



# PEI FEDERATION OF LABOUR NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2004 ISSUE

## **CURRENT NEWS**

- Due to the snow storm on Thursday, February 19, 2004, the annual NDP convention has been postponed to March 6, 2004 at 1:15 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus hall.
  
- On Friday, February 13, 2004, Over 100 employees of the CLC, members of CEP CULR-1 and OPEIU 225, went on strike. Picket lines have been set up all across the country. In Moncton the picket line is at 2282 Mountain Road and the strike headquarters is at the CEP office, 440 - 1077 St. George Blvd. The strike coordinator for the Atlantic Region is Jean Claude Basque .
  
- On Friday, February 13, 2004, it was announced that 88% of UPEI's 300 member faculty association voted in favour of their first contract with the university. The agreement which runs to June 30, 2005 and addresses issues of governance, compensation, intellectual property, and faculty workload.
  
- On Thursday, February 12, 2004, the Fed received a letter from Workers Compensation Board of Prince Edward Island inviting the Fed to send representatives to a meeting on the 2003 employer survey. Peter MacIntosh of CRA will present survey results and be available to answer questions from stakeholders on the survey. The presentation will be held on March 3, 2004 at 1:30 p.m. in the Stanhope A room, Best Western Charlottetown.
  
- On Thursday, February 12, 2004, Polar Foods announced that if it doesn't get a loan guarantee from the province it won't open this lobster season leaving 1,200 seasonal staff out of work. The province says Polar Foods will not be getting anymore help from them.
  
- On Wednesday, February 11, 2004, members of PSAC held an information picket to inform members of ongoing contract negotiations. Thousands of employees with the CCRA have been without a contract since Nov. 1, 2003. PSAC is looking for improved working conditions, job security, promotion for term employees, and an 8 per cent increase a year for 3 years.
  
- On Saturday, February 7, 2004, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for January was 10.8% up .7% from December's 10.1%. You currently need 525 hours to qualify for EI

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on PEI.

- On Saturday, January 31, 2004, one man was killed and another injured in a workplace accident. 32 year old Brent Joseph O'Brien was killed when the lift hoisting the vehicle he was working on collapsed. Occupational Health and Safety is investigating the accident.
- East Isle Shipyard in Georgetown, Kings County has secured a \$16-million contract to build two tug boats for Atlantic Towing Ltd. The new contract will result in 95 jobs at peak construction. East Isle Shipyard estimates the two new tugs will create approximately \$4 million in total payroll and benefit 50 Island businesses that will supply about \$500,000 in goods and services during the construction of the tugs. Work is scheduled to commence in May 2004. The first vessel will be delivered in January 2005 with the second to be delivered in May 2005.
- The provincial government has passed changes to the Pharmacy Act which will allow the nurse practitioners in P.E.I. to write prescriptions. Currently, there are two nurse practitioners working in O'Leary. A nurse practitioner can deal with ailments such as flu and colds, and in some situations can order X-rays and tests.

### **P.E.I. FEDERATION OF LABOUR 2004 PRIORITIES**

- On Thursday, January 29, 2004 at the Best Western in Charlottetown, the PEIFL Executive Council held a strategy session to determine our goals for this year.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

- Better communication between the Fed and its affiliates, non-affiliates, and the public was determined to be the number one goal for the Fed in 2004. To accomplish this goal, the Executive decided on 8 actions to take this year.
- 1. To set up a Meeting with each affiliate's members to find out what their concerns are, how we can serve them more effectively, and let them know what the Fed is up to.
- 2. To setup a newsletter and send it out to the affiliates on a regular basis
- 3. All info sent out by the Fed that should be seen by all members of an affiliate should have "Please Post" in big letters on the bottom.

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- 4. The Fed Executive will hold two meetings one in May and the other in Sept each year with reps from all locals to determine what their concerns are and how we can serve them more effectively. All Island media will be invited to part of the May meeting.
- 5. The Fed will start up a web page.
- 6. With 2004 being the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fed, there should be something special put on at the annual convention.
- 7. The Fed will meet with non-affiliated locals to try and convince them of the benefits of joining the Fed.
- 8. The Fed will put out press releases on important issues to let the public know the Fed's opinion on these issues.

### **BOARDS/COMMISSIONS**

- It will be the Fed's goal in 2004 to make employee reps who sit on the various boards and commissions (I.e. Labour Relations, WCB, Employment Standards, etc) on PEI more accountable to the employees they represent. To accomplish this, the Fed will send out a letter to all employee reps on the various boards and commissions letting them know what we expect from them in terms of keeping the fed informed of their actions and asking them to attend a Fed council meeting for a short report on what they have been up to in their role as employee rep. The meetings will be split up over different Executive meetings. The Fed will also offer in October a one day course on a Saturday for employee reps on boards/commissions.

### **COALITIONS**

- A group e-mail will be sent out to various coalitions and activists when there is a need to share information or to invite them to a rally.

### **COMMITTEE' S**

- The main goal of the Women's Committee will be to meet ,co-ordinate with other groups and plan events around important women's days (i.e. International Women's Day March 8, the remembrance day for women killed in the Montreal Massacre Dec.6, etc.) in 2004.
- The main goal of the Health and Safety Committee will be to set up the Day of Mourning on April 28<sup>th</sup> ,to ensure that Labour Day

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activities are organized and promoted, and to lobby the provincial government for land to set up a monument to workers killed on the job.

- The main goal of the Union Label Committee will be to lobby all levels of government to adopt a non-sweatshop policy and inform the public about what they should buy.
- The main goal of the Political and Social Action Committee will be to follow and prepare reaction to the provincial and federal budgets, lobby for electoral reform, and to co-ordinate and setup events for the federal election.
- The main goal of the Organizing Committee will be to meet with non-affiliated unions and explain to them the benefits of affiliation in hopes of them joining the fed.
- Also at the meeting the United Way gave a presentation to Executive Council on their organization. It was brought to their attention that they should re-organize the way they split up their donations on their charts to show how much union employees contribute to give a more accurate accounting and proper acknowledgment of where their donations come from (example a significant amount of the money donated under government came from government employees not the government itself). The United way is currently looking for an union member to sit on their Board anyone interested should get in touch with the Fed at 368-3068.

## **REPORT FROM THE PEIFL'S MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

- On Wednesday, February 4, 2004, members of the PEIFL met with the provincial Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs to discuss labour issues contained in the PEIFL's Brief to Cabinet and to ask the minister to set up a meeting with cabinet to discuss the full brief. There for the PEIFL were President Carl Pursey, Vice President Blair Penny, Secretary Shelley Ward, CLC rep J.C. Basque, and Executive Board members Paul Chaisson and Sandy Mackay while the minister Elmer MacFadyen had his deputy ministers Barry Curley and Ronald Macmillan with him.
- The meeting lasted approximately 2 hours and the topics discussed were Anti-Scab Legislation, First Contract Legislation, Occupational Health and Safety Concerns, WCB Board Issues, Fair Wages for the Construction Sector, Journeyman to Apprentice Ratio, Electrical Trade Compulsory Certification, and the Day of Mourning.

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### **Anti-Scab Legislation**

- The Fed's position on this issue was that anti-scab legislation will help shorten labour disputes thus lessen unnecessary disruptions in service especially in health areas where disruptions can be especially harmful to patients and will lessen the possibility of picket line violence.

### **First Contract Legislation**

- The Fed's position on this issue was that first contract legislation will get union and employer working together quicker, make sure that the employees wish to unionize is handled quickly and fairly and lessen the time employers have to try and intimidate their employees.
- The Minister's position on these two issues was that he will get consult other provinces that do and don't have first contract and anti-scab legislation in place and see how it works or why they don't have it and make up his mind based on the information he gets back. Ronald Macmillan pointed out that tons of first contracts and labour disputes have been settled without government interference.

### **Occupational Health and Safety Concerns and WCB Board Issues**

- The Fed asked the Minister to provide better and compulsory training for workplace health and safety committees and to look into ways to make them more accountable to the employees they represent. Due to recent events and ongoing problems, the fed expressed concerns over the lack of regular inspections, the need for more inspectors, and the need for stronger enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act on all work sites on PEI.
- The Minister said that training for these committees is on going and will look into making it compulsory. He also said that they are currently looking into better safety for Residential construction and is constantly getting calls on safety issues which he brings to the attention of the proper people.
- The Fed also expressed its concern on the way that the representatives of various boards and councils are chosen. The Fed wants to make sure that employee representatives are accountable to the employees they represent and are going to take steps to help that.
- The Minister's response was due to the confidential nature of

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some of the boards, accountability must be limited. He also gave the Fed a list of all representatives on all boards on PEI to the Fed and mentioned that the government has staggered dates of appointments to allow experienced people to be on boards at all times and has increased the size of the WCB board from 5 to 7.

### **Day of Mourning**

-The Fed expressed its desire to erect a monument to workers killed on the job on provincial property and asked for the government to supply the land. The Minister seemed receptive to the idea and wants to discuss it further. The Minister also complimented the Fed and in particular Brother Leo Cheverie on the job that has been done on the Day of Mourning.

### **Fair Wages for the Construction Sector, Journeyman to Apprentice Ratio, Electrical Trade Compulsory Certification**

-The Fed expressed that in the near future there will be a shortage of skilled labour in the construction industry and tried to get the point across that the government has to act responsibly to deal with shortage. The Fed's position is that younger people need to be brought into the sector but not as cheap temporary labour as is happening in the trades. It was expressed that there needs to be a ratio put in place to help protect workers already in the trades and to provide better training and safety for new workers; certification of the trades is necessary to provide an accurate view of the situation in the trades; fair wages are necessary to keep workers on PEI; and that these points need to be enforced. It was also expressed that neither the IBEW or the Carpenters have had a shortage of skilled workers available for work in recent years.

-The minister expressed that the employers are telling him that the shortage is happening now. He also said that he will be consulting with the Apprenticeship department to see what their opinion on the situation is.

-On February 17, 2004, the Fed received a letter back from the Minister regarding our meeting:

-Dear Mr. Pursey:

-As Minister Responsible for Labour, I want to thank the PEI Federation of Labour for the presentation of February 4, 2004. I

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found the meeting informative and provided me with a better appreciation of the Federation's labour agenda. As indicated, I will follow up on the issues raised at the meeting. They Include:

1. Seek from Cabinet a date for the Federation to present a brief;
2. Ask the Workers Compensation Board for a list of formal Occupational Health and Safety training sessions conducted in the past year;
3. Discuss with Workers Compensation Board concerns regarding the need for more safety inspections on residential construction sites;
4. Engage in discussions to identify a suitable location for a "monument" recognizing workers critically injured at the work site. The location cost and upkeep would require mutual agreement between the parties; and,
5. Meet with representatives of the Department of Development & Technology and the Department of Education to discuss the Apprenticeship Program and the reasons for the shortages of qualified journeymen and the use of the Labour Market Development Fund to assist apprentices.

-Once I have obtained responses to your requests. I will forward you the information.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CARPENTER'S UNION**

-Please be advised that the United Brotherhood of Carpenter's Local 1338 have established a residential construction company. This company is a non-profit venture, whose goals are to upgrade standards of pay and working conditions for carpenters in the residential sector (i.e. living wage, health and welfare, and pension). For all your residential carpentry needs please call 566-1414 or cell 626-9151.

### **UNIONS CARE**

-UPSE recently donated \$1000 to Sport PEI.

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- As of the end of 2003, the employees of the Summerside Tax Centre have raised almost 90% of their \$25,000 pledge for equipment at the new Prince County Hospital.
- Staff members of Aliant recently received a plaque of appreciation for their support of the IWK Telethon for Children.
- CEP Local 167 recently donated \$1,000 to the annual equipment campaign at the Prince County Hospital.

### IMPORTANT DATES

WCB 2003 EMPLOYER SURVEY	WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2004	1:30PM STANHOPE ROOM, BEST WESTERN, CHARLOTTETOWN
NDP CONVENTION	SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 2004	AT 1:15 P.M. AT KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY	MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2004	
STEWARD LEVEL 3 TRAINING	TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY MARCH 23 AND 24, 2004	AT HOWARD JOHNSON, CHARLOTTETOWN
LABOUR COLLEGE OF CANADA WEEK LONG EDUCATIONAL	APRIL 25 TO 30, 2004	MEMARAMCOOK INSTITUTE, ST. JOSEPH, N.B. DEADLINE MARCH 26, 2004
DAY OF MOURNING FOR WORKERS KILLED ON THE JOB	WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2004	
GLOBALIZATION WORKSHOP	SATURDAY, MAY 1, 2004	THE STATED DEADLINE JANUARY 31, 2004 HAS BEEN CHANGED TO APRIL 02, 2004.
LABOUR COLLEGE OF CANADA 4 WEEK GRADUATE PROGRAM	MAY 10 TO JUNE 4, 2004	OTTAWA DEADLINE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2004
TOPSHEE CONFERENCE ON GLOBALIZATION	MAY 15 AND 16, 2004	IN ANTIGONISH, NOVA SCOTIA. ON THE 14 THERE WILL BE A FAREWELL PARTY ON BEHALF OF EVERETT BAKER
LABOUR DAY	MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2004	

2004 PEIFL ANNUAL CONVENTION	FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NOVEMBER 5 AND 6, 2004 (TENTATIVE)	
NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2004	