



PEI FEDERATION OF LABOUR NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2004 ISSUE

CURRENT NEWS

- On Monday, December 6, 2004, there will be a ceremony at Noon at the Confederation Centre of the Arts, Memorial Hall as part of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. This ceremony will mark 15 years since 14 young women were murdered at Montreal's École Polytechnique because they were women.

- Recently in a letter dated Wednesday, November 17, 2004, the PEI Fisherman's Association thanked the fed for its support in their fight against the New Brunswick seiners and invited our president to their convention's banquet and dance in December.

- On Wednesday, November 17, 2004, it was announced that the construction of the new \$50-million federal government building in Charlottetown has been put on hold due to all the tender bids on the project being unacceptable to the Public Works department. It is expected that this will put the project at least four months behind schedule. The new building at the corner of University Avenue and Euston Street will replace the Dominion Building on Queen Street.

- On Monday, November 15, 2004, the fed submitted 3 names for the worker representative positions on the Workers Compensation Board of Directors that are set to expire on December 31, 2004.

- On Monday, November 15, 2004, the fed received a letter from MP Wayne Easter in regards to the letter the fed sent to all Island MP's in October denouncing the federal government for even considering selling billions of dollars worth of public buildings including 10 buildings on PEI and leasing back the space from private interests. In the letter, Mr. Easter admitted that he too was concerned about the proposal to privatize and that he has raised these concerns with the Minister of Public Works and caucus and he hopes that these concerns will be addressed before any action is taken.

- On Saturday, November 13, 2004, the Island NDP held their annual convention at the Delta Hotel in Charlottetown. Federation President Carl Pursey spoke at the convention and presented a

cheque for \$760 to Island NDP Party Leader Gary Robichaud to help with his cancer treatment. The money Carl presented was raised through passing the hat at the fed's recent convention with a matching donation from the fed and brought the total amount raised for Robichaud to approximately \$6000. The highlight of the NDP convention was the speech by National Party Leader Jack Layton.

-On November 12 and 13, 2004, the P.E.I. Union of Public Sector Employees held their annual convention at the Delta Hotel in Charlottetown. The Approximately 200 delegates that attended the convention confirmed their support for UPSE's new and more aggressive brand of trade unionism, highlighted by intensified public campaigning to extend the benefits of unionization to a greater number of Island workers and approved a dues increase to support these efforts. Fed president Carl Pursey attended the convention on behalf of the fed.

-On Friday, November 12, 2004, Federation representatives met with MPs Wayne Easter(mourning) and Shawn Murphy(afternoon) to discuss the CLC's most recent campaign. The issues discussed were the setting up of a public run child care system, the lowering of EI qualification hours to 360, making training funds more available, and better protection of employee wages and pensions during company bankruptcy. For the most part both were in favour of the issues presented to them except Shawn Murphy was not in favour of lowering the qualification hours for EI. He felt that this would lead to more abuse of the EI system and lessen people's interest in looking for permanent jobs.

-On Tuesday, November 9, 2004, it was announced that the 2001 National Work-Life Conflict Study, commissioned by Health Canada, links mounting workloads and soaring health costs. It concludes stress and illness caused by work overload due to the downsizing that swept the country's workplaces during the 1980s and 1990s is adding an extra \$14 billion a year in health-care costs. The study surveyed workers in 100 major organizations in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors and involved 32,000 workers.

-On Saturday, November 6, 2004, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for October was 11.8% up from September's 11.3%. You currently need 490 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.

-On Friday, November 5, 2004, CLC Executive VP Barb Byers who was in town for the fed's 40th annual Convention did an interview with the Guardian. The Guardian has so far released articles on her reaction to the upcoming review of the Canada Labour Code

and the CLC campaign to lower the qualification hours needed for EI.

- On Thursday, November 4, 2004, it was announced that 1,300 workers in Atlantic Canada have received early retirement offers from Aliant. Aliant hopes that 400 employees will take the offers. The deadline for the employees to make their decision on the offer is Nov. 19, 2004.
- On November 3 and 4, 2004, Fed Vice President Blair Penny spoke at the CUPE division meetings in Summerside and Montague respectively. Blair spoke on upcoming fed activities, the need for labour solidarity and he expressed the fed's wish to meet with all the unaffiliated CUPE Locals at their convenience to discuss affiliation.
- On Tuesday, November 2, 2004, it was announced that Eleven employer rate groups containing 64 occupations will see increases in their WCB premium rates from 9 to 20% in 2005; while 20 rate groups could receive decreases. Overall, rates are going down slightly, falling from an average of \$2.39 per \$100 of payroll to \$2.35 per \$100 of payroll.
- 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. The federal commission, which will be formally announced Dec. 2, will hold hearings across the country this winter. An interim report is expected by next fall.

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
- The PSAC Canada Revenue Agency employees will vote on their tentative deal from November 19 - December 8, 2004.
- The more than 4,800 PSAC members who work at Parks Canada will

vote on their tentative deal from November 19 - December 15, 2004.

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 our affiliate donation drive to pay for a Day of Mourning Monument to honour all workers who have been injured or killed 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), and CUPE Local 1870 (\$287). 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 a meeting with the city of Charlottetown to discuss 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.

REPORT ON THE FED'S 40TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

- On November 5 and 6, the PEI Federation of Labour held its 40th annual convention at the Howard Johnson's Dutch Inn in North River. Approximately 100 people attended this year's convention.
- Proceedings on Friday included the President's Report, speeches by CLC Vice President, Barb Byers who spoke on a variety of issues including: the current CLC campaign on EI, child care, and employee monies protection during bankruptcy and by Island NDP Leader, Gary Robichaud who spoke on his experiences in the

last provincial election and the troubles his party has with getting their message to the media, and the social.

-On Saturday, there were 13 resolutions passed by the delegates including: one constitutional resolution to stagger when the VP and President positions come up for election and resolutions to extend subsidies to Northumberland Ferries; oppose the privatization of federal buildings and the missile defence shield; in support of the current CLC campaign to setup a public run child care system, lower EI qualification hours to 360, make training funds more available, and better protect employee wages and pensions during company bankruptcy; work to make sure that the WCB Worker's Advocate truly represents workers and tie the position to the fed; call for a moratorium on the Racinos until impact studies can be done; remove overtime exemptions from the Employment Standards Act; in support of efforts to ensure that the herring fishery remain sustainable and extend enforcement of the National Building Code to across the Island. Due to time constraints it was decided that the rest of the submitted resolutions would be dealt with at the next Executive Council meeting.

-Speakers on Saturday included: the Minister responsible for Labour Elmer Macfadyen spoke on his department's meetings with the federation this year and labour issues that his department is working on; Kevin Green, President of Carpenters Local 1338 made an announcement that the carpenters would give \$1.00 per member and also build the foundation for the Day of Mourning Monument; International VP and former PEIFL President Phil Flemming spoke on his work in the PEI labour movement in the past and presented the fed on behalf of IBEW 1432 with a \$500 donation for the Day of Mourning Monument; Ed Frenette, President Fishermen's Association spoke on the fishery dispute down in Souris; Linda Gallant of the CLC donated \$500 on behalf of the CLC; and Michele Wright PEIFL VP (Women) spoke on the CLC's 15 days, 15 ways postcard campaign.

-During his speech Mr MacFadyen offered on behalf on the province to donate \$1000 towards Our Day of Mourning Monument Fund. His generous offer was brought to the floor of the convention in the afternoon where it was rejected in a vote in which a large majority of the delegates voted against excepting it. It has always been the federation's position that the Monument should be provided and paid for by Labour. After convention, the federation sent a letter to the Minister informing him of the convention's decision and thanking him for his generous offer.

-CLC rep Everett Baker was honored at our convention for his years of service to the Island labour movement. A plaque was

presented to him by the federation, a jacket was presented to him by Phil Fleming on behalf of the IBEW of which Everett was a member , and several people in attendance got up and shared remembrances of Everett's dedicated service. Everett thanked everyone for their kind remarks.

-Also the hat was passed around the convention to collect money for Island NDP Party Leader Gary Robichaud to help with his cancer treatment. \$380 was raised from the collection and there was a motion passed that the fed double it.

-Finally, in the election results, Sister Donna Murphy-MacInnis (PSAC) won the position of Secretary by acclamation for a two year term, Chris Vessey (PSAC) won the position of Treasurer by acclamation for a one year term(due to the constitutional resolution passed at convention), Michele Wright was returned by majority vote to the position of VP (women)for a two year term and the appropriate Local's delegates were asked to decide who will represent them on the federation's Executive Council for the next two years.

PRESS RELEASE ON THE 15 DAYS, 15 WAYS CAMPAIGN POSTCARDS

-On Monday, November 22, 2004, the fed sent out a press release to kick off the 15 days, 15 ways campaign on PEI. Here it is:

-The PEI Federation of Labour would like to remind the many people who have received the 15 days, 15 ways campaign postcards that the campaign will launch this Monday, November 22, 2004. The purpose of this national postcard campaign; which is a joint action on PEI between the Federation of Labour, its affiliated unions, and the Canadian Labour Congress; is to remind the Prime Minister his government needs to do more than just make promises to help end violence against women.

-Starting November 22 and for each of the 15 days until December 6, Islanders can send a postcard a day to the Prime Minister's Office. This December 6 will mark 15 years since 14 young women were murdered at Montreal's École Polytechnique because they were women.

-Each postcard contains a different issue of the utmost importance to women including: the need for affordable safe housing, the need for increased enforcement of restraining orders, and the need to increase funding to women's shelters and rape crisis centers.

-“We hope this campaign will remind the Prime Minister not only of the tragedy that occurred 15 years ago and the sorrow that we still feel for these women and their families but also remind him of the hardships and dangers that women face today and what his government can do to lessen them,” says Chairwoman of the PEI Federation of Labour’s Women’s Committee Michele Wright.

-“While nothing can lessen the loss that occurred on Dec 6th , 1989, we hope that the Prime Minister will take note of the postcards that are being sent to him and take action to lessen the chances of tragedies occurring in the future,” says Ms.Wright.

-Nationally, the 15-day postcard campaign will be launched at a news conference on November 22, at 10:30 a.m. in the Charles Lynch press theater on Parliament Hill. Canadian Labour Congress Executive Vice-President Marie Clarke Walker will be joined by Peggy Nash, Co-chair of the Canadian Labour Congress Women’s Committee, and Federal NDP Leader Jack Layton, founder of the White Ribbon Campaign.

-The Federation considers this a very important campaign and hopes that those who have received the postcards will participate and send in their cards. The cards are available from the PEI Federation of Labour.

PRESS RELEASE ON THE FISHERY SITUATION IN SOURIS

-On November 17, 2004, the PEI Federation sent out a press release in support of PEI's inshore fishermen in their fight against the corporate owned seiners. Here it is:

-Charlottetown, PEI ...The Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour passed a resolution in support of PEI's inshore fishermen in their fight against the corporate owned seiners which threaten the sustainability of the herring stocks within the traditional inshore fishery grounds of Prince Edward Island.

-“The 10,000 members of the P.E.I. Federation of Labour stand with Prince Edward Island inshore fishermen in their fight to protect their livelihood,” states Carl Pursey, President of the P.E.I. Federation of Labour. “We know that over 1,000 Island fishermen have access to much less quota than 5 seiners, the majority of which are owned by one corporate entity, the Barry Group,” states Pursey. The Federation of Labour recognizes that the collapse of other species (red fish, cod) through unsustainable, corporate fishery practical has led to the loss of jobs on P.E.I. We cannot let jobs in our coastal communities

continue to be threatened by such corporate, unsustainable practices. The Federation of Labour calls upon the Federal Government to immediately restrict such fishing to the limits now found off Isle de la Madeleine and the South Shore of Nova Scotia. "Our fishermen and workers who depend on a healthy inshore fishery deserve the same protection," states Pursey. "We know that the continued health of our lobster and tuna fishery is based on maintaining healthy herring stocks off the coast. The recent collapse of the spring and summer herring fishery as well as the collapse of herring on the Bay of Chaleur call upon us to immediately call for steps so that this fishery remains sustainable, and to ensure that corporate control of the fishery does not jeopardize employment on Prince Edward Island.

-The Federation of Labour also condemns the waste of police and other resources aimed at "criminalizing" fishermen and their families standing up for their rights. We call upon the federal government to give added resources to efforts to protect these stocks from depletion for the good of current and future generations who depend on healthy herring stocks to make a living.

IMPORTANT DATES

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON STATUS OF WOMEN ANNUAL PURPLE RIBBON PINNING BEE	WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2004	AT THE COLES BUILDING FROM 7PM TO 10PM
2004 PEIFL ANNUAL CONVENTION	FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NOVEMBER 5 AND 6, 2004	AT THE HOWARD JOHNSON, CHARLOTTETOWN
CLC NATIONAL DISABILITY RIGHTS CONFERENCE	NOVEMBER 11-14, 2004	FAIRMOUNT QUEEN ELIZABETH HOTEL, MONTREAL, QUEBEC DEADLINE OCTOBER 12, 2004
UPSE CONVENTION	NOVEMBER 12-13, 2004	DELTA PRINCE EDWARD HOTEL IN CHARLOTTETOWN
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

