



**PAS DE VICTOIRE
SANS LUTTE!**

**NO STRUGGLE,
NO VICTORY!**

**MAY 13-17 MAI
TORONTO ONTARIO**

REPORT OF THE **NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD**

377 RUE BANK STREET
OTTAWA, ONTARIO
K2P 1Y3

613-236-7238
FAX: 613-563-7861
WWW.CUPW-STTP.ORG

cupw•sttp

CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS
SYNDICAT DES TRAVAILLEURS ET TRAVAILLEUSES DES POSTES

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD TO THE 2019 NATIONAL CONVENTION

The following is the National Executive Board's (NEB) report to the 2019 National Convention. This report contains relevant information that will give each delegate an overall view of the work we have accomplished over the past four years.

Convention delegates are tasked with creating structures, adopting policies and electing the officers that will guide the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) for the coming term. The decisions we make over the next five days will affect CUPW members for many years to come. It is our responsibility to ensure that CUPW members will have a secure future with decent jobs and healthy working conditions.

Our convention provides the democratic forum that our union requires to report on its activities during the past term, take stock of our current situation, and make the necessary decisions for planning the future.

Each convention takes place in a specific context that needs to be taken into account. This one is no exception. We are in the thick of things. At the time of writing this report (February 2019), arbitration for our two main collective agreements with Canada Post (rural and urban) has begun, following the adoption by the federal government of back-to-work legislation (C-89). We are challenging this legislation before the courts, and have also filed a complaint before the International Labour Organization (ILO).

At the same time, we led two campaigns, "A Post Office for Everyone" and "Delivering Community Power," to show the importance of

expanding services at Canada Post, such as postal banking or nearby services, while respecting the environment. We know that the post office can and should be a community hub in many regions across the country. All these struggles are political in nature. Their goal is maintaining a just and fair society, with a human face. The past term, like all previous ones, was one of action. We should be proud of it! And let's not forget that 2019 is an election year in the country!

We are also engaged in various organizing campaigns, negotiations for many Private Sector Bargaining units and directly involved in several court challenges to unconstitutional legislation, both provincial and federal.

Over the past few years, we have been able to consolidate our work as a whole and develop union strategies that reflect the union's orientation. In addition, events in recent months have shown that our motto, "The Struggle Continues," is more relevant than ever.

In closing, on behalf of the National Executive Board, I would like to thank all members for the determination they showed during 2018 strikes. Members showed their understanding of negotiations issues and exercised their fundamental democratic right to strike to improve working conditions and wages, and to secure their future.

The theme for this convention builds on the struggles we have had in recent months:

"NO STRUGGLE, NO VICTORY"

Have a great convention.

Mike Palecek
National President
On behalf of the National Executive Board

The aim of the NEB report is to provide a broad overview of the union's work over the past few years, to highlight our responses to the various situations we faced, and to share the strategies we have developed to protect our public and universal postal service.

This report is based on the various reports prepared by the NEB throughout the term, particularly the last one, i.e. the pre-convention discussion paper that was sent to locals in May 2018. In each case, these documents enabled us to take stock of our work, refocus, and strengthen our work priorities and our plan of action.

OVERVIEW OF OUR WORK DURING THE PAST TERM

Our fight to protect our universal public postal service is one that we have been waging for decades. It is part of our history and our daily union life. Since May 2015, this struggle has been at the centre of everything that we do. It affects all facets of our union work, from collective bargaining to political action, to defending members on a daily basis. Here is an overview of what we accomplished during the past term and the challenges we faced.

A. Challenge: Defeating the Harper Government

In May 2015, the Conservative government plan to eliminate door-to-door delivery was underway, and the Union was fighting back with its "Save Canada Post" campaign. The federal election campaign was about to start, and we simply could not miss this opportunity.

We decided to travel across the country to denounce the Harper government and demand an end to Canada Post's five-point plan, and, above all, to the elimination of door-to-door delivery. We organized a cross-country tour to force the political parties to take a stand in favour of maintaining the universal public postal service and door-to-door delivery. The discussion paper for the pre-convention regional conferences summarizes this campaign as follows:

"We purchased an RV, had a decorative wrap placed on the outside with our campaign slogans and hit the road. The tour employed a multi-pronged strategy of mobilizing our members, engaging with the public and garnering media attention. While every day on the tour was different, there were also similarities. Every stop in every town began with work floor meetings. Mobilizing the membership for the election campaign was one of our main aims.

We also generated media interest with public events, interviews, press conferences and a carefully-crafted media strategy. This allowed us to get our message out broadly and build public support. We also targeted politicians. We held all-candidates' meetings on postal issues, we crashed Stephen Harper's rallies, we organized mass canvasses in swing ridings, and pushed the Liberals to finally commit to restoring door-to-door delivery shortly before the election.

This was all in addition to the ground campaign that locals across the country had been waging for over a year. At the local level, we built connections with communities and appealed to our allies for help. And they listened! The grassroots groundswell of support brought pressure on the powers that be. In Hamilton, senior citizens occupied CMB sites refusing to let construction crews install them. Hundreds of municipalities passed resolutions through city councils to oppose the cuts. Londoners for Door to Door built community gardens on top of CMB sites. All across the country, we organized creative resistance. Postal workers organized meetings, signed petitions and campaigned to make cuts at Canada Post one of the top five ballot box issues in the 2015 federal election."

The Conservative government was defeated in the federal election. In the days after taking power, the Liberal Government put an end to Canada Post's plan to end door-to-door delivery, which saved thousands of jobs. Later, in April 2016, the government decided to conduct a review of Canada Post's mandate. This mandate review kept us busy for the second half of 2016. Recognize the fact that although the Liberals stopped the cuts to door-to-door delivery, they reneged on the campaign promise to 'restore' the service and as a result, over a million Canadian households and small businesses are without home mail delivery and CUPW must fight to have that reversed.

B. Challenge: Negotiating Two Collective Agreements Concurrently

Immediately following the election of the Trudeau government, we began preparing for negotiations for both the urban and rural units, which would occur concurrently for the first time, with only one month separating both contracts' expiry dates. The Board decided that a single negotiating committee would deal with both collective agreements, with the goal of entering into a single collective agreement for both units.

The government had asked for Deepak Chopra's resignation, but he refused. He remained at the head of the Corporation for the negotiations, and, as to be expected, with the same management came the same approach to negotiations. The employer proposed many rollbacks and quickly asked for conciliation in an attempt to force a lockout in June-July 2016. The government decided to intervene and imposed a mediation process that led to the collective agreements being renewed for two years without any rollbacks, and the implementation of a Pay Equity Committee to address the situation of the rural unit. But more on this later.

C. Challenge: Canada Post Mandate Review

The government had announced fairly quickly that it would conduct a public review of the Canadian postal service. In fact, this review started in May 2016 with the appointment of a working group led by Mrs. Françoise Bertrand. The group was tasked with reviewing all options for the future of our postal service, except privatization.

The group produced a report to be submitted to a parliamentary committee, which organized public consultation in September and October 2016. CUPW intervened at every stage of the process, knowing it was important to present our views. We intensified the "A Canada Post for Everyone" campaign asking for service expansion, postal banking and nearby services for the public.

The Parliamentary Committee issued its report in December 2016. It contained 45 recommendations, including some that dealt directly with service expansion, but none on postal banking. So far, these recommendations have been ignored; not a single one has been implemented. Remember, the first change made by the government was the appointment of Minister Qualtrough at the end of August 2017.

D. Challenge: Expansion of Services

CUPW has always had a vision for the future of our universal, public postal service. Our vision is predicated on expanding services and maintaining good jobs at Canada Post. That is why the Union maintained its campaigns after the election. The "Save Canada Post" campaign, which was designed to block Canada Post's five-point plan, became "A Canada Post for Everyone." Its goal was to restore door-to-door delivery and promote expanding services to the public, including postal banking.

To carry out these campaigns, the National Executive Board appointed a group of national and regional coordinators. Their number fluctuated (from a maximum of 12 at the height of the campaigns to four currently) based on the work plan and our analysis of the Canadian political climate. The action plan was to involve the membership in campaigns while conducting activities to meet with municipal elected officials and federal and provincial MPs, organize information tables at conferences and meetings, find and mobilize allies, etc. They were also tasked with producing material for the various campaigns.

Here is an overview of the work accomplished by the campaign. We met with over 200 MPs, mostly from the NDP and Liberals, some several times. Our demands and positions are therefore well known on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Over 900 municipalities have adopted one or more resolutions on service expansion and/or postal banking. It should be noted that the Canadian Federation of Municipalities, which includes over 2,000 municipalities representing more than 80% of the country's population has adopted a resolution on the expansion of services.

Information tables were set up at over one hundred (100) events across the country, often over two, three or more consecutive days. CUPW took part in provincial municipalities' meetings, conferences, union conventions, political party preparatory meetings and conventions, and every other activity where a union presence was important. All this represents a gigantic amount of work!

Post cards and petitions, in the thousands, were signed throughout the mandate, dealing for example, with the campaign on Motion M-166, submitted by the NDP on conducting a study of postal banking. In addition, let's not forget our inflatable piggy bank, which travelled across the country to draw people's attention to postal banking. Thanks to the determination and commitment of the co-ordinators and everyone involved in the campaign, our vision of the postal service received unprecedented exposure.

E. Challenge: Respecting the Environment – “Delivering Community Power”

The environment has been an ongoing concern within CUPW. In each round of negotiations, we put forward projects to force the employer to commit to having a fleet of electrical vehicles and retrofitting its facilities, etc. At the 2011 Convention, we also adopted a new policy section F, which outlines the fundamental environmental principles CUPW is committed to defending.

In February 2016, these principles were included in a document entitled “Delivering Community Power.” At the request of Leap Manifesto, CUPW looked at the future of Canada Post from an environmental perspective. This led to “Meet the 21st Century Post Office.”

This document was recently updated and is now a complete document that not only advocates for service expansion, postal banking and converting the post office into a community hub, but also promotes a fair transition to a post-carbon society.

“Delivering Community Power” also brings together our labour and social allies. In fact, it is now at the heart of a large coalition that currently includes 96 unions and organizations, and is likely to grow over the coming years. To promote our vision even further, the NEB supported hiring two individuals who are travelling across the country to assist in promoting this new vision, which is also the direction our union will take for the coming years.

During the past term, some members seemed to think we were waging several campaigns that they felt sometimes overlapped unnecessarily. However, our experience has shown that this was likely unavoidable given the political climate we were dealing with. This means that the next NEB will likely have to group all our campaigns under one umbrella, that of our orientation and our vision for the future found in “Delivering Community Power.” This document, which represents our vision for the future of the postal service across the country, will serve us for many years.

F. A decisive struggle for our future: Pay Equity

As you can see, we faced many challenges during this term. Those described above accompanied and framed the struggles or specific issues we dealt with. The first of these specific issues is pay equity for our sisters and brothers in the rural and suburban unit.

Pay equity is the law: This is what one of the government ministers stated during the mediation phase of negotiations in August 2016. From then on, it was clear that the process would lead to major improvements in pay for our sisters and brothers in the rural unit. Starting with the signing of the memorandum of agreement on pay equity, this issue was discussed extensively in the Union’s regular bulletins.

In a bulletin to all members dated February 10, 2017, the process is explained as follows:

“Canada Post and CUPW have agreed to a 19-month Pay Equity process. The MOU has agreed-upon timelines for completing the process within 19 months. The first month was the selection of the committee and the pay equity expert consultants. The next 12 months (October 2016 – September 2017) is the actual study. From October to December 2017, the parties are to negotiate any changes to the Collective Agreement to reflect the Pay Equity Study’s findings. If the parties cannot agree, then from January to March of 2018 we will be in arbitration in front of Arbitrator Flynn. Arbitrator Flynn is also required to provide us with hearing dates throughout the process in case of disagreements.”

Despite the many attempts of Canada Post to delay it, we succeeded in getting through the pay equity process in 24 months. We must acknowledge the hard work and tireless commitment of the three sisters who took the lead in this matter: Sisters Barb MacMillan, Cathy Kennedy and Nancy Beauchamp.

Arbitrator Flynn rendered her first decision on May 31, 2018 and her second decision on September 20, 2018. There is still disagreement on isolated post allowance and on the dental plan for retirees. It is likely the union will have to return in front of arbitrator Flynn on these issues.

At this point, we should recall how the Union dealt with the pay equity issue from start to finish. From the outset, we said that the issue of pay equity had to be resolved at the bargaining table, not before the courts. From the very beginning, we have tried to bring the rural collective agreement in line with the urban, particularly with regard to benefits and wages. We have always argued that urban and rural work were the same, and have been guided by the principle of equal pay for equal work.

The RSMC struggle shows that progress does not always come quickly. It took us 15 years to achieve pay equity, and we should celebrate this victory. In 2003, when the RSMC were still contractors, before they were members of CUPW, then National President Deborah Bourque sat on the executive of the Organization of Rural Route Mail Carriers. At Convention, let us remember the names and faces of all those who were involved in this fight. They have made history.

G. Changes at Canada Post

After the Parliamentary Committee issued its report, the government failed to implement its recommendations. The government's first significant action was to appoint the new minister responsible for Canada Post, Carla Qualtrough, who was supposed to implement a new vision for Canada Post. The Mandate Letter she received from the Prime Minister states that she will be expected to deliver on the following top priority:

“Bring forward a new vision for Canada Post to ensure it provides the high-quality public service that Canadians expect at a reasonable price. This should build on the recent work of the Task Force on the Future of Canada Post, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, and additional input the Government has received from Canadians to date. Critical to fulfilling this commitment will also be the renewal of the organization by filling vacant leadership positions through timely, open, transparent, and merit-based selection processes, and the development of a stronger and more constructive relationship between the Corporation, its workers, and the communities in which it operates.”

Unfortunately, very little has been done so far to deliver on this priority.

At the same time, Deepak Chopra announced that he would be leaving as of March 2018. Later, changes occurred within the Board of Directors with the appointment of a new CEO, Jessica MacDonald in December 2017 and, for the first time, a labour representative, Jim Sinclair, appointed in May 2018. Once again, we have to wonder: Will these changes have a long-term impact on how upper management at Canada Post deals with CUPW? We obtained part of the answer to this question in the last round of negotiations.

H. 2017-2018 Negotiations: Taking the Lead

After the 2016 negotiations, it was clear to the NEB members, and all members of the Union, that the 2017-18 round of negotiations would be a continuation of the previous round, and in fact of the 2011-12 round of negotiations. Consequently, it was important for CUPW to take the lead in negotiations and put forward a program of demands that met the expectations of the membership. The NEB also knew that the pace of negotiations would be affected by two situations: the pay equity arbitration and Canada Post's internal situation.

In terms of the pay equity arbitration, the employer knew that it would have to adjust the rural and suburban mail carriers' pay. In fact, it had inflated the deficit for the 2017 fiscal year by \$200 million to meet its new obligations.

Things were slightly more complicated with Canada Post's internal situation. With the departure of Deepak Chopra, the government appointed Jessica MacDonald as interim CEO. However, internal divisions and/or the inability of the CEO to achieve consensus on a thoughtful approach to negotiations had a decisive impact on the round of negotiations, since the employer refused to seriously negotiate working conditions and address our demands for service expansion, among others.

As a result, the Union had no other choice but to apply for conciliation on June 29, 2018, but it did so at a strategic time that would give us the ability to go on strike at the end of September, the busiest time of year at Canada Post. And we know what happened next! Still fresh in our minds are the rotating strikes, Canada Post's lies around mail volumes, the back-to-work legislation, and the appointment of Elizabeth MacPherson as arbitrator for both collective agreements.

However, we succeeded in convincing an increasing number of citizens that the right to strike is an integral part of the right to freedom of association and the right to free collective bargaining, which is guaranteed by Article 2 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Struggle Continues!




Mike Palecek
National President



Jan Simpson
1st National Vice-President



Beverly Collins
National Secretary-Treasurer



Peter Denley
National Grievance Officer



Dave Bleakney
2nd National Vice-President



George Floresco
3rd National Vice-President



Martin Champagne
4th National Vice-President



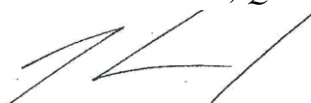
Jeff Callaghan
National Director, Atlantic Region



François Senneville
National Director, Quebec Region



Sylvain Lapointe
National Director, Metro-Montréal Region



Mark Evard
National Director, Central Region



Sanjay Sapra
National Director, Metro-Toronto Region



Tom Garbatt
National Director, Ontario Region



Gordon Fischer
National Director, Prairie Region



Tim Armstrong
National Director, Pacific Region