



PEI FEDERATION OF LABOUR NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2004 ISSUE

CURRENT NEWS

- On March 8, (7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.) and 9, 2005 (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), the C.L.C. Atlantic Region and the P.E.I. Federation of Labour will be holding a two day educational at the Howard Johnson, Charlottetown, PE. The courses being offered are: Building Unions in a World of Change - Steward Training: Level I and Social & Economic Well-Being of Women in the Atlantic Region. For registration information, please contact the fed at (902) 368-3068. The registration deadline is February 21, 2005.
- On Saturday, January 1, 2005, the minimum wage on PEI will increase from \$6.50 to \$6.80 per hour.
- The PEI Federation of Labour would like to express its deepest condolences to Claudette Anderson and her family on the death of her husband Wayne Anderson on December 29, 2004. Claudette represented the IUOE on the federation's Executive Council and was very active in our activities until her husband's illness forced her to take a leave of absence. The fed will be sending a donation in Wayne Anderson's name to the QEH Cancer Unit.
- Recently UPSE handed out 10 bursaries totaling \$5,500 to dependants of UPSE members who are attending a post secondary institution as of January, 2005.
- On Friday, December 24, 2004, it was announced that former provincial Conservative candidate George MacDonald is the new chair of P.E.I.'s Workers Compensation Board replacing Jim Lee. Another former Conservative candidate, Donna Butler has been re-appointed to the board and promoted to vice-chairwoman. Charlene MacInnis was reappointed to the board as a worker's representative while Margaret Stewart a retired teacher was appointed to the other worker's representative position that was up for grabs replacing Joyce McCardle.
- On Thursday, December 23, 2004, the fed received a letter from CLC Atlantic Regional Director, Linda Gallant asking us to nominate a woman who is a member of a CLC affiliate to replace

Sister Brenda Walker, who recently resigned due to work commitments, on the Charlottetown EI Board of Referees. Her term will expire July 30, 2006. If any female member of your union is interested in this position please contact the fed office to receive the Curriculum Vitae form. Sister Gallant also encourages the nominee to complete the Equity Self-Identification form. Deadline for applications is January 26, 2005. If you have any questions please contact Brother Basque or Sister Gallant at (506)858-9350.

- On Monday, December 20, 2004, it was announced that the Charlottetown Translation Bureau was closing, eliminating the three PSAC positions that went with it. The work currently being done by the Bureau will now be done out of Halifax. In response to this, the fed sent out letters to all the Island MP's urging them to do what they could to get this decision reversed.
- On Monday, December 20, 2004, representatives of the fed attended a meeting to discuss the creation of Sector Councils on PEI. The main issues discussed at the meeting were what has been done so far and the agenda for meetings in January at which the sector board setup will be decided, bylaws will be discussed and their executive will be elected. The next meeting will be January 11, 2005.
- On Thursday, December 16, 2004, the provincial government announced that they plan to hold a plebiscite in November, 2005 on whether to keep the current electoral system or move to a mixed proportional representation system. This would mean that in addition to voting for 20 seats by riding, Islanders would get a second vote which would decide another 10 seats based on the popular vote for each political party.
- On Thursday, December 16, 2004, members of the PEI Federation of Labour met with representatives of HRSDC to discuss organized labour's feelings on the changes needed to improve how the federal government spends its skills development money and help them develop their new Workplace Skills Strategy. Labour was represented by Fed President Carl Pursey (CUPW), Fed VP Blair Penny (IBEW), Leo Cheverie (CUPE), Paul Chaisson (Carpenters), Ray MacBride (IBEW), and JC Basque (CLC).
- On Saturday, December 11, 2004, it was announced that, as of April 1, 2002, PEI's civil service pension plan's assets had a market value of \$436 million and an estimated actuarial liability of \$488 million.
- On Monday, December 6, 2004, a ceremony was held at the Confederation Centre of the Arts, Memorial Hall as part of

the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The ceremony was held in remembrance of the 14 young women who were murdered at Montreal's École Polytechnique in 1989. The federation would like to thank our VP(women) Michele Wright for co-ordinating the federation's involvement in this important event and for lighting a candle on behalf of the fed at the ceremony.

-On Monday, December 6, 2004, The federal government announced that they will lower workers' EI premiums by \$.03 to \$1.95 per \$100 of insurable earnings and employers' EI premiums by \$.04 to \$2.73 on each \$100 of insurable earnings effective January 1, 2005.

-On Saturday, December 4, 2004, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for November was 10.5% down from October's 11.8%. You currently need 490 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.

-On Friday, December 3, 2004, The provincial health minister announced that he has no intention of regulating resident care workers on the Island. Currently, resident care workers who work in private care facilities on the Island are not required to go through training before they go to work. The RCW association wants workers to have at least six months of training.

-On Friday, November 26, 2004, it was announced that the WCB has launched a new incentive program called Safety Matters At Work, Experience Counts. The program will allow Island employers' WCB rates to be partially based on how much has been paid out in accident claims to its employees. Thus allowing employers with good safety records a lower assessment rate.

-On Friday, November 26, 2004, it was announced that negotiations between the province and the negotiating team representing 2,800 UPSE members employed by the provincial government, IRAC, and the WCB have broken down. Approximately 30 items are still on the table including pay, length of agreement, pensions, group insurance, and leave.

-On Thursday, November 25, 2004, it was announced that recent changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act will require Employers to have an emergency plan in place telling people what to do when someone falls. The changes will also allow employers to place safety netting under the area where their employees are working, a practice new to the Island. In 2003, there were 94 reports of workers falling from heights of over four feet causing many injuries.

- On Wednesday, November 24, 2004, the PEI Supreme Court announced that the Eastern Graphic's challenge to P.E.I.'s Access to Information laws has been rejected. The newspaper was challenging the WCB board's and privacy commissioner's ruling that the Graphic's publishing of the names and salaries of the employees at the WCB was an unreasonable invasion of personal privacy. The Eastern Graphic will not appeal the Supreme Court decision.
- On Wednesday, November 24, 2004, it was announced that the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal has sided with the United Food and Commercial Workers in the fight over unionizing a Wal-Mart store in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. The UFCW had been seeking internal documents as part of the union certification process, alleging that Wal-Mart managers were being given instructions on how to derail union drives. Union drives are currently underway at two Quebec stores, another store in Saskatchewan and among automotive workers at seven stores in British Columbia.
- The PEI Federation of Labour would like to thank Daryl Coles (carpenters union) for all the efforts he put into our activities during his tenure as Treasurer of the fed. Daryl who decided not to re-offer at our November convention has been replaced by Chris Vessey (PSAC) who won the position by acclamation at our convention.

UPDATE ON PSAC'S NEGOTIATIONS

- Approximately 80,000 Table 1 administrative and clerical staff and nearly 10,000 Table 3 grain inspectors will vote on what the federal government has called their final offer from December 6 - 17, 2004, and resume January 3 - 26, 2005. Negotiators for PSAC have recommended their members reject this offer.
- 3,600 PSAC Canadian Food Inspection Agency members will vote on their tentative deal from December 6 - 17, 2004, and resume January 3 - 26, 2005.
- On Thursday, December 16, 2004, despite a 54% rejection result from the 80 Island members of PSAC that work for Parks Canada, it was announced that the 4,800 PSAC members who work for Parks Canada have ratified a new agreement. The 4 year deal which expires on August 4, 2007 includes: annual wage increases across the board of 2.5% retroactive to August 2003, 2.25% for 2004, 2.4% for 2005 and 2.5% for 2006 as well as additional salary adjustments ranging from 2.6% to 19% for operational service workers that will go towards closing a wage disparity identified by a Treasury Board-PSAC pay study; improvements in overtime, call-back and reporting pay and shift premiums; and other

salary improvements for some groups through pay harmonization and restructuring and terminable allowances.

-On Thursday, December 9, 2004, it was announced that the 25,000 PSAC members who work with the Canada Revenue Agency have ratified a new agreement. The 4 year deal which expires October 31, 2007 includes: increases of 2.5% retroactive to November 1, 2003, 2.25% retroactive to November 1, 2004, 2.4% effective November 1, 2005 and 2.5% effective November 1, 2006; indeterminate status to at least 25% of its 1,100 term workers with over three years of service; recognition in the collective agreement that Part II of the Canada Labour Code governs health and safety matters at the Agency; removal of the caps on the amount of family-related leave that can be taken for a particular purpose; five days of marriage leave for workers who participate in same-sex public commitment ceremonies and a provision that will allow recurring term workers to retain accumulated sick leave credits if they are re-hired within a year.

UPDATE ON THE FED'S AFFILIATE 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.

-Thus far, the fed has received donations from IBEW 1432 (\$500), The Canadian Labour Congress (\$500), Carpenters Local 1338 (\$300), CUPE Local 1870 (\$287), Union of Veteran Affairs Employees PSAC Local 90001 (\$750), CUPW (\$150), and Union of Parks Canada PSAC Local 90023 (\$80). The Federation of Labour would like to thank all of our affiliates and the CLC who have donated to the cause so far and we hope that the rest of our affiliates 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 fed has had meetings with the Province to discuss getting the land and has recently sent a letter to Charlottetown City

Council asking for a motion to be brought before council for the city to provide upkeep and maintenance on the monument. Both levels of government appear to be on board with the main stumbling block being getting an agreement for the land.

- 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>

P.E.I. FEDERATION OF LABOUR 2005 PRIORITIES

- On Wednesday, November 24, 2004 at the Atlantic Tourism and Hospitality Institute in Charlottetown, the PEIFL Executive Council held a strategy session to determine our goals for the upcoming year.

COMMUNICATION

- The main goal in communication this year was to expand on what we accomplished last year and make sure more groups know about fed activities. To accomplish this goal, the Executive decided on 5 actions to take this year.

-1. We want to distribute the Newsletter to not only our own affiliates but also to non affiliates, coalition groups, MLA's, and Media.

-2. We want to look into increasing the 5MB capacity of our website to allow for more pictures to be displayed on our site and work on improving the look and design of the site.

-3. We want to make sure there is someone to take over the website if the current person becomes unavailable.

-4. We decided it was important to improve the amount of coverage our press releases receive.

-5. The fed will hold Union and Media Rep luncheons in May and September again this year to update them on the activities of the fed and to answer any questions they might have about the direction we are taking.

COMMITTEE' S

- The main goals of the Women's Committee will be to work with other women's groups and affiliated unions to co-ordinate

labour's involvement in the December 6th memorial ceremony and International Women's Day on March 8th .

- The main goals of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee will be to lobby Government on health and safety issues that arise, to establish a Day of Mourning Monument, to organize the Day of Mourning Ceremony (April 28th), and to work on establishing a Day of Mourning poem contest in the schools.
- The main goals of the Political and Social Action Committee will be to prepare and present the "Brief to Cabinet", co-ordinate an event if a federal election is called, and meet with Politicians and Boards on a regular basis.
- The main goal of the Union Label Committee will be to organize a workshop on sweatshops.
- The main goals of the Organizing Committee will be to keep on meeting with non affiliated unions with the hope that they will affiliate with the Federation of Labour and to continue to meet with our affiliates to make sure the fed is fulfilling their expectations.
- The main goals of the Events Committee will be to organize events surrounding International Workers Day (May 1st) and Labour Day.
- If any of our affiliated members are interested in joining any of the fed's committee's. They should get in touch with the Fed at 368-3068.

CLC GOALS FOR THE CURRENT REVIEW OF PART III OF THE CANADA LABOUR CODE.

- On Monday, November 1, 2004, it was announced that the federal government is set to launch a federal commission to review the Canada Labour Code. Everything from the length of work week to maternity leave, a national minimum wage and Canada's two-week vacation standard will be on the table.
- On Thursday, December 2, 2004, it was announced that Harry W. Arthurs, a world renowned legal scholar and labour law expert, has been appointed as Commissioner leading the review of Part III of the Canada Labour Code. The advisory panel will also include: Ms. Sherry Liang, an adjudicator with the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, Dr. Daphne Taras, Associate Dean of Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary, and Dr. Gilles Trudeau, Professor at the Universite de

Montreal's Faculty of Law and representatives from business and labour. The labour representatives will include Ken Georgetti and Hassan Yussuff, the president and the secretary-treasurer of the CLC. The final report from the panel is to be submitted to the Minister of Labour and Housing by January 2006.

-In broad terms, and recognizing that this is a partial list to be added to through further discussion, the CLC seeks the following outcomes:

-A MODEL LABOUR CODE -We want a federal Labour Code which provides a minimum floor of rights and standards for workers in the federal jurisdiction which is consistent with best practices in other advanced industrial countries and with ILO standards and conventions. The Code should maintain standards in the federal jurisdiction at least as high as best practices in any provincial jurisdiction.

-EFFECTIVE COVERAGE FOR VULNERABLE WORKERS AND WORKERS IN "NEW EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS" -We want a code which, while excluding the genuinely self-employed, covers workers in a range of potentially vulnerable 'non standard' employment relationships, including contract workers, dependent contractors and home workers. This will involve developing a broad definition of who is an employee for purposes of coverage. We want a Code which effectively protects part-time, contract and temporary workers and helps equalize pay, benefits and working conditions for such workers compared to full-time, permanent workers. The current code is silent on pay and other differences between workers based on the form of employment, in contrast to employment standards in some provinces and in Europe.

-WORK/LIFE BALANCE AND HOURS OF WORK - We want a Code which will help resolve conflicts between the demands of work and those of family and community life, including by providing for reasonable and predictable hours of work, vacation entitlements, and leaves for family purposes. Building on recent amendments to the Code providing of extended parental leaves and care-giving leaves, labour will want to advance proposals for flexible hours at the discretion of employees; family responsibility leaves; longer minimum vacation entitlements; advance notice to employees of work schedules; limits on long and highly variable hours; and broader options for taking time off in lieu of overtime. The current Code is particularly weak in terms of effectively limiting long hours of work. It will be important to ensure that coverage for family provisions extends to same-sex couples, foster children and similar issues with respect to which the current Code is dated.

-ANTI HARASSMENT AND EQUALITY ISSUES - The current Code has no provisions covering racial harassment, and is generally silent on issues of employment and pay equity for women, workers of colour and workers with disabilities. Part III may be an appropriate forum for raising these issues, particularly since the Commissioner is able to make recommendations for change in related legislative areas.

-LEARNIN ISSUES- We want a Code which recognizes the need for lifelong learning for all workers, including through access to on the job training; and training and educational leaves.

-A LIVING WAGE - While the CLC has not taken a formal position, a number of progressive organizations see re-introduction of a federal minimum wage as a stepping-stone to a national living wage. (Currently, workers in the federal jurisdiction are covered by the minimum wage of the province in which they work, but the federal government has the power to set a minimum wage in its own jurisdiction.)

-AN EFFECTIVE LABOUR CODE - We want a Code which is effectively promoted by the government, and is known and respected in an ongoing way in workplaces. There are major concerns re current enforcement provisions and the extent to which worker complaints are mainly filed only after the severance of the employment relationship. The Commissioner has been asked to make non legislative as well as legislative recommendations, and we will have to reflect on proposals for greater "flexibility" of standards if and when alternative standard-setting procedures are in place.

PRESS RELEASE ON THE LACK OF PENSION LEGISLATION ON PEI

-On Thursday, December 16, 2004, the fed sent out a press release in response to the current tragedy occurring to the former employees of a bankrupt mill in Nackawic, New Brunswick urging the PEI government proclaim the pension legislation that was passed by the PEI legislature in 1990 so that a situation like the one that is happening in Nackawic won't happen here. Here is the press release:

-“Workers have worked hard to setup pension plans and make sure that the contributions they make to those plans will help ensure they can afford the retirement they deserve after all their years of effort and service to society. It is time for the Binns government to proclaim the legislation that will protect workers

pension money" says Carl Pursey, president of the PEI Federation of Labour.

-PEI is currently the only province in the country without pension legislation. The Pensions Benefit Act was adopted by the provincial legislature in April of 1990 but was never proclaimed.

-The PEI Federation of Labour feels that the recent announcement that workers under the age of 55 no matter how long they worked at a bankrupt mill in Nackawic, New Brunswick, won't see a dime of their pensions and anyone over 55 who worked there will also lose 10 to 25 per cent of their pension should be a wake call to our Provincial government.

-" With 59% of all defined benefit pension plans in Canada running deficits that will require \$160 billion to cover the total shortfall, now is time for Attorney-General Mildred Dover to finally make sure that pension money on PEI is protected and that a tragedy like the one that is currently occurring in New Brunswick cannot occur here." states PEI Federation President Carl Pursey.

-Pensions benefits legislation is important for working people who belong to workplace pensions. In order to provide that protection, the Legislation should at least provide protection and rights for plan members in the following three areas:

(1) Requiring employers to finance pension plans in a way that minimizes the risk that pensions cannot be fulfilled.

(2) Requiring pension plans to include certain types of benefits (e.g. survivor benefits and benefits on termination of employment prior to retirement.

(3) Establishing certain membership rights (e.g. access to information about the plan)

-"The PEI legislation that was never proclaimed includes these kinds of protection for plan members and that is why it is very important and urgent that our government pass that legislation now." concludes Mr. Pursey

IMPORTANT DATES

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2004	AT NOON AT THE CONFEDERATION CENTRE OF THE ARTS MEMORIAL HALL
C.L.C. ATLANTIC REGION AND P.E.I. FEDERATION EDUCATIONAL	MARCH 8, 2005 -7:00 PM - 9:00 PM MARCH 9, 2005 - 9:00 AM TO 5:00 PM.	AT THE HOWARD JOHNSON, DUTCH INN, CHARLOTTETOWN, P.E.I.
ONE WEEK ATLANTIC LABOUR LAW COURSE	APRIL 10 - 15, 2005	MEMARAMCOOK INSTITUTE, SAINT JOSEPH, NB
LABOUR COLLEGE OF CANADA GRADUATE PROGRAM	MAY 9 - JUNE 3, 2005	ALGONQUIN COLLEGE , OTTAWA
C.L.C. ATLANTIC REGION AND P.E.I. FEDERATION EDUCATIONAL	OCTOBER 13 - 14, 2005	