



**PEI Federation of Labour's Submission to the
Standing Committee on Community Affairs and
Economic Development (Sunday Shopping)**

January 9, 2008

Introduction

The labour movement has always recognized how important a good balance between work and family/social life is to ensure workers have the time needed to rest and remove the stresses that come from their everyday work life. We have fought hard to try and ensure that balance is available for all workers. Unfortunately, here on PEI more than anywhere else in Canada there is still much to fight for.

PEI's Employment Standards legislation provide Island workers with the worst balance between work and family/social life in Canada. This legislation provides Island workers with the longest work- week before overtime (see Table 1), the lowest number of statutory holidays (see Table 2) and the lowest duration of vacation time in Canada (see Table 3). The Legislation barring Sunday Shopping was the one piece of legislation that showed that PEI's provincial government had any respect for Island workers need to balance work and family/social life at all and now that has been weakened too.

No Need For Full-Scale Sunday Shopping

Other than being a minor convenience for some Islanders, The PEI Federation of Labour can not see why there is any need for full scale Sunday Shopping on PEI especially when the previous legislation which barred Sunday Shopping allowed enough businesses to open to ensure that all necessities and most conveniences were available on Sunday.

Sunday shopping has a major impact on the retail workers it affects. It means that they have less time to spend with family and friends, It provides many workers especially single-parent families or families where both parents are forced to work on Sunday with the difficulty of finding daycare on a day when it is not necessarily readily available, it means that they have less time to spend on community volunteer work and they have less time available to attend their or other family members events, sports activities, hobbies, etc.

The idea that Sunday shopping will stimulate the economy is ludicrous. Because more shopping days doesn't mean there will be more money to shop. Average household debt loads in Canada are already too high and wages are stagnating, leaving little room for additional shopping dollars. However we do know that allowing Sunday shopping will have a negative impact on small independent stores that now benefit from the Sunday restrictions on the big operators. Some of these smaller shops will be forced to close and some communities may actually be left without local convenience stores.

As a recent survey shows, many Island businesses who are staying open simply to compete with the big box stores, really don't want to be open on Sunday.

It is also argued that we need Sunday Shopping to accommodate tourists. Shops that serve tourists were already allowed to be open on Sundays and as we said earlier, the previous legislation allowed enough businesses to open to ensure that all necessities and most conveniences were available. Therefore it is hard to see how restricting shopping on one day of the week will have a dramatic effect on the tourism industry. In the case of cruise ships, some commentators have noted that very few actually visit on Sunday as it is the day that they usually leave their home ports. We also need to question the wisdom of shaping PEI's future to suit visitors who spend a few days, or hours in the case of cruise ship passengers, here on the Island.

An issue that was brought up in Nova Scotia when they were deciding on this issue, the idea that Nova Scotian retailers were losing money due to Nova Scotians crossing the boarder to do casual shopping in New Brunswick on Sunday, is not an issue here on PEI. With Islanders having to pay to take the ferry at Woods Islands or cross the bridge in Borden, it means that Islanders do not go to NB or NS for casual shopping .

Conclusion

It is so important for government to be there to ensure that the employer's continual quest to improve profit margins does not totally overshadow their employees need to earn a fair income while still providing themselves and their families with the best life they can outside the workplace. Contrary to what business says, it is government's job to set the minimum standards that allow for a fair and balanced workplace. Unfortunately government here on PEI have for too long shirked that responsibility and allowed Island workers to live with legislation that leaves Island workers lagging far behind the rest of Canada. In this age where PEI is in tough competition to retain and attract workers, we cannot afford to maintain this lack of respect for workers rights. In this case, the government has a chance to stand up for workers and I hope this committee will come back with recommendations that reflect this.

Sunday needs to be a day where the pace of life in our communities slows down. Islanders need this to remind themselves that they are more than consumers and employees.

Table 1: Comparison of Overtime Rules across Canada

Jurisdiction	Overtime rules
British Columbia	Over 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week In BC, overtime pay also includes double time for hours after 12 hours per day
Northwest Territories	Over 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week
Yukon	Over 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week
Federal	Over 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week
Nunavut	Over 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week
Manitoba	Over 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week
Saskatchewan	Over 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week
Newfoundland & Labrador	Over 40 hours per week
Quebec	Over 40 hours per week
Alberta	Over 8 hours per day or 44 hours per week
Ontario	Over 44 hours per week
New Brunswick	Over 44 hours per week
Nova Scotia	Over 48 hours per week
Prince Edward Island	Over 48 hours per week

Table 2: Comparison of Statutory Holidays across Canada

Jurisdiction	Number Stat Holidays
Northwest Territories	10
Saskatchewan	10
Yukon	9
Federal	9
Alberta	9
Nunavut	9
British Columbia	9
Ontario	8
Quebec	8
Manitoba	8
New Brunswick	7
Newfoundland & Labrador	6
Nova Scotia	6
Prince Edward Island	6

Table 3: Comparison of Duration of Vacation across Canada

Jurisdiction	Vacation Pay	Duration of Vacation
British Columbia	4% of vacationable earnings After 5 years: 6%	* After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks * After 5 years of employment: 3 weeks

Manitoba	4% of vacationable earnings After 5 years: 6%	* After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks * After 5 years of employment: 3 weeks
Alberta	4% of vacationable earnings After 5 years: 6%	* After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks * After 5 years of employment: 3 weeks
Quebec	4% of vacationable earnings After 5 years: 6%	* After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks * After 5 years of employment: 3 weeks
Northwest Territories	4% vacationable earnings After 5 years: 6%	* After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks * After 5 years of employment: 3 weeks
Nunavut	4% of vacationable earnings After 5 years: 6%	* After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks * After 5 years of employment: 3 weeks
Federal	4% of vacationable earnings After 6 years: 6%	* After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks * After 6 years of employment: 3 weeks

Saskatchewan	3/52 of vacationable earnings After 10 years of employment: 4/52 of vacationable earnings	* After 1 year of employment: 3 weeks * After 10 years of employment: 4 weeks
New Brunswick	4% of vacationable earnings After 8 years: 6%	*After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks (One day for each calendar month worked, or 2 weeks; whichever is less.) *After 8 years of employment: 3 weeks
Nova Scotia	4% of vacationable earnings After 8 years: 6%	* After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks * After 8 years of employment: 3 weeks
Newfoundland & Labrador	4% of vacationable earnings After 15 years: 6%	* After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks * After 15 years of employment: 3 weeks
Ontario	4% of vacationable earnings	After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks
Prince Edward Island	4% of vacationable earnings	After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks
Yukon	4% of vacationable earnings	After 1 year of employment: 2 weeks