



# PEI Federation of Labour Newsletter November 2005 Issue

## Current News

- ❑ The PEI Federation of Labour would like to welcome CUPE Local 1770 (School Board Administrative Support employees) and its 124 members into the federation as our newest affiliate.
  
- ❑ On January 04, 2006, the PEI Area Council PSAC will be holding an All Candidates Forum on Labour Issues at 6: 45 PM at the Best Western Charlottetown. A Candidate from each Political Party will be in Attendance. The Moderator will be Heather Brooker National President, National Component, PSAC. Everyone is invited.
  
- ❑ On Tuesday December 6, Memorial Services for the National Day of Remembrance and Action of the Montreal Massacre and Violence Against Women will be held at Memorial Hall, Confederation Centre of the Arts at 12 noon Charlottetown. The Summerside service will also take place on the 6th at 12 noon at the Trinity United Church. Everyone is welcome to attend these services.
  
- ❑ On Sunday, December 4, 2005, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for November was 10.6% down .5% from October's 11.1% . You currently need 490 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.
  
- ❑ On Monday, November 28, 2005, the minority Liberal federal government was toppled by an united opposition 171-133 in a vote of non-confidence. The date for the next Federal Election has been set for January 23, 2006.
  
- ❑ On Monday, November 28, 2005, Islanders voted against the mixed-member proportional system by a vote of 20,515 votes (63.58 % and 25 ridings ) for the No side to 11,750 votes (36.42 % and 2 ridings) for the Yes side. Only 1/3 of the roughly 97,000 voters who would had been eligible turned out to cast a ballot. The federation would like to thank the Canadian Labour Congress and the Newfoundland, British Columbia, and Manitoba Federations of Labour for their generous financial donations to the Yes Campaign. We would also like to thank Yes Coalition co-ordinator Mark Greenan and the rest of the Yes Coalition for all their hard work and dedication to the cause.

❑ On Thursday, November 24, Fifteen groups including the PEI Federation of Labour held a press conference at the Basilica Rec Centre in Charlottetown in support of the Yes on MMP Campaign. Vice President, Blair Penny spoke on behalf of the federation at the conference. Other groups represented at the conference included CUPE, the Council of Canadians, Cooper Institute, MacKillop Centre for Social Justice, NDP, P.E.I. Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Green Party, Canadian Taxpayers' Federation, and Every Vote Counts.

❑ On Thursday, November 24, The provincial government signed a \$20.4 million, 5-year child-care deal with the federal government. The deal is a two-part agreement, with the agreement in principle signed today and the deal on implementation of the new system to be negotiated later. The Province will immediately receive \$3 million through the program , \$3.4 million next year and \$ 4 million for each of the next three years which will be used to set up new programs and improve on programs already in place. The deal also includes an extra \$500, 000 that could be used to support programs like the Best Start program. The money being allocated under the deal is going only to licensed day-care facilities. PEI was the ninth province to sign onto the program.

❑ On Thursday, November 24, Island MLA's passed changes to PEI's Marriage Act to bring P.E.I.'s legislation in line with federal legislation which allows for same-sex couples to marry. Bill 12 also designates marriage commissions and provides for a member of the clergy to refuse to solemnize any marriage that is not in accordance with the person's religious beliefs.

❑ On Monday, November 21, the Province announced that it intends to merge ambulance services into one big operation on P.E.I. Currently there are 16 ambulances on P.E.I., operated by five independent companies. Total annual cost of these services for the government is \$4 million. All the independent contracts on the Island expire in March. The Province expects to have a new system in place in April.

❑ On Wednesday, November 16, the province announced during the speech from the throne that they plan to build a new hospital in western Prince Edward Island. The new facility is expected to cost \$35 million to build and will replace existing hospitals in the area. The government also announced that it will create a new Division of Public Safety to oversee the management of the provincial fire marshal, EMO and 911 organizations.

❑ On Tuesday, November 15, it was announced that Aliant Inc. is outsourcing 129 permanent jobs from its call centres to a non-unionized company, and will also drop about 100 temporary employees from the payroll. Aliant will reassign the permanent employees affected into other jobs. However, the contracts of close to 100 temporary and student employees won't be renewed in March. The workers affected provide

help-desk support for dial-up Internet, high-speed Internet, telephone repair and mobility repair at call centres in Halifax, Moncton and St. John's, N.L. Aliant is in talks with ICT Group Inc.'s operation in Miramichi to shift the work of the permanent employees to the New Brunswick operation. ICT is a multinational call centre operator, headquartered in Newtown, Pa., and has operations throughout Atlantic Canada. Employees at one of the ICT Group's two call centres in Miramichi currently provide the help-desk service for a portion of Aliant's dial-up Internet customers. Aliant hasn't ruled out further outsourcing.

☐ On Tuesday, November 15, 18 unions representing a combined membership of more than 300,000 federal employees went to court in a bid to force the federal government to repay billions of dollars that they allege was taken from their pension funds. In 1999, it is alleged the federal government transferred more than \$30 billion of pension fund surpluses from three groups of workers — the RCMP, the military and the public service to the government's general revenues. It is expected to be a long battle.

☐ On Monday, November 14, Elmer MacFadyen, Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs announced that the Binns government is not in favour of a two-tier minimum wage for PEI. This issue was brought to the federation's annual convention in an emergency resolution against the two-tier minimum wage system that was carried by the delegates. Objections to a two-tier minimum wage were expressed to Minister MacFadyen directly by delegates at the convention after he finished his speech.

☐ On Tuesday, November 8, it was announced that provincial Health minister Chester Gillan has also added Minister of Social Services and Seniors to his list of responsibilities.

☐ On Saturday, November 5, it was announced that the negotiating team for over 800 health-care workers represented by CUPE has agreed to bring back a tentative deal reached with the provincial government to their membership without a recommendation to accept or reject. The negotiating teams were in their third round of conciliation talks when the tentative deal was struck. CUPE health workers have been without a collective agreement since March 31, 2004. There will be four meetings across the province to present the tentative agreement to the affected CUPE members over the next five weeks.

## **Oil Discount For Affiliate Members From Palmer Fuels**

☐ The Federation was recently contacted by Palmer Fuels. They are offering all members of unions affiliated with the federation a **4 cents / litre discount** on furnace oil and a **\$100.00 bonus** for initial sign up on a new account. The \$100.00 bonus will be applied to your account after you have purchased 1,000 litres of heating oil.

□They also have a 250 litre no-runout guarantee, will bleed your furnace free of charge, and deliver across the Island. **(Please note that in order to get the discount you must be on automatic delivery.)** To receive an application just call 1-902-566-4391 (hit option #2) and ask for Gary McLaine.

## **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 two day educational at the Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn, Charlottetown, P.E.I. on Thursday, March 9, 2006 - 8:30 am - 5:00 pm (Lunch provided). The courses being offered are:

### **Shop Steward Level 2: Representation Skills and Tools**

-This 9 hour second level course builds on the framework of steward skills established in our Level 1 course. The course will focus on representation issues:

- \* knowing your membership;
- \* working with your union executive, grievance preparation;
- \* problem solving, conflict resolution and representation skills.

### **Global Solidarity**

-Everything seems to be going global. Are you losing ground in a sea of global change? Learn new ways of looking at the world and gain practical instruction in how to make links with workers in other countries. Understand who benefits, who doesn't and why, under the present economic structures, then move to what we need to change. The 9 hour course will be dynamic, fast paced and challenging.

### **Registration Information**

-Please complete the registration form and send it before February 16, 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) 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](mailto:peifed@pei.aibn.com)

or

Jean-Claude Basque at 506-861-7086 or email: [jcbasque@clc-ctc.ca](mailto:jcbasque@clc-ctc.ca)

## **Federation's Press Release On the Recent Labour Relations Board Decision Against Polar Foods**

□ On Tuesday, November 8 , it was announced that the P.E.I. Labour Relations Board has ruled that Polar Foods owes \$500,000 to a group of 150 former employees who were laid off for trying to form an union. In 2001 after the UFCW began organizing unions at the two fish plants in Beach Point and Souris, Polar closed them and shipped lobster that was due to be processed at those plants to another plant in Tignish. The labour board has ruled that the company has to pay the workers for lost wages. Those payments range between \$2,000 and \$10,000 per worker. Ernst and Young, Polar's receiver, is responsible for the payouts. However, it can appeal the board's decision.

□ On Thursday, November 24, Community and Cultural Affairs Minister Elmer Mac Fadyen announced that an order has been issued under the Employment Standards Act and that the former Polar Foods workers will be paid from assets left over from Polar's collapse. Ernst and Young who had set aside money in case of a settlement will be required to make payment to the employment standards regulators within 10 days of the order being issued.

□ In response to this decision the Federation released a press release on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Here it is:

□ The PEI Federation of Labour considers the P.E.I. Labour Relations Board ruling that Polar Foods owes \$500,000 to a group of 150 former employees who were laid off in 2001 for trying to form a union not only a victory for those workers but also victory for all workers on PEI.

-To that end, the Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour would like to congratulate UFCW Local 864 and those former Polar Foods workers in Beach Point and Souris who worked so hard and fought so long to protect their basic human right to unionize.

-“Polar Foods blatant anti-unionism in this case is reprehensible. The right to unionize is one of our basic and greatest freedoms and for a company to layoff workers because they try to exercise this freedom cannot be tolerated. I am very happy that the Labour Relations Board's decision upholds this freedom.” states Carl Pursey, President of the Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour.

-The federation hopes that the Labour Relations Board's decision in this case will act as a further deterrent to other companies who would try to step on their employee's rights so

that no other employees will have to go through such a hard and long battle to get the justice that is so rightfully theirs.

-We also hope that Ernest and Young will have the decency not to appeal this decision and allow these workers to finally celebrate their victory.

## **Information on the Recent MP Lobby on Bill C-55**

□ On Monday, November 21, the House of Commons unanimously voted in favour of Bill C-55, the Wage Earner Protection Program Act. The adoption of Bill C-55 will allow the creation of a Wage Earner Protection Fund to guarantee up to \$3,000 to workers who suffer lost wages when employers declare bankruptcy; it will affirm the sanctity of collective agreements against bankruptcy proceedings; and it will secure the integrity of unpaid pension contributions at the time of the bankruptcy.

-The CLC has stated that Bill C-55 is a great start but they would have liked to have seen the wage protection ceiling of \$3,000 set higher and more protection for workers' pensions. While there is a small recognition that if a company failed to make contributions according to the pension agreement, this would have some priority, it does not go far enough. Industry Canada has stated that 10,000 to 15,000 workers each year have unpaid wage claims due to bankruptcies. Thousands of others have massive cuts in benefits as "secured creditors" are paid over the needs of working families.

-Recently representatives of the federation and the Atlantic Division of the CLC met with Island MP's Wayne Easter (November 7) and Shawn Murphy (November 10) as part of the CLC's nationwide lobby to get MP's to vote for BILL C-55 when it finally came before the House of Commons. Both seemed supportive of the Bill and to most of the amendments to the bill that the CLC was lobbying for. Unfortunately, for the most part the amendments were not adopted. Still the adoption of this bill is considered a victory for workers. The amendments we discussed with the MP's were:

- 1. to increase the wage protection ceiling from \$3,000 to \$5,000.**
- 2. to eliminate the 3 month work tenure provision to access the fund. This waiting period would disqualify thousands of workers; mostly temporary, contract & those with less than 3 months employment.**
- 3. the need for the federal government to address and eliminate the massive debts that employers have been allowed to accumulate in pension funds.**
- 4. the need to make it clear that courts cannot override collective agreements during bankruptcy proceedings**

-On Friday, November 25, 2005, Bill C-55 received Royal Assent. However, the Standing

Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce requested and received the Government's assurance that Bill C-55 would not be proclaimed in force prior to June 30, 2006, at the earliest. The see Bill-55 as adopted go to:  
[http://www.parl.gc.ca/38/1/parlbus/chambus/house/bills/government/C-55/C-55\\_3/C-55\\_cover-E.html](http://www.parl.gc.ca/38/1/parlbus/chambus/house/bills/government/C-55/C-55_3/C-55_cover-E.html)

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

☐ On Tuesday, November 8, 2005, the Federation's President and Vice President met with the Charlottetown City Council and gave a short presentation to Council on the monument in our attempt to get them to reject the Heritage Board's recommendation to not allow the monument in Queen's Square.

☐ On Monday, November 14, 2005, Charlottetown City Council voted on two resolutions concerning the monument. They voted 7-3 to reject the Heritage Board's recommendation of not allowing the Day of Mourning Monument to be placed in Queen's Square. It should have been 8-2 ( with Councillors Phillip Brown and Kim Devine against) but after making a really good speech in favour of the monument Councillor Mitch Tweel misread the question and pushed the wrong button. He tried to have his vote changed but was turned down. The second resolution to approve the monument was accepted by Council by a 9-1 vote with Councilor Kim Devine as the lone dissenting vote.

### **Press Release the PEI Federation of Labour Released in Reaction to City Council's Approval of the Day of Mourning Monument.**

☐ Here is the press release the federation put out on November 15:

-The PEI Federation would like to express its deep appreciation for Charlottetown City Council's decision to approve the Day of Mourning monument's placement on the Coles building location and thank all of the Councillors who voted in support of and spoke on behalf of the monument at their recent Council meeting.

-“We are very glad that Council gave such strong approval because this is an important monument for all workers on PEI.” States Carl Pursey President of the PEI Federation of Labour “It is meant not only as a respectful memorial to all workers who have lost their lives on Island worksites but also as a stark reminder to all Island workers and employers of how important workplace safety is.

-The importance of this monument to the Island's labour movement has been shown in

many ways but especially in the labour movement's generosity. The Federation had no problem meeting and exceeding our monetary goal with 32 union locals and labour organizations making donations and the Carpenter's union donating not only money but also their labour and expertise to install the monument's base.

-“The federation has felt from the beginning that it was very important for the Island labour movement to embrace this monument and truly make this a workers monument supplied by workers. I am very proud of the generosity shown by PEI's labour movement” states Pursey

-“I am also very happy that we finally can put this monument in a place that affords it the respect, visibility, and security it deserves and in addition to City Council I would like to thank the Province specifically Ron MacMillan and Parks Canada for securing that place.” States Pursey

-We would also like to thank the Injured Workers Organizational Committee for their recent press release in support of the monument.

-In conclusion, We would like to state that the federation from day one has tried very hard to make sure that the process of getting the monument installed was followed correctly and never wanted that process to overshadow the importance and respect that we feel for this monument and the people and families that it is meant to honour.

-The Federation hopes to have the monument in place as soon as possible and we hope that all Islanders get a chance to visit the monument and take sometime to reflect on what it represents once it is installed.

**☐ With the final obstacle out of the way the Monument was put in place on Monday, December 19, 2005. With the date of placement of the monument being so close to the Christmas season and with winter now upon us it has been decided to hold off on the dedication ceremony. The ceremony will now take place to coincide with the April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006 Day of Mourning Ceremony.**

☐ The Federation of Labour would like to thank all of the affiliated and nonaffiliated locals and the CLC who donated to the cause. The support and generosity the Island labour movement has shown this project is deeply appreciated and the federation would like to thank the following unions for their generous donations:

<b>Union</b>
<b>Bricklayers Local 1</b>

<b>Canadian Labour Congress</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees PEI Division</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 501</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 805</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1145</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1770</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1779</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1870</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2523</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3324</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Postal Workers Charlottetown Local</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Postal Workers Summerside Local</b>
<b>Communications, Energy &amp; Paperworkers Union Local 61</b>
<b>Communications, Energy &amp; Paperworkers Union Local 401</b>
<b>International Association of Machinists Local 1934</b>
<b>IATSE Local 906a</b>
<b>International Union of Operating Engineers Local 942</b>
<b>International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1432</b>
<b>PEI Nurse's Union</b>
<b>PEI Teacher's Federation</b>
<b>PEI Union of Public Sector Employees</b>
<b>Public Service Alliance of Canada Area Council</b>
<b>Canadian Employment and Immigration - PSAC Local 90152</b>
<b>Canadian Employment &amp; Immigration - PSAC Local 90153</b>
<b>Canadian Employment and Immigration - PSAC Local 90154</b>
<b>Union of Canadian Transport Employees PSAC Local 60905</b>

<b>Union of Parks Canada PSAC Local 90023</b>
<b>Union of Taxation Employees PSAC Local 90002</b>
<b>Union of Veteran Affairs Employees PSAC Local 90001</b>
<b>United Brotherhood of Carpenters &amp; Joiners of America - Local 1338</b>
<b>United Food and Commercial Workers - Local 864</b>

-For pictures of the monument drive please visit  
<http://www.peifl.ca/pages/dom2/dom.html>

### **Important Dates**

<b>Immigration Forum</b>	<b>November 2, 2005</b>	<b>Rodd's Charlottetown Hotel</b>
<b>PEIFL Annual Convention Friday and Saturday November 4 and 5, 2005</b>	<b>Friday and Saturday November 4 and 5, 2005</b>	<b>Dutch Inn</b>
<b>UPSE Annual Convention</b>	<b>Friday and Saturday November 18 and 19, 2005</b>	<b>Delta Prince Edward Hotel</b>
<b>Plebiscite on Electoral Reform</b>	<b>Monday, November 28 ,</b>	
<b>National Day of Remembrance and Action of the Montreal Massacre and Violence Against Women</b>	<b>Tuesday, December 6<sub>2</sub> 2005</b>	<b>12 noon at Memorial Hall, Confederation Centre of the Arts</b>
<b>The Summerside Service for the National Day of Remembrance and Action of the Montreal Massacre and Violence Against Women</b>	<b>Tuesday, December 6<sub>2</sub> 2005</b>	<b>at 12 noon at the Trinity United Church.</b>

<b>All Candidates Forum on Labour Issues Sponsored by the PEI Area Council PSAC</b>	<b>January 04, 2006</b>	<b>6: 45 PM Best Western Charlottetown, 238 Grafton St. Charlottetown, PEI</b>
<b>Federal Election</b>	<b>January 23, 2006</b>	
<b>International Women's Day</b>	<b>Wednesday, March 8, 2006</b>	
<b>CLC Atlantic Region and PEI. Federation Educational</b>	<b>Thursday, March 9, 2006</b>	<b>8:30am - 5:00pm Howard Johnson Dutch Inn, Charlottetown</b>
<b>National Day of Mourning for Workers Injured or Killed on the Job</b>	<b>Friday, April 28, 2006</b>	