



PEI Federation of Labour Newsletter July 2006 Issue

Current News

□ Recently, the PEI Federation of Labour received a request from Elmer MacFadyen, Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs announcing that effective December 31, 2006, the terms of 2 worker representatives on the Workers Compensation Board of Directors, will expire and requesting that we submit names for those positions. In the letter, the Minister asks the federation to indicate why we believe our nominees would be good candidates as Board members. Therefore, If you have any members interested in being considered as nominees for these positions, we ask you to submit their name, phone number, address, and a short list of any training, experience, and/or positions held that shows interest and experience in workers compensation and health and safety issues. Submit nominations by email at: peifed@pei.aibn.com; by Fax at: 368-3192. The deadline for nominations will be before 4:30pm on Wednesday, October, 25, 2006.

□ Once again this year in early September, the Federation will be donating books, CD's, and DVD's, dealing with labour and social issues to the Provincial and UPEI libraries. The value of this year's donation will be approximately \$1200. Recently, the Federation sent out notices of this campaign to each of our affiliates asking them to donate \$50.00 to the Adopt-A-Book Fund. We feel that making sure that the general public has access to this information is very important. Last year, thanks to the generosity of many of our affiliates and their national bodies, the federation was able to donate approximately \$2300 worth of materials. If your Local wishes to donate to this campaign, please send a cheque payable to the PEI Federation of Labour (memo Adopt A Book Fund) to our office at 22 Enman Crescent, Charlottetown, PEI, C1E1E6. Thus far, we would like to thank CUPE PEI Division, CUPE Local 501, CUPE Local 1870, and UPSE for their generous donations.

□ On Monday, September 4, the P.E.I. Federation of Labour will hold its 7th Annual Labour Day Corn Boil and Barbeque at Victoria Park in Charlottetown. So bring a lawn chair and meet your brothers and sisters as we celebrate Labour Day 2006. There will be Entertainment, Games for the Kids, Prizes, Hot Dogs, Corn, and Fun For All. If your local has union hats, shirts, jackets, etc (Especially something for kids) that you are

willing to donate for prizes at the event or if you have any members interested in helping out with the serving or preparation of food or with the children's games and races at this year's event, please contact our office at 368-3068; fax at 368-3192 or e-mail at: peifed@pei.aibn.com by **Friday, September 1, 2006. (Please note: Due to rain on September 4, this year's event was cancelled)**

❑ On Sunday, July 30, it was announced that the City of Chicago has passed the first "living wage law" in the United States, forcing mega-retailers such as Wal-Mart, Home Depot and Target to pay workers a minimum wage of \$9.25 (\$10.50 Can) /hr (up from the current rate of \$6.25). The new law applies only to stores with at least 90,000 sq ft of space and \$1 billion (US) in annual sales across the company. It will affect 42 stores and 7,500 workers, and has the potential to affect many more.

❑ On Friday, July 28, it was announced that close to 150 former Polar Foods employees are finally going to receive payment from a P.E.I. Labour Relations Board ruling eight months ago. The delay has been blamed on federal bureaucracy. Apparently, Ottawa has spent a great deal of time wrangling over how to deal with employment insurance payments received by the former workers in light of the settlement. It is expected that the individual payments should be out by the end of next week and will range from \$75 to about \$5,000.

❑ On Friday, July 28, it was announced that the Kohltech window manufacturing plant in Summerside is shutting its doors for good on Nov. 6, with a loss of more than 50 jobs. The company says it can no longer compete in its main market, the U.S., with the current high value of the Canadian dollar. The workers at the plant are represented by Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada Local 167.

❑ On Friday, July 28, it was announced that the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench has concluded that Wal-Mart had provided no evidence to support its allegations that the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board was biased and that efforts had been made to interfere with the Board's operations. WalMart had been attempting to stop the Labour Relations Board from hearing cases related to union organizing efforts at company stores.

❑ On Thursday, July 27, an 85-foot-long, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC) petition containing 53,000 signatures demanding a national child care and early learning program was presented symbolically to the Premiers attending the Federal Council of Ministers meeting in St. John's. Speakers at the event urged the premiers to be united in the fight to get the Harper government to reinstate the signed agreements with provinces to provide an universal child care program.

□ On Thursday, July 27, the Supreme Court of Canada released a decision over union successor rights which confirmed that labour relations boards should determine questions on successor rights and not the courts in the case of bankruptcies. The decision stops courts when appointing interim receivers from declaring that those receivers (in this specific case, KPMG) are not successor employers under labour relations legislation. The Court also said orders appointing interim receivers may not immunize them from liability as a successor employer. The legal victory concludes a case launched by the former I.W.A. Canada Local 700 (now United Steelworkers Local 1-500) several years ago after T.C.T Logistics Inc. became insolvent. Its largest creditor, GMAC Commercial Credit Corporation, applied to an Ontario court to have KPMG appointed as an interim receiver. The Order obtained from the Court gave the interim receiver the power to hire and fire employees and declared that KPMG could not be found to be a successor employer within the meaning of the Ontario Labour Relations Act. KPMG eventually became the trustee when TCT was assigned into bankruptcy and went on to terminate workers. Most of TCT's assets were subsequently purchased by Spectrum Supply Chains Solutions Inc., which then hired some former TCT employees, but not in accordance with the collective agreement that existed with the union. The USW will be seeking the reinstatement of collective bargaining rights and union members, with compensation for lost wages and other costs.

□ On Monday, July 24, it was announced that the latest Public Service Employee Survey, which involved 105,486 federal workers, has found that 22% feel they were harassed on the job during the past year while 17% believe they were discriminated against in the performance of their duties. The harassment numbers are 1% higher than when the last survey was conducted in 2002. The discrimination numbers are unchanged. Also 2% of all respondents (more than 2,000 in total) also reported that they had experienced physical violence on the job. The Public Service Alliance of Canada has announced that it is analysing the results of the survey and will address all issues in future discussions and collective bargaining negotiations with the government.

□ On Wednesday, July 19, it was announced that The Quebec Occupational Health and Safety commission is formally investigating complaints that Wal Mart employees at the Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu store were kept on the job to search for explosives after a bomb threat at the store. Three separate threats apparently occurred. After the first threat, workers say a manager directed employees to remain and look for explosives while shoppers were told to leave. Fortunately, no explosives were found.

□ On Friday, July 14, it was announced that a new study commissioned by Social Development Canada and the cities of Toronto and Vancouver shows Canadian cities offer licensed daycare spaces for only about 15% of children. The study, entitled Learning From Each Other: early Learning and child Care Experiences in Canadian

Cities, concludes that none of the cities examined in the study have sufficient service coverage for children ages 0-12, with the exception of kindergarten provision, which is universal. It also showed that the percentages of children who have access to licensed child-care spaces are extremely low, and vary widely from city to city and province to province. Most of the cities have enough spaces for about 10 to 16 % of children. The study looked at the provision of children's services for children ages 6 to 12 in 11 major cities across Canada including St. John's, Halifax, Montréal, Sherbrooke, Toronto, Sudbury, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary, Vancouver and Whitehorse.

□ On Friday, July 14, the Provincial Government announced that effective immediately a cap of \$150 will be put in place for ambulance services where a patient requires multiple trips in order to reach the appropriate medical facility. Under the current fee system, if a patient requires multiple trips by ambulance to get to the most appropriate medical centre, they have to pay \$150 per trip. This could add up to \$300 or \$450 in fees for one day.

□ On Friday, July 7, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for June was 10.5% up 0.4% from May's 10.1%. You currently need 525 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.

□ On Thursday, July 6, it was announced that the members of CUPE Local 804 have voted unanimously to move to conciliation after talks with City of Summerside representatives broke down last week. The Local represents municipal and recreation department workers in Summerside who provide water and sewer services; street and sidewalk cleaning and repair; and rink, pool and parks services. Negotiations officially began on June 23 and broke down June 28.

□ On Thursday, July 6, it was announced that the United Transportation Union has signed a strategic alliance with the United Steelworkers' Union (USW) to address a range of common issues in the transportation sector in Canada, including the globalization of the industry. They will work together more closely to share resources where there is mutual advantage, and team up on a number of public policy issues. The USW represents more than 288,000 men and women working in every sector of Canada's economy, including about 40,000 workers in the rail, air, marine, taxi and trucking industries. The UTU has about 5,000 members in Canada.

□ On Saturday, July 1, New Brunswick's minimum wage increased by 20 cents to bring it up to \$6.70 per hour. Saturday's rise is the first of two planned increases to boost the minimum wage to \$7.10 by July 1, 2007.

□ In May, the Federation put out a call to our affiliates for nominations to consider for the

4 worker representative positions on the Charlottetown Employment Insurance Board of Referees. In total the federation received 5 nominations. Recently it was decided that, Leo Cheverie (CUPE), Ray McBride (IBEW), and Michelle Johnston (UFCW) will return to fill 3 of the 4 positions available with the fate of the 4th position to be decided in the fall.

Report From Recent PEI Health Coalition Meeting with Premier Binns

□ On Friday, July 21, As part of the PEI Health Coalition, Federation President Carl Pursey, Vice President Blair Penny, Mary Boyd (MacKillop Centre for Social Justice) and Leo Broderick (Council of Canadians) met with Premier Pat Binns to discuss the National Pharmaceutical Program, Wait Time Solutions in the Public System, and other issues concerning our public healthcare system. The meeting was scheduled to discuss these issues before the Premier left for the Council of the Federation meeting in St. John's, Nfld.

-Here is the letter from the Kathleen Connors, Chairperson of the Canadian Health Coalition on which the meeting was based:

Dear Premier Binns,

-We would like to raise the following two issues with you in anticipation of the Ministerial Task Force report on the National Pharmaceutical Strategy, and on the eve of your upcoming Council of the Federation meeting in St. John's, July 26-28, 2006.

1. Pharmacare and the National Pharmaceutical Strategy:

Key Messages:

-Real progress on the National Pharmaceutical Strategy is urgent. Public health is being endangered and Canadians are not getting value for money. It is time to put adequate drug coverage in place. Canadians need an actual plan, with clearly specified target dates, and a strategy for implementation.

-Canadians expect their federal government to be at the table as a full partner, including sharing in the costs of providing for those currently going without drug coverage. We will work with you to help secure appropriate federal involvement.

-Canada has a serious problem of drug over-spending, misuse, and under-insurance:

Drug over-spending:

- 8-10% increases in drug costs after inflation since 1990's
- \$2.1 billion spent by drug industry on promotion in 2004

Drug misuse:

- 12,000 deaths per year in Canada from Adverse Drug Reactions
- 347% increase in antidepressants (SSRIs in women and children)

Drug under-insurance:

- 4.3 million Canadians have inadequate drug coverage and 600,000 Atlantic Canadians have no drug coverage.

-International research indicates that drug companies engage in large scale marketing malpractices, “ranging from covertly attempting to persuade consumers that they are ill to bribing doctors and misrepresenting the results of safety and efficacy tests on their products.” (Sarah Boseley, “Drug firms a danger to health – report”, Guardian UK, June 26, 2006).

-If pharmaceutical industry malpractices go unchecked and Health Canada permits more direct-to-consumer drug advertising, this will:

1. threaten the sustainability of Medicare with new drugs that are more expensive but no better than existing ones;
2. threaten Canadians' health with unsafe drugs;
3. pose a barrier to access for seniors, retirees, and the working poor;
4. fuel pressure for privatizing health care service delivery and coverage;
5. shift employer drug benefit costs onto workers;
6. undermine the competitive advantage for Canadian manufacturers; and
7. crowd out other health care spending (e.g. home care, primary care...)

-Medicare should cover essential drug costs in the same way it now covers hospitals and physicians. (www.healthcoalition.ca/moreforless.pdf). The solution is to expand public drug insurance and pay only for cost-effective and safe drugs.

2. Wait Time Solutions in the Public System:**Key Message:**

-Care guarantees are misguided and divert scarce resources away from public hospitals to investor-owned, for-profit facilities. This distracts from the real task of fixing the public health care system and encourages the establishment of a private parallel health care system. We encourage you to continue working on public solutions to wait time problems

including better management and coordination of wait lists, as outlined by the Federal Advisor on Wait Times, Dr. Brian Postl.

-Countries with parallel public and private healthcare systems have longer waiting times in the public system than countries with a single-payer system, such as Canada. Turning to private for-profit clinics doesn't make sense — more private facilities does not mean more healthcare providers. The private system doesn't train nurses or doctors; the ones they hire come from the public system. Care guarantees have been tried and abandoned in Norway, Sweden and Denmark because they failed.

-The issue is how to manage wait lists to ensure that patients get care at the right time. Switching the criterion for moving to the front of the line from need to length of time on a wait list is bad for patients. It is important to distinguish between guarantees, which are likely to prove destructive, and wait time benchmarks associated with rigorous monitoring. Setting guidelines for acceptable wait times, and keeping close track of how we are doing in achieving them, is highly desirable.

-More market-based health care and private insurance will not solve wait time problems or unsustainable drug costs – they make them worse. Private health insurance and delivery is more expensive, inefficient, inequitable, and of lower quality. It's time to build on the success and compelling advantage of Canada's single-payer public insurance programs.

□The federation has also been lobbying our Island MP's on these issues along with Child Care and Anti-scab Legislation as part of the CLC's Spring Lobby. Thus far we have met with Wayne Easter and Shawn Murphy.

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

□The C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation will be holding a one day educational at the Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn, Charlottetown, P.E.I. on Thursday, October 12, 2006 8:30 am - 5:00 pm (Lunch provided). The courses being offered are:

The Steward as Leader: Steward Training - Level 3

-The Steward As Leader highlights the basic leadership role of stewards in the local union and the responsibilities that this role entails in the face of a changing union and growing legislative responsibilities. The theme of this course is how to effectively build an union which is fair and inclusive for all members, what kind of commitments and strategies are required from the steward, the executive of the local and the union itself. Legislative responsibilities such as human rights and the duty of fair representation will be

highlighted. The Steward As Leader is third in a series of CLC Stewards courses. Participants should already be well grounded in basic stewards training.

Mobilizing the Membership

-This 9 hour course deals with the very important issue of recruiting and maintaining - local union activists. Discussions focus on how we entice volunteers in our locals to become active, and how we keep them active. The course will also briefly examine how we work within the structure of the labour movement to achieve our goals; how we organize campaigns in our locals, and how we work with other groups, outside our local unions to get our message out. Participants will spend a little time as well perfecting some of the "tricks" used to prepare ourselves and our message for the public and our members.

Registration Information

-Please complete the attached form and send it before September 28, 2006 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 on Thursday October 12, 2006) 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.

Important Dates

Creative Lunchtime Rally in Support of Public Health Care!	Sunday, August 20, 2006	starting at noon Outside the Delta Hotel (18 Queen Street, Charlottetown, PEI)
Panel Discussion on the Dangers of For-Profit Health Care	Monday, August 21, 2006 _____	7 p.m. at the Holy Redeemer Parish (3 Pond Street, Charlottetown, PEI)

Labour Day	Monday, September 4, 2006	4:00 - 6:00 P.M. at Victoria Park, Charlottetown
Deadline for Resolutions for the Federation's Convention	Wednesday, October 4, 2006	
The C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation Educational	Thursday, October 12, 2006 8:30 am - 5:00 pm	Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn Deadline for Registration Thursday, September 28, 2006
Deadline for Nominations for Worker Representatives on the Workers Compensation Board of Directors,	Wednesday, October, 25, 2006. Before 4:30pm	
PEIFL Annual Convention	Friday and Saturday November 3 and 4, 2006	Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn