



# PEI Federation of Labour Newsletter October 2005 Issue

## Current News

- ❑ 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 Monday, November 28 , Islanders will vote in a plebiscite on whether the province's electoral system will change from the current first-past-the-post system to a two-ballot, mixed-member proportional system. Under the proposed mixed-member proportional system, 17 MLA's would be elected in their district, and another 10 would be elected from ranked lists provided by the parties, based on the results of the second ballot which will establish the percentage of the vote the party gets provincially.
  
- ❑ On Friday, November 4 and Saturday, November 5, the PEI Federation of Labour will hold its 41<sup>st</sup> annual convention at the Howard Johnson's Dutch Inn in North River. The following positions will be up for election at convention: 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Treasurer, and VP (women). If your local has not received your credentials by September 15, 2005 or your local wishes to submit a resolution to convention please contact our office at 368-3068; fax at 368-3192 or e-mail at: [peifed@pei.aibn.com](mailto:peifed@pei.aibn.com). The deadline for resolutions will be October 5, 2005.
  
- ❑ At our convention, the federation will be electing a new VP(women) due to the recent resignation of Michele Wright (UPSE). The federation would like to thank Ms. Wright for all her efforts in the role and we hope to work with her again in the near future. We would also like to wish UFCW representative on our Executive Council Vimy Gregory a happy retirement and thank him for all his efforts on behalf of the federation.
  
- ❑ On Friday October 28, Quebec and Ottawa signed a five-year \$1.1-billion deal on day care that will have few strings attached and recognizes Quebec's already existing daycare network that is considered a model for other provinces. Seven similar agreements in principle have been reached with Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Newfoundland Labrador, Nova Scotia, Alberta and British Columbia.

□ On Tuesday October 25; Carl Pursey, President of the PEI Federation of Labour; Kirsten Lund, executive director of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women; and Mark Greenan, Yes on MMP co-ordinator; as part of the Yes coalition held a press conference to launch the Yes on MMP campaign on PEI. The coalition is hoping Islanders will vote for the mixed member proportional system in the November 28<sup>th</sup> plebiscite. The Coalition is also made up of Island members of CUPE and other unions, the NDP, the Green Party, the Council of Canadians and other individuals devoted to the cause. At the conference, Carl stated that the federation has been pressing for proportional representation since 2000 and that the federation sees MMP as a way of getting better representation in the Legislature.

□ On Tuesday October 25, Premier Pat Binns set the final threshold factors that will be used to determine a winner in November's plebiscite on electoral reform. The premier said that 60 % of Islanders and 60 % or 16 of the 27 districts of the Island's electoral districts would have to vote in favour of mixed-member proportional representation before the government would consider making changes to the electoral system. The threshold for the districts is set at the traditional 50 % plus 1. He also announced that there will be no change in the decision to reduce the traditional number of polling stations by 75 per cent. Meaning that there will be only 2 or 3 polling stations set up in each district, instead of the 12 per district in provincial elections. He did however back away from setting a level for voter turnout. The Commission on P.E.I.'s Electoral Future had recommended a simple 50% plus 1 threshold.

□ On Tuesday October 25, the Provincial Government announced that the entire provincial IT structure is being reviewed for efficiencies in hopes of saving up to \$ 3 million from the provincial budget by creating a shared services organization to run the government's computer and phone systems. The planning process will consider changes to management, staff roles and responsibilities to reflect the new structure and related operations. An IT optimization planning team, representing various ministries and UPSE representatives, has been developed to review current IT operations and build an implementation strategy including a transition plan.

□ On Monday October 24, the Conference Board of Canada announced that it expected Oil and gas workers to receive the largest average wage increases of all non-union employees in 2006 at 4.3 per cent because the energy industry is one of the hardest hit by a shortage of skilled labour. Non-unionized workers in the public sector are expected to see average pay increases of 3.6 per cent while private-sector workers are expected to see 3.4 per cent for 2006. Unionized employees in both the public and private sectors can expect average increases of 2.5 per cent. Alberta is expected to lead the increases with an average of 3.9 per cent, as it hikes wages to recruit labourers.

- ❑ On Monday, October 24, 2005, the Federal Labour Standards Review Commission held public hearings in Charlottetown. The mandate of the Commission is to conduct a comprehensive review of Part III of the Canada Labour Code which sets out labour standards for workers and employers under federal jurisdiction. Federal labour standards currently address such issues as hours of work, minimum wage, unjust dismissals and annual vacation.
  
- ❑ On Thursday October 20, in a 7-0 decision, The Supreme Court of Canada rejected a claim by Quebec that the federal government has been poaching on provincial turf by providing maternity and adoption benefits under the Employment Insurance Act. The case was sparked three years ago by a Quebec government demand to set up its own system of parental benefits. Had the Supreme Court ruled the other way, it would have called into question the federal EI parental leave payments that still apply in all provinces except Quebec where the provincial and federal governments have since reached a political deal that gives Quebec the power to set up its own system. It would also have undermined a wide range of other benefits, such as payments to sick and injured workers, compassionate leave, paid job training and compensation for jury duty, as Quebec had argued that federal jurisdiction over EI is limited to compensating people who lose their jobs for strictly economic reasons.
  
- ❑ Wednesday, October 19, it was announced that Wal-Mart Canada is challenging a pair of recent decisions by Quebec's labour board favourable to unions at both the Quebec Labour Relations Board and Quebec Superior Court levels. Wal Mart is appealing the board's recent ruling that the retailer failed to prove its claim that the decision to close its store in Saguenay, Que was due to financial troubles at the outlet. It is also appealing the board's decision to deny its bid to get the names of employees at the outlet who were in favour of organizing.
  
- ❑ On Friday October 14, the Commission on PEI's Electoral Future announced that due to public input, they have removed the idea of a candidate running for office in both a district and on the party list (dual candidacy) from their list of considerations. The Commission will also stress in its final report, that each party should ensure that it's provincial list of ten candidates reflects the makeup of the population of the province.
  
- ❑ On October 13 and 14, the C.L.C. Atlantic Region and the Federation held a two day educational at the Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn. The educational was very well attended with 43 attendees. The courses offered were Clear Language For Union Communications and Health & Safety - New Strategies for Building Enforcement and Bargaining. The next educational is tentatively scheduled for March with Globalization and Steward Level II being offered.

□ On Thursday October 13, it was announced that the P.E.I. government is exploring the possibility of lowering the minimum wage for untrained workers and people who receive tips or gratuities as part of their job. This two-tier approach has been adopted in four other provinces, including neighbouring Nova Scotia where workers who are new to a job and don't have any experience can be paid 45 cents less than other minimum wage earners. The government committee appointed to look at the issue is expected to report by the end of December. The Executive Council of the Federation will be bringing a resolution to our convention against a two- tier minimum wage.

□ On Tuesday October 11, the Public Service Alliance of Canada expressed its disappointment with Canada Post's decision to appeal a decision by a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in a 22-year old pay equity complaint. On October 7, the Tribunal awarded at least \$150-million in pay and interest to about 6,000 current and former Canada Post clerical workers. PSAC's case against Canada Post is the longest running federal pay equity complaint to date.

□ On Friday, October 7, Elmer MacFadyen, Minister responsible for Labour, announced that Executive Council has approved the recommendation of the Employment Standards Board to increase the minimum wage in Prince Edward Island from \$6.80 to \$7.15 effective April 1, 2006.

□ On Tuesday October 4, it was announced that Veterans Affairs Canada employees, along with guests from other federal departments, will kick off the 2005 Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign with a one-day blitz on Thursday, Oct. 6. Each year the government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign raises thousands of dollars for the United Way, 16 Health partners agencies, and other registered charities. In 2004, federal government employees in PEI raised \$194,163. Many other fundraising activities are planned during the campaign such as a pancake breakfast, silent auction and bingos.

□ On Monday October 3, it was announced that the United Way 2005 provincial government employees' campaign recently got underway with the annual kick-off barbecue. \$1,226.14 was raised, exceeding last year's total by more than \$200. In addition to the barbecue, there was a mini-putt, a raffle, door prizes and a silent auction on a \$200 gift certificate from Southport Home Hardware. The campaign goal this year is \$115,000. Future fundraising events include a pancake breakfast, followed by the Halloween Dress with a Difference Day and a 50/50 draw that will take place in November/December.

## **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.

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.

## **Highlights of the Federation's Recent Submissions on GMO's and Immigration to the Provincial Government.**

In our submission on GMO's, we urged the government to ensure we have a food system which will guarantee food security for all Canadians and in which all people have safe, nutritionally adequate and personally acceptable foods available at all times and that these foods are produced and processed in a manner that is sustainable over the long term and maintains a decent standard of living for food producers and workers in the food industry.

-We also urged the Province to act cautiously as there has been no testing for long term effects of GMO's and a lack of information from Health Canada and we warned them that transmission of GMO crops to organic and other non GMO crops could hurt those sectors and that many markets, including Europe, are cautious about letting GMO crops into their marketplace. We also attached the CLC's Environment Department report on GMO's, Mutated Food and Irradiated Food to our submission.

In our Immigration submission, we asked that the Provincial Immigration policy reflect the need to recognize, attract, and integrate skilled professionals and tradespeople into the Canadian workforce and society.

-We addressed some of the issues immigrants face when they come to PEI and some of the issues the government must address in order to make immigration to PEI more attractive and accessible and we asked that the Province strengthen programs and policies which address prejudice, racism and discrimination in our workplaces, schools and other settings.

-We also asked the Province to address the issue of out-migration of workers from P.E.I. including the youth of this province. Many leave although trained in the trades because

wages and benefits are greater elsewhere. The same is true of many other occupations. The adoption of a fair wage policy for trades workers in this province may assist in keeping trades workers here. The submissions should be up on our website shortly.

## **The Premier's Response to the Federation's Letter on Health Care Restructuring**

□ On May 30, the Federation's President and Vice President and representatives from the Atlantic Region of the CLC met with representatives of UPSE, CUPE, IUOE, and the Nurse's Union who are being affected by the restructuring of the Provincial Health Care System to get an update on what is going on and determine how the federation can be supportive of these unions and their members.

-In response to this meeting the fed sent out a letter to Premier Binns urging the provincial government to not lose sight of the impact these cost-cutting measures will have on the affected employees, their families, the public, and the Island economy and asking them to realize that any short term savings that may come from eliminating jobs in PEI's Health Care System will come with a high long-term price tag for the Island's Health Care System and economy. The letter we sent appeared in June, 2005's issue of our newsletter.

-Here is the Premier's response to that letter:

October 12, 2005

Dear Mr. Pursey:

-Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the restructuring of PEI's Health Care System. I apologize for the delayed response.

-As you are undoubtedly aware, health costs have increased by almost 50% over the past five years and each year they continue to grow at a significant rate. In this past fiscal year the health and social services expenditure was 46% of the total provincial program spending. We believe that health services can be delivered more effectively and efficiently under a streamlined structure.

-By re-organizing the health and social services system, Government will reduce overlap and duplication in the system and achieve operating efficiencies throughout the system, allowing Government to maintain, as a priority, programs and services and remain focused on quality patient/client/ resident care. It is anticipated that the impacts on front line services will be minimal.

-The PEI Government also recognizes the value of a strong and vibrant workforce and will continue to strive to keep PEI's economy a growing and prosperous one that will benefit the Island workforce.

-Again, I would like to thank you for your letter and reiterate that careful examination of the issues will continue, and all information will be taken into consideration to ensure the best possible decision for all Islanders.

Sincerely, Pat Binns  
Premier of Prince Edward Island

## **Details of the Canadian Media Guild's Deal With the CBC**

□ On Sunday, October 9, it was announced that members of the Canadian Media Guild had voted 88.4 % in favour of accepting their tentative deal with the CBC. Most of the CBC's 5,500 unionized workers are expected to head back to work on Tuesday, October 11.

### **Details of the agreement in principle**

-The Corporation will be allowed to hire up to 9.5% of the permanent workforce on contract. This ratio must be maintained for a full 15 months beyond the life of the collective agreement until June 30, 2010.

### **Improved rights for contract employees are as follows:**

-Contract employees who have been on contract for four years will be allowed to convert to staff if they wish. Any contract employee who has four years of service on ratification will be allowed to convert immediately.

-The approximately 90 contract employees now working in Television A&E, Radio Drama and Comedy and Sports will also have, for the first time, the opportunity to convert to staff. Those who remain on contract cannot be terminated during their contracts except for just cause or lack of work.

-Contract employees will have access to pension after two-years of employment including a buyback option. This buyback option will also apply to any contract employee who chooses to convert to staff.

-Contract employees will be entitled to severance pay.

-Contract employees who have worked 5 consecutive contracts of nine or more months but less than 1 year for 5 consecutive years will be credited with actual time worked for seniority purposes at the time of hiring into a permanent position.

**Improved rights for temporary employees are as follows:**

-Temporary staff may be hired for relief, backfill, emergencies and augmentation. The Corporation will not use temporary hiring as a way to displace, delay or avoid hiring of permanent employees or to deny temporary employees rights.

-Temporary employees who have worked in the same position in the same location and component for 18 months will be allowed to convert to staff. A break of a week or less will not count as a break in service.

-Temporary employees will accrue seniority for use in progression on salary scales and upon becoming permanent.

-Temporary employees will be paid for a minimum shift of a full day unless they are filling in for someone who works reduced hours.

-Temporary employees of 13 weeks or longer will have access to sick leave (STD) benefits. They will no longer have to re-qualify if they have a break in service of less than 13 weeks.

-A break of four weeks or less between the end of one period of work and the beginning of another will not constitute a break in service for seniority. No pre-approval required.

-There will be a full jointly-conducted review within 90 days of ratification of all non-permanent staff to ensure they have been properly hired and are receiving the appropriate rights and benefits.

**Wages:**

-Across the board increases for a total of 12.6% for the life of the collective agreement; broken down as 2.5 % for 2004, 2.5% for 2005, 2.1% for 2006, 2.5% for 2007, and 3.0% for 2008. The duration of the contract will be to March 31, 2009. There will be full retroactivity to April 1, 2004 for everyone (including both short- and long-term temps and contract employees) on payroll at the time of the lockout. There will be a signing bonus of \$1,000 per member.

-Employees will be entitled to five weeks of vacation after 18 years of service, an

improvement over the previous 20-year rule.

-Severance pay at retirement will be maintained for all existing employees and will include anyone on contract who converts to staff after ratification. People hired after ratification will not be eligible for severance on retirement.

-A premium of \$800 per year will be paid to those employees who are required to work in aboriginal languages.

-Employees will have the right to refuse overtime after 48 hours of work in a week.

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

□ On Tuesday October 25, 2005, the federation's President and Vice President met with Charlottetown's heritage board to discuss their objections to the federation installing the Day of Mourning monument in Queens Square. Unfortunately on Wednesday the Board announced that they will be recommending to the Charlottetown City Council that the Council reject the Federation's proposal to erect the Day of Mourning monument in Queens Square. The City Council will vote on the recommendation on November 14<sup>th</sup> and representatives of the federation will meet with the Council on November 8<sup>th</sup> to do a presentation on the monument and ask the Council to vote against the Heritage Board's recommendation.

-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.

-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. 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.

- Thus far, the fed has received donations from:

<b>Union</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>Bricklayers Local 1</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>

<b>Canadian Labour Congress</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees PEI Division</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 501</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 805</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1145</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1770</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1779</b>	<b>\$185.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1870</b>	<b>\$287.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2523</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3324</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Postal Workers Charlottetown Local</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>
<b>Canadian Union of Postal Workers Summerside Local</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Communications, Energy &amp; Paperworkers Union Local 61</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>
<b>Communications, Energy &amp; Paperworkers Union Local 401</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>International Association of Machinists Local 1934</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>IATSE Local 906a</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>
<b>International Union of Operating Engineers Local 942</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<b>International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1432</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<b>PEI Nurse's Union</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>
<b>PEI Teacher's Federation</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>PEI Union of Public Sector Employees</b>	<b>\$1,500.00</b>
<b>Public Service Alliance of Canada Area Council</b>	<b>\$550.00</b>
<b>Canadian Employment and Immigration - PSAC Local 90152</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>

<b>Canadian Employment &amp; Immigration - PSAC Local 90153</b>	<b>\$80.00</b>
<b>Canadian Employment and Immigration - PSAC Local 90154</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Union of Canadian Transport Employees PSAC Local 60905</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Union of Parks Canada PSAC Local 90023</b>	<b>\$80.00</b>
<b>Union of Taxation Employees PSAC Local 90002</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>
<b>Union of Veteran Affairs Employees PSAC Local 90001</b>	<b>\$750.00</b>
<b>United Brotherhood of Carpenters &amp; Joiners of America - Local 1338</b>	<b>\$300.00</b>
<b>United Food and Commercial Workers - Local 864</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,982.00</b>

- 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. So far the average contribution has been approximately a dollar per member but any contribution would be greatly appreciated.

- 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**

<b>CLC Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation Educational</b>	<b>October 13 - 14, 2005</b>	
<b>Canada Labour Code Review Hearing</b>	<b>OCTOBER 24, 2005</b>	<b>Charlottetown (If There is Sufficient Interest)</b>
<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, 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, 2005</b>	<b>at 12 noon at the Trinity United Church.</b>