residents and local CUPW representatives since July 5, 2006.

Members of Police Association Call for Attorney General's Resignation

□ On Tuesday, December 12, Fifty members of the PEI Police Association unanimously

voted to accept a motion calling for Attorney General, Mildred Dover's resignation during their meeting to discuss changes to the Police Act. The resignation call comes because of the change in the Act that creates the new office of police commissioner, who would be in charge of reviewing civilian complaints about police officers if they can't be resolved by the local chief of police, and the lack of consultation with police unions before the Attorney General tabled the final draft of the legislation in the legislature, as she had promised.

Nearly 5 Canadians Die Every Day in Workplace-related Deaths

□ On Tuesday, December 12, a new study put together by the Centre for Study of Living Standards on workplace fatalities in Canada was released. According to the study nearly 5 Canadians die every day in workplace-related deaths and the number is on the increase. In 2005, there were 1,097 workplace deaths in Canada, while in 2004, there were 958. In 1993, the total was 758. According to the study, Newfoundland in 2005 had the highest rate of workplace deaths of all 10 provinces, with 11.7 deaths per 100,000 workers, a rate that is nearly double the national average of (6.8). The rest of the provinces in order, B.C. (8.9), Alberta (8.0), Ontario (6.5), N.S. (6.1), Quebec (6.0), Sask.(5.6), Man. (4.5), N.B. (3.4), and P.E. I.(1.5). The study also found that men are 30 times more likely to die on the job than women. The full 155 page study is available at <http://www.csls.ca/reports/csls2006-04.pdf>.

Members of CEP 401 raise money for the United Way

□ On Monday, December 11, it was announced that the members of CEP 401 at Aliant were involved in an fund raising campaign for the United Way of PEI that raised over \$15,000. The funds were raised through employee payroll deductions.

Study Shows Dangers Faced by Nation's Nurses

□ On Monday, December 11, in a new phone survey of 19,000 nurses nationwide (including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and registered psychiatric nurses) conducted by the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI), Health Canada and Statistics Canada, it was reported that 27 % of Island nurses reported being physically assaulted by a patient over the previous year. The report, conducted during the period October, 2005 to January, 2006, also revealed nearly 50% of the nurses across the country reported being pricked during their careers by a needle, scalpel, or other sharp object that had been contaminated by use on a patient. About 37 % across Canada reported they had experienced pain serious enough to prevent them from carrying out their normal daily activities in the year before the survey and 75% of them blamed job factors.. The report also revealed nurses in P.E.I. experienced among the highest rates of high blood pressure, at 16.5% . The average for Canada is 13.2%. The survey links work stress, low autonomy and lack of respect to health problems among nurses.

Wal-mart Loses Appeal must Now Accept a UFCW Presence in its Gatineau Store

□ On Friday, December 8, it was announced that Wal-Mart has lost an appeal against a labour board decision in the Quebec Court of Appeal and must now accept a UFCW presence in its Canadian store in Gatineau. Wal-Mart had tried to keep UFCW out on the pretext that a Local had withdrawn its recognition request, and been replaced by another UFCW Local. The labour board had decided that the store's workers have the right to be represented by their UFCW Local, as the required number have signed union cards.

Representatives of the Federation Attend Round Table on Atlantica in Halifax

□ On Thursday, December 7, the Federation's President and Vice President attended the Round Table on Atlantica in Halifax. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss and suggest changes to the draft version of the Atlantica: Myths and Reality Report that Scott Sinclair of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has been commissioned to create for the Atlantic Federations of Labour. Speakers at the meeting included Mr. Sinclair; Andrew Jackson, CLC Social & Economic Policy Director, and Hassan Yussuff, CLC Secretary-Treasurer. Also discussed at the meeting, which was also attended by representatives of the NB and NS Federations, the CLC Atlantic Region, various unions, the Council of Canadians, and other groups, was how we can start to work together to fight this very bad trade deal. The Paper will be officially released to the public at press conferences hosted by the respective Federation President and held in each Atlantic Province on February 15th.

Most People Happy with Non-emergency Wait Times

□ On Thursday, December 7, in a poll IBM Canada conducted for its health consulting business in March and April, it was announced that 80% of Canadians surveyed this year were satisfied with the amount of time they waited to get a doctor's appointment, a medical test or non-urgent surgery. But only 55 % were satisfied with their most recent emergency-room wait. The poll also found that only 27% of Canadians said they felt wait times were longer than five years ago, down from 42 % in 2004.

MP's Send Strong Message to Harper On Same-Sex Marriage

□ On Thursday, December 7, MPs from all parties voted 175 to 123 against the motion to re-open the same-sex marriage debate brought to the house by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. In 2005, MPs passed a law legalizing same-sex unions in the wake of court rulings that said barring same-sex couples from marriage was unconstitutional. Since then, more than 12,000 same-sex couples from across Canada have wed.

EI Sickness Benefits Bill C-278 Passes Second Reading In House

□ On Tuesday, December 5, a Liberal sponsored private member's bill proposing changes to employment insurance has passed second reading in the House of Commons. Bill C-278, an Act to amend the EI Act would extend the maximum period of EI

sickness benefits from 15 weeks to 50 weeks for people who must leave work when they become ill, or are injured or quarantined. The Liberals, Bloc Quebecois and NDP supported the bill while the minority Conservative government voted against the extension during debate in the House of Commons.

Bill C-278 (travel and accommodation) Receives First Reading In House

□ On Monday December 4, Bill C-390 an Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (travel and accommodation deduction for tradespersons received first reading in Parliament. The Act if proclaimed will allow tradespersons and indentured apprentices to deduct from their taxable income any travel and accommodation expenses that they have incurred in order to secure and maintain employment in a construction activity at a job site that is located at least 80 kilometres away from their ordinary place of residence if not paid by the employer.

Ontario Court of Appeal Turns Down CUPW's NAFTA Challenge

□ On Friday, December 1, the Ontario Court of Appeal unanimously decided that since the NAFTA tribunals don't have exclusive jurisdiction to hear disputes about government measures they don't usurp the authority of Canadian courts. NAFTA tribunals hear complaints from private corporations claiming government policies are harmful to their business interests. The legal challenge arose from a UPS claim that Canada's publicly funded mail system gives Canada Post an unfair advantage over courier companies. The complainants which included CUPW, the Council of Canadians (Council) and the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues feel the NAFTA provisions deprive the Canadian courts of authority.

CBC News at 6 PM to be Restored to 1 Hour

□ On Friday, December 1, it was announced that starting in February, CBC PEI will return to 60 minutes of local news programming at 6 p.m each evening. The news will still be a mix of local, regional, national and international news, but decisions on what news will be shown on will be made locally.

N.B. to Increase Minimum Wage Twice this Year

□ On Friday, December 1, the New Brunswick Provincial Government announced that they will increase their provincial minimum wage rate twice this year. On Jan. 1, 2007 the wage will increase to \$7 per hour then increase to \$7.25 per hour on July 1, 2007. Once both increases take effect, the minimum wage rate will be up about 8% from the current level of \$6.70 per hour. They also pledged a rate review at least once a year by the Minimum Wage Board.

Sunday Shopping Legislation Receives First Reading in the Legislature

□ On Friday, December 1, Sunday shopping legislation received first reading in the

legislature. The legislation would allow stores to open on Sundays from the Victoria Day weekend to the end of December, starting in the spring of 2007. During that period, stores would be allowed to be open from noon until one minute before midnight on Sundays. The government is also bringing amendments to the Employment Standards Act that would allow persons who were employed before the act comes into force with the right to refuse to work on Sunday and prevent employers from penalizing an employee who makes such a refusal. The bill received Royal Assent on December 15.

Articles for This Issue

C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation of Labour Spring Educational

-The C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation will be holding a one day educational at the Murphy's Community Center (former Basilica Rec Center) 200 Richmond Street, Charlottetown, P.E.I. on Thursday, March 8, 2007 8:30 am - 5:00 pm (Lunch provided). The courses being offered are:

Steward Training Level IV: The Steward as Educator

-Education of union members is crucial to the survival of local unions. The Steward As Educator is designed to assist the steward, local union leader, or local union activist develop skills and confidence in educating members around union issues in the workplace and issues that affect the workplace and community issues of the day. The course offers new ideas and methods of discussing membership education and communication and offers participants a look at how they can strategize around making union education and the role of steward a crucial part of the local union culture. Note: It is preferable that participants have completed a basic steward course.

Women Breaking Barriers

-This course looks at women's inequality and how to change things for the better. You will identify the barriers different women are up against in their homes, communities, workplaces, union and other social and economical institutions. A key part of this workshop is developing the skills to get at the roots of gender inequality and why it persists. You will also develop strategies and action plans for bringing down barriers, and personal skills to fight sexism, argue a point of view and speak in public.

Registration Information

-Please complete the attached form and send it before **February 15, 2007** along with a cheque made payable to the P.E.I. Federation of Labour to cover the registration fee (\$35.00 per person which includes lunch) to: Marjorie Gyurus, Registrar P.E.I. Federation of Labour 22 Enman Crescent, Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1E 1E6

-If you require additional information, please contact: Marjorie Gyurus at (902) 368-3068 or email: peifed@pei.aibn.com or Jean-Claude Basque at (506)-851-7086 or email: jcbasque@clc-ctc.ca

Update on the National, Consumer Boycott against Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company

-On Tuesday, January 2, United Steelworkers' (USW) National Director Ken Neumann released press release thanking all those who supported the 15,000 USW members during their 86-day strike against Goodyear. In the release he states that the continent-wide agreement with Goodyear Tire and Rubber would not have been achieved without the support of thousands of working people, their organizations and others who supported the Goodyear strikers in Canada.. The settlement provides better security in terms of preventing Goodyear from exporting production and jobs and Goodyear also agreed to put \$1 billion into the fund for retired workers' medical benefits - above the company's previous \$660-million plan.

-With this ratification, the PEI Federation of Labour ends its call for our affiliated members to boycott Goodyear and Motomaster tires. We wish to thank all of our members who supported this boycott.

Highlights of Reports on the Growing Gap Between Rich and Poor

□ In December there were three studies released relating to the growing gap between the rich and poor in Canada and across the world. The numbers shown in these studies are very scary and all indications are that the gap will continue to get worse.. Here are the highlights of those reports:

Statistics Canada Study

□ On Friday, December 15, it was announced in a new study by Statistics Canada that the top 20% of Canadians now own 75% of all national wealth. It also states that Canadians in that top 20% expanded their wealth by 19% between 1999 and 2005 while there was no change during the study period for those in the bottom 20% of the population. In fact the report states that the net worth of poor Canadians has, in fact, been stagnant for 20 years.

CLC Report Card 2006 Is Your Work Working for You?

□ On Wednesday, December 13, the CLC released its Report Card 2006 Is Your Work Working for You? study. In the report they state that:

- 1/8 of all Canadian workers are stuck in a low-wage job that does not cover cost-of-living essentials such as rent and food, and the number is rising despite unemployment rates that are at or near 30-year lows. These remarks are backed up by the Canadian Association of Food Banks, which recently reported that people with jobs make up the second largest group of food bank clients.
- there was a marked increase in wage inequality in the first half of 2006, with the top 10% now making 6.5 times more than the bottom 10% - up from 5.6 times more in the first half of 2005.
- the new jobs being created are not replacing the 300,000 jobs that have been being lost over the past four years in the country's manufacturing sector. The new jobs created generally do not match those lost in terms of wages, skill-level requirements, and full-time hours.
- 27% of adult workers still find themselves with part-time, temporary jobs or in some form of self-employment. While there has been some decline in part-time jobs, the proportion of short-term contracts and seasonal jobs has grown.

- In the end, the CLC calls on the Federal government to come up with a jobs strategy focussing on the long-term prosperity of working families, improving access to collective bargaining and training and raising and enforcing employment standards. The report is available at <http://www.working4you.ca/pdf/reporten.pdf>

Report by the World Institute for Development Economics Research

□ On Friday, December 8, After 25 years of freewheeling global capitalism, including endless tax cuts for the wealthy, an orgy of free trade and the emergence of a supposedly global economy, a new report by the World Institute for Development Economics Research, a UN agency based in Finland, shows that the rich are stunningly richer than ever while the poor have fallen farther behind than ever. The report finds that more than 40% of all household wealth on the planet is now owned by 1% of world adults, most of them in Europe and the United States. The top 2% own more than 50%, and the top 10% have corralled 85% of the planet's wealth. By contrast, the bottom 50% of all adults on the planet lay claim to just 1% of the wealth. The statistics are based on data collected in 2000. If the same trend has continued since then, and there are few doubts it has, the situation is even worse today. The report also states that one measure of just how large the gap has become is that an individual with just \$2,200 in assets now ranks in the top half of the world's distribution of wealth. Almost all of the world's richest people live in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific nations. Brazil, China and Russia occupy much of the middle third of global wealth distribution, with India, Africa and low-income

Asian nations occupying the lower third.

Highlights of the Provincial Capital Budget

□ On Thursday, December 7, Provincial Treasurer Mitch Murphy tabled the Province's capital budget. The Highlights are:

- the province will spend nearly \$53 million over the next 10 years to replace 5 aging manors across the Island (Colville Manor, Souris; Riverview Manor, Montague, Prince Edward Home, Charlottetown; Summerset Manor, Summerside; and the Maplewood Manor, Alberton) .
- more than \$35 million will be spent updating the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Charlottetown with approximately \$2.9 million being spent on redevelopment and another \$955,000 on improvements next year.
- \$23.7 million will be set aside for the new regional hospital in West Prince.
- \$3.2 million will be spent over the next five years on health-facilities improvements.
- The province will also accelerate the construction of the new \$14.7 million Montague regional high school which will now be ready in 2 years instead of 3.
- \$4.2 million will be spent to renovate the existing vocational section of Holland College Royalty Centre and to consolidate the 3 PEI Analytical Laboratories facilities under one roof.
- And \$ 2.4 million will be spent to upgrade the recreation facilities at the Elm Street School in Summerside
- In the next five years, the province expects to spend \$321 million on capital projects.

Important Dates

Round Table on Atlantica	Thursday, December 7, 2006	Citadel Inn, Halifax.
Wal-Town Canadian Tour Stop on PEI	Monday, January 29, 2007	in Kelley room 210 on the UPEI campus, 550 University Avenue, at 7pm. Admission is free
Opposing Atlantica Meeting	Thursday, February 8, 2007	at 4:30 p.m. at UPSE Office in Charlottetown

Press Conference to Release the Atlantica: Myths and Reality Paper	Friday, February 15, 2007	
The C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation Educational	Thursday, March 8, 2007	8:30 am - 5:00 pm at the Murphy's Community Center (former Basilica Rec Center) 200 Richmond Street, Charlottetown, P.E.I.
Federation's International Women's Day Event	Thursday, March 8, 2007	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm at the Murphy's Community Center (former Basilica Rec Center) 200 Richmond Street, Charlottetown, P.E.I.
International Women's Day Celebration	Thursday, March 8, 2007	7 pm, Georgian Room, Charlottetown Hotel. Reception followed by a Round table discussion and a special ceremony honouring Island women labour leaders. For information call CUSO at 892-2610 or 1 800 676-8411