



# PEI Federation of Labour January Newsletter Issued on March 26, 2008

## Current News In Brief

### **Federation of Labour to Hold Seventh Annual Provincial Day of Mourning Ceremony**

□ On Monday, April 28, the PEI Federation of Labour in conjunction with the Department of Community, Cultural Affairs and Labour and the Workers Compensation Board will hold its Seventh Annual Provincial Day of Mourning Ceremony for workers who have been killed or injured on the job. The ceremony will be held at 7:00 pm at Province House with a reception to follow. Everyone is encouraged to attend. We also ask any union who wishes to lay a wreath at the ceremony to contact our office at 368-3068; fax at 368- 3192 or e-mail at: [peifed@pei.aibn.com](mailto:peifed@pei.aibn.com) as soon as possible.

### **CLC Atlantic Region and the Labour College of Canada Weeklong Educational**

□ From April 20 to 25, the CLC Atlantic Region and the Labour College of Canada will be holding a weeklong educational at the Memramcook Institute in St. Joseph, NB. The courses for this year will be Labour Law, Facing Management, and Women in Leadership. The Registration Fee of \$650 (shared) or \$800 (single-limited number available) accommodation includes room, meals, tax, gratuities and all course materials . For more information please contact CLC Atlantic Region at (506)858-9350; fax at (506)858-9571, e-mail at: [atlantic@clc-ctc.ca](mailto:atlantic@clc-ctc.ca), or see the brochure on-line at <http://www.peifl.ca/pages/educ/clc%20week.pdf>. The deadline for applications is March 26, 2008.

### **Unemployment Rate For January**

□ On Tuesday, February 12, 2008, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for January was 10.6 % same as December. You currently need 525 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.

### **Dewar Appointed Deputy Minister of Health**

□ On Wednesday, January 23, the Province appointed Keith Dewar as the new Deputy Minister of Health. From January, 2007 to his recent appointment, Mr. Dewar was the senior vice-president of health services for the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region in Saskatchewan and he is also the former CEO of the Provincial Health Services Authority here on PEI. Dewar replaces Rory Beck, who was put on paid sick leave in

September of 2007. Since returning, Beck has been moved to Deputy Minister responsible for Infrastructure and Federal-Provincial Relations replacing Ron Macmillan who took a leave of absence to work in the Yukon.

### **CUPE PEI President Donalda MacDonald Dies**

□ On Sunday, January 20, CUPE PEI President Donalda MacDonald died after a seven month battle with cancer. Donalda spent more than 25 years as an active union member in CUPE 1770, as president of CUPE PEI and as a CUPE Regional Vice President before becoming General Vice President in Toronto in October of 2007. She also served on the executive of both the PEI Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress. In October of 2007 she was awarded the Grace Hartman Award for activism in the struggle for workers' rights, equality and social justice. The Federation was very proud to have been one of the many who supported her nomination for this award. Donalda was a mentor and inspiration to many in the Island's labour movement and brought a level of knowledge, experience, commitment, and hard work to everything she did that will be very hard to replace. She will be missed. The Federation extends its sincere condolences to her family.

### **N.S. Minimum Wage Review Committee Recommends Increase to \$9.65/hr by 2010**

□ On Thursday, January 17, the Nova Scotia Minimum Wage Review Committee released its annual review report. In the report, the committee recommended that Nova Scotia's minimum wage increase to \$8.10 ( a 6.5% increase) effective May 1, 2008, \$8.60 (a 6.2% increase) effective April 1, 2009, \$9.20 (a 6.9% increase) effective April 1, 2010, and \$9.65 (a 4.8% increase) effective October 1, 2010. The Increases will bring the minimum wage up to the expected 2010 Low Income Cut Off line for a city the size of Sydney. The Committee is also recommending that after 2010, the rate could be adjusted annually using the change in the cost of living (CPI) in Canada as reported by Statistics Canada.

### **New Study Praises Canada's Ability to Prevent Death from Treatable Conditions**

□ On Wednesday, January 9, a new British study was released that awards Canada high marks for preventing death from treatable conditions and further states that Canada's health care system offers "excellent value for the money". The study entitled Measuring the Health of Nations: Updating an Earlier Analysis compares amenable deaths (deaths that would not have occurred if effective health care had been available) in the United States with 14 western European nations, plus Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The list of deaths assessed included conditions causing deaths associated with bacterial infections, treatable cancers, diabetes, some cardiovascular disease and the complications of common surgical procedures. In this study based on figures from 2002-03, Canada's rate was 76.83 per 100,000 population, placing it 6<sup>th</sup> after France, Japan, Australia, Spain and Italy. Meanwhile, amenable mortality rates in the U.S. was

109.65 placing the U.S in 19<sup>th</sup> place.

### **Federation Gives Presentation In Opposition to Sunday Shopping**

□ On Wednesday, January 9, the President of the PEI Federation of Labour appeared before the Standing Committee on Community Affairs and Economic Development to express the Federation's opposition to full-time Sunday Shopping. In our presentation the Federation expressed that the labour movement has always recognized how important a good balance between work and family/social life is to ensure workers have the time needed to rest and remove the stresses that come from their everyday work life. We also expressed that the previous legislation which barred Sunday Shopping allowed enough businesses to open to ensure that all necessities and most conveniences were available on Sunday. Sunday Shopping also will have a negative impact on retail workers, have very little positive economic impact on our economy, and do little to attract tourism. The complete submission is available on our website at:  
<http://www.peifl.ca/pages/sub/SubSunshop08.pdf>

### **IBEW Local 1432 Signs New Contract**

□ On Tuesday, January 8, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1432 (Unit 2 Construction Electricians) and the Association of Commercial and Industrial Contractors of P.E.I. officially signed a new contract which runs until February, 2010. The new deal will move their high rate (projects over \$350,000.00 electrical) from \$28.25/hr to \$34.25/hr for a 21.23% increase and their low rate to \$27.38/hr from \$21.38/hr a 28.06% increase over the term of the agreement. The new contract also includes increases to their board and travel allowances and foremen rates and improvements to contract clauses on bereavement leave, the tool list, low rate projects, and Major Projects.

### **CEO's Daily Salary More Than Average Workers Yearly Salary**

□ On Wednesday, January 2, it was announced that a new analysis of escalating CEO compensation compiled by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) reveals that at 10:33 a.m. on New Year's Day, top Canadian chief executive officers (CEOs) had already "earned" more money than the average Canadian worker will make in all of 2008. The 100 highest-paid CEOs working for companies whose stock is publicly traded earned an average \$8.5 million in 2006. This compares to an average worker's annual pay of \$38,998. Canada's top CEOs now make 218 times as much as the average Canadian full-time worker. The level has more than doubled from a rate of 104 times in 1998. The top paid CEO in the Top 100 club collected \$55 million in 2006 (more than a million a week). The bottom member of the club got a \$3-million pay cheque.

### **Articles for this Month**

## **C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation of Labour Teach-In on Women's Equality**

-The C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation of Labour will be holding a one day educational at the Loyalist Lakeview Resort 195 Harbour Drive, Summerside, PE on Thursday, May 15, 2008 (9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.) (Lunch provided).

The course being offered is:

### **Teach-In on Women's Equality**

-All levels of government are ignoring the continued and, in some cases, growing economic inequality of women. There is a lack of attention paid to the causes of inequality and little attention being paid to solutions. The manufacturing crisis has highlighted the particular impact on the loss of good paying jobs among women, as has privatization of public sector jobs.

-This Teach-In on Women's Equality will look at issues such as child care, pay equity, employment standards, access to EI, CPP, OAS and GIS, and their impact on women's economic equality. As well, the Teach-In will help to mobilize union women to talk in their unions, with their families, with the public, the media and with politicians about how important these issues are and what needs to be done to improve equality for women."

### **Registration Information**

-Please complete the Registration form and send it before April 25, 2008 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. Registration form is available on-line at <http://www.peifl.ca/pages/educ/form.pdf>.

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

## **Settlement Reached for Community Health Workers in BC Over Bill 29**

□ On Friday, January 29, it was announced that the multi-union Community Bargaining Association (CBA) has reached a tentative settlement agreement after four months of negotiations with the British Columbia government and health employers to implement the Supreme Court of Canada ruling on Bill 29. The settlement agreement affects

approximately 13,000 workers across B.C.

-In 2002 the government of B.C. rammed through legislation (Bill 29) which cancelled the contracts of thousands of health care workers, allowed for mass layoffs outside the collective bargaining process, and enabled the widespread privatization of health-sector service jobs. In June the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that three key portions of Bill 29 are unconstitutional. The court also rejected earlier Supreme Court decisions that excluded collective bargaining from the Charter's protection saying those decisions do not withstand principled scrutiny. The court further noted that collective bargaining complements, promotes and enhances fundamental Charter values such as equality and democracy.

-The main elements of the CBA agreement include:

- Doubled severance for community health workers impacted by contracting out, with one week of severance for every year of service compared to one week for two years previously
- \$4 million lump sum payment broken down to \$1.5 million for compensation to impacted workers, and \$2.5 million for retraining and mitigation
- An obligation for employers to engage in meaningful "good faith" consultations, properly notify of future contracting out, and give opportunity to propose alternatives to contracting out and labour adjustment measures for affected workers.
- Expanded rights to bidding for health sector jobs across all six B.C. health authorities, and reimbursement of relocation expenses up to an agreed amount
- The restoration of service and seniority rights for members whose jobs are returned to direct service.

## **Press Release in Response to the Chambers of Commerce's Opposition to Recommendations to Improve the Employment Standards Act.**

□ On Friday, January 18, the PEI Federation of Labour released a press release in response to the opposition from the Charlottetown and Summerside Chambers of Commerce to the very modest improvements being recommended to the Island's Employment Standards Act. Here is the press release we released.

"We are extremely disappointed by the recent opposition from the Charlottetown and Summerside Chambers of Commerce to the very modest improvements being recommended to the Island's Employment Standards Act." stated Carl Pursey, President of the PEI Federation of Labour

"At a time when you cannot go a day without hearing about impending labour shortages and Islanders leaving this province for more lucrative employment in other provinces, it is incomprehensible to me that the Chambers of Commerce cannot understand that their members' futures depend upon PEI's ability to attract and more importantly retain workers. This cannot be done when the Legislation that provides the minimum floor of labour rights and standards for workers on PEI. is so out of touch with the rest of the country." continues Mr. Pursey

PEI currently has the worst Employment Standards Legislation in Canada. Thanks to this, workers covered under this Act have to work the longest number of hours before they receive overtime, have the lowest number of statutory holidays, the lowest duration of vacation time, and if the Ghiz government does not act very shortly the lowest minimum wage in all of Canada. Also in regards to overtime, despite having the longest hours required for the payment of overtime in the country, many Island businesses in certain industries are given an extra exemption to this rule and are allowed to require workers to work up to 75 hours/week before they are paid overtime.

Even with the enactment of all of the positive recommendations made by the Employment Standards Review Committee, Island workers will still make very little headway in comparison with the rest of Canada. And this is not to say that all the Review Committee's recommendations are positive, as one of their recommendations provides for the possibility of a two-tiered minimum wage rate (which the PEI Federation of Labour vehemently opposes and hopes the government ignores) but at least for the most part the committee's recommendations are a small step in the right direction.

The Provincial government and Island businesses need to realize that if PEI wishes to remain competitive in this ultra tight labour market, they need to do everything they can to ensure working Islanders have jobs that provide them with not only a fair and competitive income but also allows them time for a social/family life.

"Enacting the positive Employment Standards recommendations is just a small step in what is needed to improve things for Island workers. It is however an important step and I urge the Ghiz government to ignore the objections of the Chambers of Commerce and start to make the changes to our Employment Standards Act needed to bring this important piece of legislation in line with the rest of Canada. Contrary to what the Chambers of Commerce say in their press statements, the balance has been for so long and so far in the favour of business here on PEI that it is long overdue that the balance needs to start, in this small way, shifting in the favour of Island employees " concludes Carl Pursey, President of the PEI Federation of Labour.

## **Important Dates**

<b>C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation of Labour Spring Educational</b>	<b>Thursday, March 6, 2008</b>	<b>8:30 am - 5:00 pm at the Best Western Charlottetown (formerly the McLaughlin Hotel), Charlottetown, PE</b>
<b>CLC's Women's Economic Equality Campaign Launch Press Conference</b>	<b>Friday, March 7, 2008</b>	<b>11:00 am at the Best Western Charlottetown (formerly the McLaughlin Hotel), Charlottetown, PE</b>
<b>CLC Atlantic Region &amp; Labour College of Canada Weeklong Educational</b>	<b>April 20 to 25, 2008</b>	<b>Memramcook Institute, St. Joseph, NB</b>
<b>Seventh Annual Provincial Day of Mourning for Workers Killed and Injured on the Job</b>	<b>Monday, April 28, 2008</b>	<b>7:00 pm at Province House</b>
<b>C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation of Labour Teach-In on Women's Equality</b>	<b>Thursday, May 15, 2008</b>	<b>9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m at the Loyalist Lakeview Resort 195 Harbour Drive, Summerside, PE</b>
<b>The 25th Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress</b>	<b>Monday, May 26 to Friday, May 30</b>	<b>at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. The Deadline for receiving Resolutions is March 11, 2008. The Deadline for receiving Credentials is April 25, 2008</b>