



PEI Federation of Labour Newsletter March 2005 Issue

Current News

- ❑ On Thursday, April 28, the PEI Federation of Labour in conjunction with the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs and the Workers Compensation Board will hold its Fourth 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 at the Coles building. Everyone is encouraged to attend.
- ❑ On April 14 and 15, the Workers Compensation Board will be holding its Sixth Annual Workplace Health and Safety Conference at the Delta Prince Edward Hotel in Charlottetown. Cost of the two day conference will be \$150/person. The deadline for registrations is April 2, 2005. For more information Phone: 368-5697 toll-free: 1-800-237-5049.
- ❑ On Wednesday, April 13, Bill C-263, an amendment to the Canada Labour Code that would make it illegal for employers to hire replacement workers during strikes or lock-outs in federally regulated undertakings will be going to a vote in the House of Commons. To get more info on the subject go to <http://www.canadianlabour.ca/antiscab.html>
- ❑ On Saturday, March 19, it was announced that East Isle Shipyards has received a \$19 million contract to build two more tug boats for the Danish company Stevns. The contract will begin immediately and employ 100 to 110 workers during the construction phase.
- ❑ On Friday, March 18, Premier Pat Binns announced that Treasurer Mitch Murphy will bring down the provincial budget in the evening of Thursday, April 7.
- ❑ On Thursday, March 17, the provincial government announced that it will provide Garden Province Meats with an additional \$400,000 in an effort to keep the plant in operation for the next 8-12 months. In the meantime, the province and its owner, Maple Leaf Foods, will try to come up with a long-term solution to try to keep the plant, and its 100 jobs, in P.E.I. The options being considered include: purchasing the plant from Maple Leaf; selling all of the plant's assets to Maple Leaf; building a new, regional hog plant much like what was done for beef producers; and shutting it down.

- ❑ On Thursday, March 17, the provincial government announced that it will offer 500 of its employees up to six months salary if they retire from their jobs. The deal is open to employees in the civil service, health and education sectors. Voluntary retirement incentives are being offered to employees who have the required years of service and are vested in their pension plans. In addition to regular retirement pay provisions, approved full-time employees will receive a financial incentive of 26 weeks' pay under the voluntary retirement option. A voluntary severance incentive is also available to employees who are not yet eligible for retirement benefits. Seasonal employees in the civil service who agree to terminate their position by April 30 may also be eligible to receive half of what they earned during their last term of employment. Employee information sessions are scheduled for March 22 and 30 in Charlottetown, March 29 in Summerside and March 31 in Montague.

- ❑ On Tuesday, March 15, it was announced that UPSE recently distributed over \$17,000 to a variety of local community and non-profit groups as part of its UPSE Has a Heart campaign.

- ❑ On Monday, March 14; 2,439 UPSE members of the Civil Service, WCB and IRAC bargaining unit signed a new contract with the province. The agreement provides a pay increase of 7% over three years (April 2004 to March 2007). It also includes other significant non monetary contract improvements.

- ❑ On Monday, March 14, it was announced that the PEI Employment Standards Board is set to begin its annual review of the minimum wage. Submissions must be received by April 8, 2005 and can be sent to HazelWalsh, Secretary, Employment Standards Board, PO Box 2000, 31 Gordon Drive Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8, by fax to 902-368-5476 or by e-mail to hawalsh@gov.pe.ca. Following the review, the Employment Standards Board will make recommendations for consideration by government.

- ❑ On Saturday, March 12, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for February was 10.2% down 0.3% from December's 10.5%. You currently need 525 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.

- ❑ On Tuesday, March 8, the fed held a two day educational at the Howard Johnsons in Charlottetown. Fifty-four affiliate members attended the educational. The courses offered were Steward Level 1 and the Social & Economic Well-Being of Women in the Atlantic Region.

- ❑ On March 3 as part of our action plan, the President and Vice President of the fed met with members of PSAC Local 90154 to update them on fed activities on discuss any concerns they may have with the direction the fed is moving in.

❑ On Tuesday, March 1, representatives of the fed met with Island MP Joe MacGuire. The issues discussed at the meeting were the CLC campaign on Child Care, EI, and Pensions; the Wood Islands ferry subsidy; and the upcoming vote on Anti-scab Legislation.

❑ On Tuesday, March 1, talks between CUPE and the province's five health regions broke down. The negotiations affect 800 health-care workers in four CUPE locals on P.E.I. who work in the dietary, laundry, housekeeping, laboratory, maintenance and other support services in the health sector. The major issue holding up signing of a contract is government's refusal to renew the union's "no layoff" clause. The next step in the process for the union and the employer is conciliation.

❑ On Wednesday, February 23, the federal government announced in its budget that it will cut approximately 2,800 public service jobs. Many of the losses will come after the creation of a government agency called Service Canada, a place where Canadians will be able go to access any federal government service at one office. The savings-review plan would also see public servants buy through a central agency, move offices, and work in smaller areas.

Update on UFCW's Walmart Unionization Drive

❑ On Thursday, March 24, the UFCW filed an application asking the Quebec Labour Relations Commission to delay the closing of the Wal-Mart store in Jonquiere pending rulings on employee dismissals and the content of a collective agreement.

❑ On Monday, March 21, the UFCW tabled two certification applications with the Quebec Labour Relations Commission to represent workers in the main section of the Wal-Mart store in Gatineau, as well as for the store's Tire and Lube Express shop.

❑ On Friday, March 11, it was announced that Auto repair shop employees at the Wal-Mart store in St-Hyacinthe, Que., have been granted union certification by the province's labour relations board. Negotiations with the company on a first contract are set to begin March 16.

❑ On Tuesday, March 8, it was announced that employees at a Wal-Mart store in Windsor, Ont have rejected union certification by a vote of 167 to 59 . The Windsor Wal-Mart voted to unionize once before, back in the 1990s. But no first contract agreement was ever reached and the local membership subsequently collapsed. Both the UFCW and Wal-Mart management have filed unfair labour practice charges, accusing each other of intimidation.

- ❑ On Thursday, February 24, the Quebec labor relations board ruled that Wal-Mart Canada has tried to hinder the formation of a union at a store in Sainte-Foy, Quebec. The board has ordered the retail giant to cease intimidating and harassing employees who wish to exercise their rights under the law. It has also directed that Wal-Mart post the ruling in a conspicuous area in the employees' lunchroom for a period of 30 days.
- ❑ On Thursday, February 24, it was announced that the National Union of Public and General Employees has formalized its commitment to support and cooperate with the UFCW in their national drive to organize workers at Wal-Mart stores across Canada by signing a formal organizing protocol. NUPGE commits to educating its members about the anti-union activities, unfair labour practices, avoidance of labour laws and other strategies used by Wal-Mart to avoid unionization of its workers. The agreement also stipulates that each union will encourage its members to contact Wal-Mart's corporate offices through on-line petitions and letter writing campaigns, as well as its store management in person, to express their disapproval and disgust at Wal-Mart's unfair treatment of its workers and its union busting strategies.

Highlights of the Federation's Brief to the Provincial Cabinet and The Opposition

-On Tuesday, March 8, representatives from the federation of labour presented the fed's annual brief to cabinet to Premier Pat Binns and 5 members of the Provincial Cabinet. The 22 page brief was also presented to members of the opposition on March 15. These are just the highlights of this year's brief. To get a full copy of the brief, please go to our website <http://www.peifl.ca/pages/brief/Brief05.pdf>.

- ❑ **First Collective Agreement Legislation** - In order to provide a disincentive to employer conduct aimed at undermining collective bargaining and to provide an incentive to the parties to bargain a first collective agreement in a timely manner, We urged the provincial government to finally proclaim First Collective Agreement Legislation.
- ❑ **Employment Standards Legislation - Overtime Exemptions** - We urged the Provincial government to not only reduce the standard work week for Community Care Facilities, which is currently under review, but to also remove all overtime exemptions from the Employment Standards Act. They were also urged to reduce the standard work week within the Act from 48 to 40 hours in order to bring PEI more in line with the majority of Canada.
- ❑ **Occupational Health & Safety Issues** - We urged the Provincial Government to

make sure the necessary resources and staff are in place to ensure workers safety on the job. We expressed our concern over how small the fines issued in two recent cases where a serious injury occurred in one and a death occurred in the other were. There was also a concern expressed that safety inspectors are not doing enough to contact onsite union safety representatives before conducting worksite inspections.

❑ **Web Issues** -We commended the government for moving to expand WCB coverage to all workers in this province and moving to base employers rates on accident rates in those occupations. We again demanded that the three-day Waiting Period to be taken out of the WCB Act.

❑ **Provincial Fair Wages for Construction Sector**- In order to stem the out flux of skilled tradesmen from PEI and because in general construction workers on PEI are the lowest paid in Canada by a significant amount, we urged the provincial government to institute provincial fair wage legislation on provincially funded construction projects and to base those wages so union wages are not undermined by contractors paying low wages and providing little or no benefits.

❑ **Recognizing the National Building Code Across PEI** - We urged the government to institute the National Building Code island wide, return Inspection of Electrical installations to compulsory rather than random, and make sure that there are sufficient resources and penalties in place to ensure that these codes are enforceable.

❑ **Caribou Ferry Service and Subsidy Increase** - We urged the provincial government to do what it can to ensure that the federal government not only renews the current subsidy but also makes a long term commitment to the sustainability of this valuable gateway to Eastern PEI.

❑ **Pensions Legislation** - We urged the government to finally proclaim this very important legislation and allow Island workers who have pension plans the protection they deserve.

❑ **Healthy Children - /Childcare / Dental Plan /And Best Start** - We expressed our concern about cutbacks to two key programs which serve children the “Best Start” program and the Children’s Dental Program. We also urged the province to offer a constructive role in promoting and building a strong national child care program.

❑ **Political Appointments to Joint Boards and Commissions, Etc**- We expressed our concern over the way the provincial government has been appointing worker’s representatives to various government boards and councils. The fed feels all worker representatives should come from us. We also expressed major concern that a position as

important to workers as the WCB Worker's Advocate was appointed without any consultation with the fed.

- ❑ **Minimum Wage Should Be a Living Wage** - We urged the government to do what it can to eliminate the working poor on PEI and ensure that all working Islanders can afford to live on the wages they work so hard to earn.

Highlights of Recent Fed Submissions to the Provincial Government

- ❑ Recently the fed submitted two Submissions to the provincial government. The submissions were:
 - ❑ (1) **Submission to the Employment Standards Board** - the Employment Standards Board is currently reviewing the Standard Work Week Exemption Order for Community-care facilities looking at reducing it from 60 hours to 48 hours. On February 28, the fed sent out a submission to the board urging them to not only reduce the standard work week for Community Care Facilities but to also remove all overtime exemptions from the Employment Standards Act. We also urged them to reduce the standard work week within the Act from 48 to 40 hours in order to bring PEI more in line with the majority of Canada.
 - ❑ (2) **Submission to the Forest Council** - The provincial government is currently developing a new forestry policy. On March 16, the fed sent a submission to the Forest Council asking them to envision policies which will stop "job killing" and "unsustainable" harvesting practices. We also asked them to intensify value added efforts so a greater number of jobs are created on P.E.I. by processing the wood on P.E.I.
- ❑ These are just the highlights of the submissions for the full versions please visit our website (www.peifl.ca).

International Women's Day Event and Press Release

- ❑ On Tuesday, March 8, the P.E.I. Federation of Labour's Women's Committee held an event in conjunction with the fed's educational to celebrate International Women's Day. Donalda MacDonald, President CUPE PEI Div. & VP CLC Executive Council did a presentation on Child Care, Improv PEI performed, and a poem on women was read. Approximately 70 people attended the event. The fed would like to thank Women's Committee chairperson Michele Wright and all those who helped her for their work in organizing the event.
- ❑ On Friday, March 4, the fed sent out a press release on International Women's Day.

Here it is:

□“The time has come for a truly national system of early learning and child care, a system based on the four key principles that parents and child care experts say matter – quality, universality, accessibility and development.” says Michelle Wright, chair of the PEI Federation of Labour Women’s Committee

□"On the occasion of International Women’s Day, we are turning our attention to a subject that impacts all families, but most especially women, and that subject is a lack of quality, regulated child-care services." says Ms Wright

□ The situation of women in our society and our province has changed. The era when the family unit consisted mostly of a father as the breadwinner and a stay-at-home mother are in the past. Today in most families both parents are in the workforce. Plus a growing number of families are single-parent based and the parent in the majority of cases, is a woman, and most often one who is in the workforce.

□"In PEI, women in the labour movement and in society, have been asking for a National Child Care Program. Too many of our children are in non-regulated child-care facilities, a certain percentage are cared for by family members, neighbours, or in child-care facilities which does not meet any standards of quality" continues Ms. Wright

□ For women, quality child-care services offer numerous advantages. In fact, quality child-care assures a better balance between work life and family commitments, better job opportunities in which to earn a living throughout one’s time in the workforce and at retirement, an adequate income.

□ For employers, quality child-care services ensure a reduction in absenteeism and lateness resulting from family commitments and greater productivity because of reduced stress in workers who are feeling more secure about their children’s well-being

□ We are asking the federal government to put in place and for the provinces to step up and agree to:

1-A publicly funded, sustainable system for quality child care parents can count on and afford. Government provides most of the funding directly to the programs, giving them a stable operating base. In Quebec, for example, parents pay a maximum \$7 a day and government pays the rest.

2- A Child Care Act that guarantees standards and the principles of quality, universality, accessibility, developmental programming and inclusiveness.

3- Public accountability tied to provincial and territorial five-year plans that contain goals, timelines and targets, and a way to measure real progress in developing comprehensive family- and centre-based child care services.

4- Money for children, so that in the future every public dollar goes directly into services. Services should be expanded in the non-profit sector, with a transition plan developed for existing commercial centres.

□" It is about time that our governments, both federal and provincial make the right choice and give women another piece of legislation that will bring them a little bit closer to been considered equal in our society" concludes Ms. Wright

The Fed's Press Release on the Wood Islands Ferry Service

□ On Tuesday, March 22, it was announced that a new five-year contract between the Northumberland Ferries Limited and Transport Canada has been signed. The new agreement will see NFL's subsidy increase from \$5 million in the 2005-06 season to \$5.1 million the following year to \$5.2 million for the subsequent years which will allow the ferry to operate a full season from May to December with two ships at the traditional level of service.

□ On Tuesday, March 15, when it looked like the subsidy maybe cut, the fed released a press release in support of the ferry system and the CAW members that work there. The fed also worked with the Save The Ferry group. Here is the press release:

□ "The current federal proposal for the Wood Island Ferry system shows a real lack of respect from the federal Government to the present and future economic importance of the Northumberland Ferry system to the Island economy" says Carl Pursey President of the PEI Federation of Labour.

□ Not only does the Wood Island ferry provide direct employment but it also is a key component to the present and future economic development of Kings County.

□ The Wood Islands ferry also affects the Island economy by providing a more efficient way to transport goods to Nova Scotia and is the Island's only other way to move vehicles on and off the Island. The proposed significant reduction of this valuable service will have a major economic impact to the whole Island and could be disastrous should anything ever happen to the Confederation Bridge.

□ "There is no logic behind the reduction that the federal government is proposing. The

minor savings that the federal government proposal calls for, will in the long run have no, significant impact on federal coffers yet it will significantly effect PEI” states Pursey.

☐The PEI Federation of Labour calls on the federal government to remove their current proposal from the table and return with a proposal that will commit to maintaining this valuable gateway to Eastern PEI for the long-term.

☐“There are ways for the federal government to save money but this is not one of them. The affect this will have on the ferry workers and their families specifically and the Island in general, makes the federal proposal totally reprehensible especially to an area that has shown its support to this government many times. It is now time for Paul Martin and our Island MP’s to show their support for Kings County.”, concludes Pursey.

Update on the Fed’s Labour Movement Donation Drive to Establish a Day of Mourning Monument

☐ On Saturday, November 6, 2004, at our annual convention the federation kicked off its labour movement donation drive to pay for a Day of Mourning Monument to honour all workers who have been injured or have died on worksites across PEI to be installed around Province House hopefully by the next Day of Mourning ceremony. We feel that it is very important for labour to come together and supply this very important monument to workers who paid the ultimate price. The goal for the drive is \$8,000.

☐ On Monday, January 10, 2005, Charlottetown City Council passed a resolution at their regular monthly Council meeting to provide upkeep and maintenance on the Day of Mourning Monument.

☐ Thus far, the fed has received donations from:

Union	AMOUNT
Bricklayers Local 1	\$100.00
Canadian Labour Congress	\$500.00
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 501	\$100.00
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 805	\$500.00
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1145	\$100.00
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1779	\$185.00

Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1870	\$287.00
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3324	\$50.00
Canadian Union of Postal Workers Charlottetown Local	\$150.00
Canadian Union of Postal Workers Summerside Local	\$100.00
Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union Local 61	\$10.00
Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union Local 401	\$100.00
International Association of Machinists Local 1934	\$100.00
IATSE Local 906a	\$40.00
International Union of Operating Engineers Local 942	\$500.00
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1432	\$500.00
PEI Teacher's Federation	\$100.00
Canada Employment and Immigration Union PSAC Local 90154	\$50.00
Union of Canadian Transport Employees PSAC Local 60905	\$100.00
Union of Parks Canada PSAC Local 90023	\$80.00
Union of Taxation Employees PSAC Local 90002	\$200.00
Union of Veteran Affairs Employees PSAC Local 90001	\$750.00
United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America - Local 1338	\$300.00
Total	\$4,902.00

The Federation of Labour would like to thank all of the affiliated, and nonaffiliated locals and the CLC who have donated to the cause so far and we hope that the rest of the Island Labour movement will show their support for this very important cause.

So far the average contribution has been approximately a dollar per member but any

contribution would be greatly appreciated.

☐ The commitment that has been shown to this important project thus far has been overwhelming with all the pieces coming together very nicely. With the City of Charlottetown's generous offer of upkeep and maintenance on the monument and the Island Labour movement showing tremendous support for our donation drive, the only piece that remains is securing the land for the monument and at our recent brief to cabinet we were assured by the province that the deal for the land should be completed shortly.

☐ If you wish to receive copies of our brochure or want to arrange for a fed representative to come to your meeting to discuss the monument. Please contact the fed's office. If you wish to keep up on what is happening with our drive please visit <http://www.peifl.ca/pages/dom2/dom.html>

Important Dates

Provincial Budget	Thursday, April 7, 2005	
Bill C-263, Anti-Scab Legislation	On Wednesday, April 13, 2005	Will Be Going to a Vote in the House of Commons.
One Week Atlantic Labour Law Course	April 10 - 15, 2005	Memaramcook Institute, Saint Joseph, NB
WCB Sixth Annual Workplace Health and Safety Conference.	April 14 and 15, 2005. The deadline for registrations is April 2, 2005.	at the Delta Prince Edward Hotel in Charlottetown.
Day of Mourning for Workers Killed and Injured on the Job	Thursday, April 28, 2004	At 7:00 pm at Province House
Labour College of Canada Graduate Program	May 9 - June 3, 2005	Algonquin College ,Ottawa
25th Annual CUPE Convention	May 19 - 20, 2005	Slemon Park, Summerside
24th CLC Constitutional Convention	June 13 - 17, 2005	Credential Deadline May 13, 2005

CLC Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation Educational	October 13 - 14, 2005	
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