



PEI Federation of Labour Newsletter June 2005 Issue

Current News

- The PEI Federation of Labour would like to inform to whomever it may concern that our mailing address is changing from P.O. Box 21094, Charlottetown, PEI, C1A 9H6 to **22 Enman Crescent, Charlottetown, PEI, C1E 1E6**

- On Monday, September 5, from 4:00 - 6:00 P.M., the P.E.I. Federation of Labour will be holding its 6th Annual Labour Day Corn Boil and Barbeque at Victoria Park in Charlottetown. So bring a lawn chair and meet your brothers and sisters as we celebrate Labour Day 2005. There will be Entertainment, Games for the Kids, Prizes, Hot Dogs, Corn, and Fun For All. If your local has union hats, shirts, jackets, etc (Especially something for kids) that you are willing to donate for prizes at our celebrations or you wish to make a monetary donation towards labour day expenses, please let our office know by Wednesday, August, 31, 2005. All donations/prizes will be gratefully accepted and appreciated.

- On Tuesday, June 28, the Federation received a letter from Elmer MacFadyen, Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs inviting us to submit two nominees for the employee vacancies on the Labour Relations Board. The names of the nominees that we submit, together with other names, will be forwarded to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council for consideration. Each Board member appointed usually serves a three-year term. If any of our affiliates have names they would like the fed to submit to the Minister or if you have any questions, please contact our office at 368-3068; fax at 368-3192 or e-mail at: peifed@pei.aibn.com. The deadline to submit names to us will be **Friday, July 22, 2005**. Along with your name(s) and telephone number, we ask any applicant to please submit a short resume of training or experience that relates to the position.

- On Thursday, June 23, Gary Robichaud announced that he was stepping down as leader of the Island New Democrats to focus more on fighting his ongoing battle with cancer and to spend more time with his family.

- On Wednesday, June 22, Statistics Canada announced that for the first time since 1994, contributions to trusteed pension plans last year were greater than benefits paid. Total contributions for 2004, including those of both employers and employees, amounted to

\$30.3 billion, while benefits paid totaled \$29.8 billion. About 5.5 million Canadian workers belong to employer pension plans. Of these, about 4.5 million are in trusteed plans. The remaining one million workers with employer pension plans are covered by the consolidated revenue funds of the federal and provincial governments, or by insurance company contracts or Government of Canada annuities. The agency also says that return on investment for 2004 was 8.6 %, up from 5.1 % in 2003.

☐ On Thursday, June 16, Ken Georgetti was re-elected CLC president at the Canadian Labour Congress convention in Montréal, winning a third term. Also re-elected, by acclamation, were secretary-treasurer, Hassan Yussuff, and executive vice-presidents Barbara Byers and Marie Clarke Walker.

☐ On Thursday, June 16, The Canadian Labour Congress called on the federal government to immediately pass its law to recognize equal marriage. In a letter to all political party leaders, Ken Georgetti, says that any further delay, or amendment of the legislation, would be an unacceptable weakening of the equality rights of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and trans-gender citizens. Georgetti also chastised Conservative leader Stephen Harper for his indecent proposal to trade off the rights of Canadians for an early summer vacation. Earlier in the week, a call for immediate passage of same sex marriage laws received the unanimous support of the almost 2000 delegates attending the CLC convention in Montréal.

☐ On Wednesday, June 15, it was announced that the Federal Labour Standards Review Commission will be holding public hearings in the fall of 2005 in 14 cities across Canada. 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. The Commission has set aside October 24th, 2005 to visit Charlottetown. Further information on these hearings has now been posted on the Federal Labour Standards Review website (www.fl-s-ntf.Qc.ca).

☐ On Wednesday, June 15, the Commission on P.E.I.'s Electoral Future announced they are recommending Monday, Nov. 28 as the date for the plebiscite on changing the province's electoral system. Under the proposed mixed-member proportional system, 17 MLA's would be elected in their district, and another 10 would be elected from lists provided by the parties, based on the percentage of the vote the party gets provincially. The commission will now begin an educational campaign, which will include a series of public meetings across the Island.

☐ On Monday, June 13, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for May

was 10.8% up 0.4% from April's 10.4% . You currently need 525 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.

☐ On Friday, June 10, it was announced that the Public Service Alliance of Canada have unionized about 150 commissionaires across the Island. The union was certified by the Labour Board of P.E.I., a decision which the employer unsuccessfully appealed. Not only was the Commissionaires of Canada's attempt at keeping Island commissionaires union-free unsuccessful, the court also awarded PSAC legal costs of \$18,000. Commissionaires in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador are also looking at union certification.

☐ On Wednesday, June 8, the PEI Federation of Labour received a letter from Elmer MacFadyen, Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, asking us to submit names for the position of employee representative on the Occupational Health and Safety Council as Mike MacQuaid's (his name was not submitted by the fed) term of appointment will expire on August 14, 2005. If any of our affiliates have names they would like the fed to submit to the Minister or if you have any questions, please contact our office at 368-3068; fax at 368-3192 or e-mail at: peifed@pei.aibn.com. Due to the Federation not having a July meeting because of summer break, the deadline to submit names to us will be **Wednesday, June 29, 2005**.

☐ On Sunday, June 5 it was announced that the delegates to the PSAC Atlantic regional convention have re-elected Jeannie Baldwin as their Regional Executive Vice-President for a three-year term. Debbie Graham was elected as the alternate Regional Executive Vice-President for the Atlantic region. She would become the REVP in the event that Jeannie Baldwin could not complete her term of office. This year's convention held in Dartmouth attracted 215 delegates, who met from June 2 to 5, 2005. The guest speaker at the convention was Stephen Lewis, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa.

☐ On Friday, June 3, it was announced that 769 provincial public employees have accepted early retirement. The government will still not say whether they have reached their goal of cutting 500 full-time jobs from their payroll.

☐ On Friday, June 3, the Federal government tabled legislation in the House of Commons that if passed will establish a federal fund that would pay up to \$3,000 per worker in back wages should their company go bankrupt. Under current bankruptcy law, workers' claims rank behind those of secured creditors, a group that typically includes banks, mortgage lenders and tax collectors. With the new fund workers would get the money in about six weeks. The government would then claim the money in the bankruptcy, perhaps recovering part of its outlay.

- ❑ On Friday, June 3, members of the International Union of Operating Engineers who work at Ocean Choice's main plant in Souris voted in favour of a strike. The last offer from Ocean Choice that was deemed unacceptable included no raise until 2006 when they would receive a \$.10/hr raise and \$.20/hr in 2007.
- ❑ On Friday, May 27, it was announced that the Educational Assistants and Youth Services Workers, CUPE Local 3260, have signed a 3 year deal with the province. The deal provides for wage increases of 1.5% per every 6 months until June 30, 2007. The agreement was reached through binding arbitration.
- ❑ On Friday, May 27, it was announced that Rebecca Wellner has been appointed Information and Privacy Commissioner for PEI replacing Karen Rose who resigned in April.
- ❑ On Wednesday May 25, the PEI Federation of Labour held its 2nd Annual Spring Luncheon for Labour Reps and Media at the Inn on the Hill in Charlottetown. This year's event was attended by 13 Executive Council members and labour reps and 2 members of the media. Those in attendance gave an update on what is happening in their Locals and Federation President Carl Pursey gave an update on Fed activities and was interviewed by the media reps on the status of the Day of Mourning Monument.
- ❑ On Thursday, May 19, the provincial government tabled eight bills that will restructure health and social services, do away with the five regional health authorities, and eliminate 180 administrative jobs. Once passed, five community hospitals are going to have separate boards. The Prince County, Hillsborough and Queen Elizabeth hospitals will continue to be run under one umbrella, the Provincial Health Services Authority. The changes also give the minister of health more authority and centralize administration of the hospitals in Charlottetown. The changes are expected to be in place by October.
- ❑ Recently the Fed has received a letter from CEP President Brian Payne informing us of the situation occurring with 12 of their members in Belledune, N.B. who have been on strike against Canadian Gypsum for more than a year to achieve a first contract. The company stopped production at the Belledune plant April 15, 2005 rather than sign a contract. What makes it worse is that the plant was set up as the result of a community economic development agreement with the NB government and it sources material for its product from NB Power. To show support for these workers, the CEP is asking that you use gypsum products from other companies if at all possible until the strike is over and let Canadian Gypsum know about your decision by going to their website at www.cgcinc.com and emailing them. CGC produces Durock, Sheetrock, Fiberock and CGC branded powders and adhesives.

Letter sent to Premier Binns on the Cost of Health Care Restructuring

□ On May 30, the Federation 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 fed can be supportive of these unions and their members.

-In response to this meeting the fed sent out this letter to Premier Binns.

Dear Mr Binns:

-As your Government starts to restructure PEI's Health Care System, the PEI Federation of Labour urges your 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.

-We hope that you will remember that eliminating any full-time, reasonably well paid job that have benefits and pensions will have a major long term impact on an Island economy in which only 43% of Islanders work full-time year-round. Just the amount of wages that will be lost to the Island economy will be a major hit to the Island business community and their workers for years to come and the loss of jobs with benefits and pensions will increase the long-term costs of the health care system and other government programs.

-We also hope that you fully realize the impact all the uncertainty being created by the restructuring process is having on your current and potential employees. Until stability is returned to PEI's Health Care System there will be an unreasonable amount stress put on employees and their families as they worry about how secure their futures are. Also this instability will hasten the "brain drain" from PEI and force more of our best educated young people to leave PEI in search of a sense of job security. It will also make it harder for your government to recruit needed employees for the health care sector.

-In the end, your government needs 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.

-Thus, we urge you to realize the value of these workers and the services they supply to the public and keep any job losses to a bare minimum.

Yours Sincerely,

Carl Pursey,

President of the PEI Federation of Labour

Federation's Press Release on the Chaoulli Ruling

□ On Thursday, June 23, In a 4-3 decision, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Quebec government cannot prevent people from buying private insurance for health-care procedures covered under medicare. The justices said banning private insurance for a list of services ranging from MRI tests to cataract surgery was unconstitutional under the Quebec Charter of Rights, given that the public system has failed to guarantee patients access to those services in a timely way. But they split 3-3 on whether it violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, meaning there is no immediate impact on the Canadian health-care system as a whole. The Quebec government has stated that it will consider using the notwithstanding clause in Quebec's constitution as an alternative to abiding by the court's decision.

-In response to this decision, the Federation released this press release:

-“The June 9th Supreme Court ruling on the Chaoulli case needs to be a wake up call for the Binns Government” States Carl Pursey President of the PEI Federation of Labour

-The decision which only applies to Quebec should not be looked upon as endorsing privatizing healthcare but as showing Federal and Provincial governments the time is now to properly fund Medicare and provide the timely, efficient, and universally accessible public health-care system that Canadians want.

-Since the Chaoulli case was first filed in 1997, there have been some positive steps taken through recent federal - provincial agreements on healthcare. However there is still work to do before Canadians truly have the public health care system they deserve.

-Thus we urge the Premier, Health and Social Services Minister Chester Gillan, and every politician in Canada to do whatever is necessary to reassure all Canadians that they are not only fully committed to making sure Canada's Public Healthcare System remains focussed on ensuring all Canadians receive the best care possible but also fully committed to protecting it from those that would try to make a two-tier system where the quality of patient care is dependent on the size of the patient's bank account.

-“Canadians have consistently told politicians that universal public healthcare is the most important issue to them, now more than ever, it is time for Canada's politicians to show Canadians they are listening”. States Pursey

Premier's Response to the CLC and Federation Letter on EI Reform

□ On Friday, April 29 , CLC President, Ken Georgetti and Federation President Carl Pursey sent a letter and report to the Premier as part of the national CLC campaign to reform EI legislation. The report and letter outlined the consequences that EI cuts have had on Island workers and the Island's economy. The letter also asked Binns to join a lobby effort to get the federal government to hand over a surplus in the EI fund, and make changes to the system so more people are eligible for benefits.. Treasurer Mitch Murphy tabled the report in Province House as part of the province's fight for more help from the federal government.

-Here is the Premier's response:

June 6, 2005

Dear Messrs. Georgetti and Pursey:

-Thank you for your recent letter relating to Employment Insurance (EI) adjustments implemented by the Federal Government.

-As you know, Prince Edward Island has the most seasonal economy in Canada and, as such, is affected significantly when the Government of Canada changes legislation and regulations that relate to employment insurance.

-This is also of concern to neighbouring Atlantic Provinces as well as Quebec. Prince Edward Island joined with its Atlantic neighbours and Quebec last fall to develop a common paper on E.I. issues that affect our jurisdictions.

-In late February, after the report of the Federal Subcommittee on Employment Insurance Funds, our partnership produced a report, "Eastern Provinces' Common E I Issues," that was endorsed by all participants.

-In addition to the work, Minister Blaney of the Province of New Brunswick agreed, on behalf of the partners, to meet with Federal Human Resource Skills Development Canada Minister Robillard to present recommendations for improvement. This meeting occurred in late February at which time the Federal Minister was informed of common concerns relating to Employment Insurance.

-In summary, we thank you for your communication on this important matter and we will continue to press the Government of Canada for fair and reasonable treatment for Island workers under federal legislation and regulations.

Sincerely,
Pat Binns
Premier of Prince Edward Island

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 very shortly. 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 PEI Division	\$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 1770	\$200.00
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1779	\$185.00
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1870	\$287.00
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2523	\$50.00
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 Nurse's Union	\$150.00
PEI Teacher's Federation	\$100.00
PEI Union of Public Sector Employees	\$1,500.00
Public Service Alliance of Canada Area Council	\$50.00
Canadian Employment & Immigration - PSAC Local 90153	\$80.00
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
United Food and Commercial Workers - Local 864	\$1,000.00
Total	\$8,432.00

- 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, the Island Labour movement showing tremendous support for our donation drive, and the monument made up and ready to go, the only piece that remains is securing the land for the monument. The province is still saying that the deal for the land should be completed any day.
- 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

24th CLC Constitutional Convention	June 13 - 17, 2005	Credential Deadline May 13, 2005
6th Annual Labour Day Corn Boil and Barbeque	Monday, September 5, 2005	from 4:00 - 6:00 P.M., at Victoria Park in Charlottetown.
CLC Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation Educational	October 13 - 14, 2005	
Canada Labour Code Review Hearing	OCTOBER 24, 2005	Charlottetown (If There is Sufficient Interest)
PEIFL Annual Convention Friday and Saturday November 4 and 5, 2005	Friday and Saturday November 4 and 5, 2005	

UPSE Annual Convention	Friday and Saturday November 18 and 19, 2005	Delta Prince Edward Hotel
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