



**PAS DE VICTOIRE  
SANS LUTTE!**

**NO STRUGGLE,  
NO VICTORY!**

**MAY 13-17 MAI  
TORONTO ONTARIO**

# REPORTS OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTORS

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NATIONAL DIRECTOR - ATLANTIC

**FRANÇOIS SENNEVILLE**  
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CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS  
SYNDICAT DES TRAVAILLEURS ET TRAVAILLEUSES DES POSTES

# **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR ATLANTIC REGION**

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Dear Comrades,

This report is my third such report as the National Director for the Atlantic Region. It is submitted for your consideration in accordance with Article 3.04 of our National Constitution.

In this report, I will outline many of the events that occurred during this past mandate as well as provide my viewpoint on some of the serious challenges we will face during the next mandate and beyond. As always, due to the volume of work undertaken during the past four years and the constraints given for this report, it is not possible for me to report on every issue or devote as much time in this report as some issues truly deserve.

Looking back over the past four years, I am amazed at the number of issues we dealt with, the number of events and activities we have participated in, and the sheer volume of work undertaken nationally, regionally, and locally. Presenting briefs and working with community-allies during the Canada Post mandate review; working collectively to get rid of Harper's conservative government; fighting for the restoration of home mail delivery; two rounds of bargaining for the RSMC and UPO bargaining units and four rounds of private sector bargaining; court challenges; organizing drives, arbitrating and implementing the Pay Equity process; CIRB challenges; countless accommodation and schedule change consultations; grievance arbitrations; route restructures; and various other meetings are just some of the work done during the 2015-19 term. Needless to say, there was little time to pause, to debrief, or even to celebrate our victories and achievement. We were constantly moving from one fire to the next.

## **OUT OF THE BLOCKS: BARGAINING, COURT DECISIONS, AND MANDATE REVIEW**

Within a month following the 2015 National Convention, delegates were gathering at Urban Operations and Rural and Suburban Mail Carrier Regional Conferences to debate and adopt demands for the upcoming round of bargaining with Canada Post. Locals had, just a few weeks earlier, debated and adopted their resolutions. Given the number of unresolved issues and rollbacks from the 2011 negotiations, the list of demands for the 2015 round looked virtually identical to that of the 2011 round. Both Programs of Demands were overwhelmingly adopted by the members: 92% Urban Operations and 82% Rural and Suburban.

While hopes and expectations of the membership were high heading into this round of bargaining, there was also a sense of urgency as of many of the unresolved issues had been ongoing for many years and solutions were needed.

Before bargaining began, the Board passed a resolution appointing the members of both bargaining committees and, just like every committee since 1992 (UPO) and 2004 (RSMC), no member from the Atlantic Region was selected. When a region is bypassed for one round of bargaining, that can be expected as only four negotiators are appointed for each bargaining unit. When a region is continuously not selected for such important committees, one cannot help but feel that the interests and experiences of that region do not matter. With the exception of Darrel Tingley, National President for the 1992 and 1997 rounds of UPO bargaining, and Cheryl Coughlin, who was appointed to the RSMC Transition Committee, no member from the Atlantic Region has been appointed to a national negotiations committee since Jeannie Campbell, President of the North Sydney Local, was appointed to the 1992 committee.

Despite being slighted by the Board, Atlantic Locals rallied around their programs of demands and their negotiators. Locals held information pickets, work floor talks, MP visits, collective breaks, and public rallies to show their support for much needed improvements to their working conditions and for justice for RSMC members.

In April, the Ontario Superior Court released its much anticipated decision to CUPW's constitutional challenge of Stephen Harper's 2011 Postal Service Continuation Act. The Union argued that the legislation violated 2(b), freedom of expression, and (d), freedom of association, of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Union also argued the Act substantially interfered in the meaningful process of collective bargaining.

In what is commonly referred to as the "Firestone Decision," the Court ruled the Act had indeed violated postal workers' rights of expression and association "in an unjustified manner." This was a total vindication for the Union and clearly showed the lengths the employer and government will go to deny basic freedoms and keep workers under their thumb.

For the first time in our bargaining history, in April 2016, the employer applied for conciliation, which put in place a 90 day count down to a potential strike or lock-out in June. It was apparent the employer had no real appetite to bargain meaningfully and was content to repeat the steps they had taken in 2011; play to the public that there was no dealing with the unrealistic union, cry poor, lock-out workers, and then wait for their friends in government to pass back-to-work.

Following unsuccessful conciliation, in June 2016, the Minister of Labour appointed two mediators to assist the parties. Within days of the Union obtaining our right to strike, CPC presented two global offers, which included new employer demands never discussed at the bargaining table. The parties agreed to a two-week extension to the "cooling off" period.

It was clear Canada Post was anxious to lock us out, given that mail volumes historically declined during the summer months. It was also evident that any employer lock-out would stretch out for months. It was critical, in order for us to regain control of the bargaining process and place the employer under maximum financial pressure, that we make it to the fall.

Not providing a 72-hour notice meant the will and strength of the membership would be tested as the employer tried to intimidate and provoke a walkout; however, members stood strong and our message resonated with the public that CUPW would remain at the table until an agreement was hammered out. Without a solid and disciplined membership during this critical period, the strategy of the Board would have simply been words on paper.

In early July, we presented Canada Post with a global offer that addressed long standing issues: full job security for all, including those left not fully protected in 2012; a wage adjustment for Groups 3 and 4 members; elimination of the post 2013 wage chart for Groups 1 and 2; solutions for Group 1 staffing; access to information; getting rid of the double-bundle; addressing overburdened Letter Carrier routes; and ensuring equality for RSMCs.

In August, the government appointed Special Mediator William Kaplan, and, just when it seemed we had essentially reached the point where we could start to inflict real pressure on the employer at a crucial time of the year, tentative agreements were being recommended for acceptance. In what the majority of the National Executive Board referred to as “non-concessionary agreements,” most of the Union’s demands again ended up on the floor.

Although the membership voted to accept both tentative agreements, I strongly believe that, had we forced the issue then, many or all of the unresolved issues from 2011 may have gotten resolved. In my opinion, the low percentages of acceptance of these contracts across the country sent a clear message that members were less than pleased with the process or the outcome. Apart from both bargaining units negotiating as one committee and the achievement of the Pay Equity Process for RSMC’s, of which the importance to our members cannot be under stated, putting the fight for many serious issues off for another day is not how this Union made historical gains for our members or for workers in general.

With the federal election and the OGGO report behind us, it was time to head back into bargaining with Canada Post. Our priorities, for all intents and purposes, had remained unchanged: addressing the major rollbacks from the 2011 round; finding solutions for many long outstanding issues such as insufficient staffing, health and safety matters; and resolving the need for equality. As a Union, we had kicked the can down the road as long as we could and now it was, as we say in the Atlantic, time to fish or cut bait. In November 2017, CUPW gave our notice to bargaining.

With lessons learned from previous rounds, the Board decided to enact a different strategy and applied for Mediation from the outset of bargaining. As the employer was stuck with a lame-duck President and CEO, the feeling was the federal government may be more involved in this round, and, if that was the case, a federally appointed mediator would witness first-hand the kind of non-negotiating Canada Post had subjected the Union to over the past rounds of bargaining.

Something else was different for this round of bargaining. For the first time in decades, the Atlantic Region had a member on the negotiations committee; Amy Anderson, President of the Acadie-Bathurst Local, was appointed as a member of the RSMC negotiating committee. It takes a very big commitment for a member to put their life on hold and go to Ottawa to do this work and we, as a region, were very grateful Amy had made that commitment and that the Board had accepted her.

In bargaining, true to form, the employer showed it was unwilling to seriously negotiate solutions to the same issues we had brought to bargaining many times. Even months into the process, the employer had yet to even table what its real demands were. Local after local across the region were reporting that the members' frustration was growing, partially because of the lack of information coming from the bargaining table. This was understandable as the process was really mediation. The reality was that nothing much was happening. Although our negotiators were taking the time to detail our issues and explain our solutions, the employer either failed to respond or, like the employer's Chief Negotiator for RSMS issues, was nowhere to be found.

In June, CUPW applied for conciliation and the 60 day clock starting ticking down to a strike or lock-out. In August, strike votes were held across the country. That same month, the government named Jessica MacDonald as Interim CEO.

For a split second, hopes were high that a new face would result in a new attitude on Riverside Drive. Within very short order, this new boss was acting like the old boss. Talk is cheap and when workers have been lied to, harassed, and mistreated for years, lip-service from the interim CEO was never going to be enough.

After 11 months of this, members provided the Union and negotiators with overwhelming strike mandates. This was a historical moment for RSMC members who, for the first time since becoming members of CUPW in 2004, had taken a vote to authorize strike action (in 2015, RSMC took a strike vote which was meaningless since the tentative agreement was ratified). Workers of both units agreed they would not be divided and would take on the employer together.

The decision taken by the Board to enact a ban on all overtime as part of its strike activities turned out to be very decisive. Workers who had been forced to work countless hours of overtime on over-structured routes, in under-staffed offices, or, in the case of RSMC, hours of free work, were suddenly able to tell their supervisor that they would not be working overtime without any fear of reprisal from the employer. Members had taken back control of their offices, plants, and depots. Members had the power and were enjoying flexing their muscles.

While Brother Gallant was replacing me on the Board, the decision was made to implement the overtime ban. Although I initially was not in favour of the action, it soon became apparent the employer had not anticipated such actions and, given their staffing in virtually all groups relied heavily on overtime, the overtime ban was a brilliant move.

Varying the duration for rotating strikes was also a maneuver which caught the employer off guard. While the initial strike locations rotated out and then back in 24 hours later, when locals were kept out for longer periods of time, this left the employer unable to continue “business as usual.” Again, if not for the determined discipline of the membership to comply with the strategy, the rotating strikes would not have been as effective.

Despite the claims by the liberal government that they supported free collective bargaining and that solutions should come at the bargaining table, once Trudeau openly mused that “all opinions are on the table,” everyone knew what opinion the government would take to bring closure. As the sole shareholder of Canada Post, the government only needed to direct the employer to stop screwing around and bargain, but no such direction came. Instead, we share the introduction of Bill C-89.

Once again, the only champion in the House opposing legislation that stripped us our constitutional rights was the NDP. Apart from a few back-bench Liberals like Saint John-Rothesay MP, Wayne Long, who voted against the Bill, only New Democrats stood on the side of the workers. For all the talk about advancing rights for workers, defending “middle-class jobs” and being feminists, Trudeau’s government would implement a bill that sent workers back to work under the same contracts that had resulted in countless work place injuries during a period with the heaviest parcel and mail volumes of the year. It was also forcing a group of workers made up of mostly women to return to performing thousands of hours of unpaid work.

As it became apparent C-89 would pass, and with the same crippling financial penalties for union members, leaders, and the Union as a whole as the Conservatives had in their unconstitutional Bill C-6, the Board did not vote to defy the legislation.

On the day the legislation was passed in the House, occupations and walk-outs blanketed the country as workers showed their unwillingness to simply go away. While we all definitely felt we had been betrayed and mistreated by our employer and government, we did not feel defeated. There is a distinction between how one feels when they have fought and conceding without a fight. I will never forget the militancy of the members during this round of bargaining. As many members (including local executive members) had never been on strike before, I was encouraged to see that there was no apprehension whatsoever as members seized their opportunity to send a clear message that they were prepared to fight for what they truly deserved.

There is no putting the “genie back in the bottle” for Canada Post. Because of their arrogance and deceit, along with the government collusion to deny free collective bargaining, the employer has helped to create countless shop floor activists right across the country. For possibly the first time ever in their careers, workers got to see their real employer.

I would be remiss if I did not include an acknowledgement of the kind of real friends CUPW has, especially here in the Atlantic. After C-89 became law and we were effectively denied our right to picket our employer, our friends and allies said that would not do. Within hours of the bill becoming law, our allies put up picket lines and blocked Canada Post trucks from entering or leaving.

In the Region, we saw solidarity picket lines go up in Moncton, Fredericton, and Halifax. Labour councils members, members from CUPE NB, SEIU, and other unions, the IWW, Federations of Labour and CLC reps and members of the public all showed up to support us.

While these Solidarity pickets were largely peaceful, in Halifax, Canada Post thugs colluded with anti-union Halifax cops and arrested six picketers on trumped up charges. Members greatly appreciated this incredible act of solidarity and quickly started a GoFundMe page to raise money for a legal defense fund. As I write this report, three of the Halifax 6, Tony Tracey, Darius Mirshahi and Austin Hiltz, are all awaiting trial, but they know they have 50,000 postal workers in their corner.

## **ORGANIZING AND BARGAINING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

The Atlantic Region continued to organize and represent workers in the private sector, both postal and non-postal related employers. We negotiated collective agreements for Emergency Dispatchers at Medacom Atlantic, Combined Urban Service workers at Pro-Ex Transportation, and Nor-Pel.

### **Nor-Pel**

Although Nor-Pel has held many contracts with Canada Post across the country, we saw this employer be awarded CUS contracts for the first time in the Maritimes (in Cape Breton and New Glasgow, NS, and St. Stephen, NB).

After eluding the Union for two years, Nor-Pel's running days came to an end. Despite the employer threatening to walk away from the contracts they held in all three locals, the members provided the Union with a unanimous strike mandate and, on August 8, 2018, the workers walked off the job throughout the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

The workers' two day strike, along with the solidarity actions of their sister and brothers in St. Stephen and New Glasgow, and their UPO and RSMC co-workers who refused to do struck work, forced Canada Post to intervene with their employer and demand they get a contract with the union.

As employees performing Combined Urban Service work, Nor-Pel workers have seen their fair share of contractors come and go, but they always vote to remain CUPW members. Their solidarity, determination, and courage were truly inspirational, and resulted in a just and fair first collective agreement with that employer. Their actions also empowered other members right across the country, showing us all what real solidarity looks like.

### **Pro-Ex Transportation**

In March 2017, CUPW provided Pro-Ex Transportation Solutions with our notice to bargain. Pro-Ex held Combined Urban Service contracts with Canada Post in three Atlantic locals, Edmundston and Campbellton in New Brunswick and Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia.

Negotiations dragged on and, in November 2017, the Union applied for conciliation. It was not until the conciliator notified the parties that her efforts were unsuccessful and that the 21 day "cooling off" period would begin on January 30, 2018 that the process finally started moving again.

After being provided with an overwhelming strike mandate from the members in all three locals, pressure was put on the employer and a tentative agreement was reached. The membership ratifies the two year collective agreement that included a 12% wage increase over the life of the agreement. Many thanks to the members for their support and actions during this round and for the efforts of our negotiators, Jim Gallant and Toni MacAfee.

As this report is being written, we are preparing for the next round of bargaining with Pro-Ex as the current collective agreement expires April 30, 2019.

### **Emergency Medical Care**

The members of the Nova Scotia Medical Communications Local are still dealing with legislation enacted by the Nova Scotia Liberal government back in 2014 and 2015.

Bill 37 – The Essential Health and Community Services Act (2014) – while not removing the right to strike from public sector workers, the legislation imposes an obligation for both unions and employers to agree on numbers of workers who would be designated as “essential services” prior to either party taking strike or lock-out actions.

Bill 148 – The Public Services Sustainability Act (2015) – imposes two years of wage freezes following by two more of wage increases limited to 1% and 1.5%/0.5%. CUPW joined other unions representing public sector workers, including Nova Scotia Government Employees Union, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Unifor, Service Employees International Union, Nova Scotia Nurses Union, Nova Scotia Teachers Union, and the International Union of Operating Engineers, to launch a constitutional challenge of Bill 148 as it violates s. 2 (d) of the Charter of Rights and freedoms by depriving union members of a meaningful right to strike with respect to wages and other compensation-related items.

As we prepare for the upcoming round of collective bargaining, wage increases for the fourth and fifth year of the current collective agreement are still unresolved, and several employer initiatives, including their attempt to implement a Non-Paramedic Medical Dispatcher into the bargaining unit, will need to be addressed.

### **Medacom Atlantic Inc.**

This was the second round of collective bargaining with Medacom Atlantic, a subsidiary of Medavie Blue Cross, who also operates Emergency Medical Inc. (EMC) in Dartmouth. Prior to negotiations, the employer initiated training that would have workers become certified EMD (Emergency Medical Dispatchers). The parties were subsequently able to arrive at an agreement on a new wage rate that partially addressed the increased workload and responsibilities workers would be faced with.

During the previous round of bargaining, CUPW and the employer were not able to reach a tentative agreement and, with the workers not having the right to strike, the parties proceeded to interest arbitration. Although significant improvements were gained, the wage increases fell far below what these workers truly deserved. Improved wages would be a priority for the next round of bargaining.

With strong support from the membership and with the immense dedication and perseverance shown by our negotiators, a tentative agreement was reached with the employer with important gains and improvements long overdue:

- Annual wage increases of 3.5%, 3.5%, 3.5% and 4%
- Improvements to Annual Leave entitlements
- Enhanced Health and Safety protections and procedures
- Introduction of paid Emergency Leave,
- An end to capping the number of Shift trades
- Decrease in time negative reports remain on a worker's personal file
- Streamlined Grievance Procedure
- Guarantee of Pay Smoothing

When Medacom workers first approached CUPW and inquired about joining our union, wages at the Communication Centre were slightly above minimum wage. At the completion of this contract, workers there will be earning between \$21 and \$25 an hour. These workers are not remunerated as much as they deserve, but their latest contract provides more recognition for the vital services they provide for all Prince Edward Islanders.

Many thanks to our negotiators, Toni MacAfee and Pearl Gillis-Palmer, and EMD member Cody Hamly who worked tirelessly researching, preparing, and presenting the workers' demands at the bargaining table.

## **RMS Pope Incorporated**

Attempts during the mandate to negotiate with this employer have proven unsuccessful. Although the Union requested and received confirmation in August 2014 that the Canada Industrial Board had filed their decision on RMS Pope with the Federal Court of Canada, the employer continues to ignore any request to bargain.

Despite the employer's claim they had lost all remaining contracts with Canada Post in the Maritime provinces, which turned out to be untrue, at this point, the bargaining unit has been reduced to three members in the Charlottetown local.

## **Bee Clean Building Maintenance**

In October 2018, CUPW was certified by the New Brunswick Labour Board as the bargaining agent for workers with Bee Clean in Moncton and Saint John, NB. These members are employed by Bee Clean, who clean and maintain Canada Post facilities in both locations. As this report is being prepared, negotiations have commenced and our negotiators, Jim Gallant, Toni MacAfee, Debbie Legge (Moncton), Kim Stiles (Moncton), and Kevin Suttie (Fundy), are meeting with the employer and working hard to achieve a fair first collective agreement.

## **SAVE CANADA POST CAMPAIGN**

I want to acknowledge the work undertaken by so many members, allies, and affiliate organizations during the 2016 Mandate Review of Canada Post. Due to the amazing work of CUPW members, many going door-to-door in their communities, attending public forums, signing petitions, and making thoughtful and fact based presentations, a number of important recommendations resulted.

On December 13, 2016, the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates' (OGGO) released their report, which included some 45 recommendations to the government, including:

- Canada Post be maintained as a universal public service for all Canadians and conduct its operations on a self-sustaining financial basis, while ensuring that profits generated are reinvested within the Corporation;
- The Minister of Public Services and Procurement consider broadening the mandate of Canada Post to include delivering critical digital communications infrastructure to rural Canadians;
- Canada Post and the federal government take steps to modernize Canada Post's defined benefit pension plan so that it can operate on a going-concern basis and no longer be subject to solvency funding requirements;
- Canada Post focus on expanding services to the small- and medium-sized enterprises and provide excellence in service so that businesses have confidence in Canada Post's service delivery model;

- Canada Post continue the moratorium on community mailboxes conversion, and develop a plan to re-instate door-to-door delivery for communities that lost that service after August 3, 2015;
- Canada Post examine ways to increase the hours of operations in rural post offices and perform more regional sortation of mail and packages so that rural customers can access their local market easily;
- Canada Post preserve its post offices, along with the associated moratorium on the closure of rural post offices, even in areas where there are franchise postal outlets;
- Canada Post explore location-specific opportunities for post offices to act as community hubs and respond to the local needs of its surrounding community;
- The federal government examine the possible delivering of broadband Internet and improved cellular service to rural Canada using Canada Post real estate to house servers and offer retail services to customers.

In January 2018, the government quietly announced what it called “a new vision for Canada Post.” Its “vision” included:

1. Terminating Canada Post’s program to convert door-to-door delivery to community mailboxes.
2. Reclassifying Canada Post under the Financial Administration Act so that it can reinvest all of its profits in service and innovation.

Although certainly not all the recommendations, if implemented, would be positive for Canada Post, the public, or our members, many of the more favourable recommendations would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the membership, local, regional, and national leadership and our Save Canada Post Campaign Co-ordinators.

CUPW must continue its efforts to ensure that all of the communities across the country that lost their home mail delivery, like St. John’s, Charlottetown, Halifax, and Bathurst, have that service restored. We know that, as long as parts of the Canadian population are without this service, Canada Post and its sole shareholder will seek to exploit that fact and push for more cuts in service.

## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

This mandate, the Region continued its International Solidarity work, largely through the efforts and funding provided by the Region's International Solidarity Fund. The AISF was created by Atlantic locals with the objective of promoting a better membership understanding of the need for international Trade Union and worker-to-worker solidarity between postal workers and workers in other countries. The AISF is largely funded by contributions from Atlantic locals and the proceeds from International Solidarity auctions held during Spring and Fall Educations and other constitutionally mandated meetings.

The following were adopted by the Resolutions Committee, which oversees the administration of the AISF between constitutional meetings:

- May Day Delegations to Havana Cuba (2016, 2017 and 2018)

Members on each of these delegations met with Cuban Postal Workers (members of the SNTCIE) and their leadership, participated in May Day events and an International Solidarity Conference, and also gained a better understanding of Cuba and its historical struggles and achievements.

2016: Paul Clarke (Nova), Amy Anderson (Acadie-Bathurst), Dan McCormick (Breton), Nicola Boone (New Glasgow), and Krista Ricketts (Corner Brook)

2017: Dan McCormack (Breton) and Debbie Hollis (Moncton)

2018: Line Doucet (Moncton) and Geof Turner (Annapolis Valley)

Members of the 2018 delegation also had the opportunity to visit two sites in Cuba where CUPW and the SNTCIE were running an Appendix R funded project, which provide training and information for local leadership. The training was conducted in both Havana and Ciego de Avilia.

Members from the Atlantic Region also participated in other nationally organized and funded delegations:

- Labour Notes Conference (Chicago) 2016 – George Nickerson (Fredericton-Oromocto)
- World Social Forum (Brazil) 2018 – Todd Murray (St. John's)
- Labour Notes Conference (Chicago) 2018 – Amy Anderson (Acadie-Bathurst)
- UNI World Women's Conference and UNI World Congress (England) 2018 – Toni MacAfee
- Palestinian Postal Service Workers Union Speaking Tour 2019

The Liverpool and Nova Locals, the National Union, the Halifax and Dartmouth District Labour Council, along with Labour4Palestine, sponsored a regional stop in Halifax for the speaking tour of Imad Temiza, International Coordinator for the Palestinian Postal Service Workers Union (PPSWU). Many thanks to Anita Bock, and Tony Rogers and Mike McDonald for organizing a successful visit to the Atlantic Region for Brother Temiza.

Although some members may not see the need for spending union dues or devoting time and energy on international visits or projects, I firmly believe this is some of the most important work we can do as a national trade union. On a daily basis, we see just how internationally connected large multinational corporations act and how decisions taken in other countries not only impact workers there but those decisions are felt by workers right around the globe. Why is it okay for businesses to act globally, but not for trade unions to do the same? It makes little sense for us to close our hearts and minds to the issues faced by workers in other parts of the world, especially when we are faced with the same issues here.

Our international solidarity efforts allow us to learn different strategies and tactics to take on our employers and governments. Our sisters and brothers around the world show us time and time again how to fight without fear, most of the time under enormous threats to health and personal safety. International solidarity is definitely not a one way exchange.

As a union, we must take steps to ensure that more and more of our international solidarity efforts involve a greater number of union members and that we continue to be transparent about what and why we are engaged in those efforts.

## **WORK WITH LABOUR MOVEMENT AND ALLIES**

Throughout this mandate, postal workers have continued our active participation within the labour movement, working closely with our allies, labour councils, the Canadian Labour Congress and the four Federations of Labour on fundamental issues affecting workers and the public at large.

As in the past, CUPW continues to be well represented on Federation of Labour Executive Councils: Carl Pursey (past President of Charlottetown Local) is the President of the Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour; Scott Gaudet (Summerside Local) represents CUPW on the PEI Federation of Labour's Executive council; Kevin Suttie (President Fundy Local) represents CUPW on the New Brunswick Federation of Labour's Executive Committee; Gordie MacDonald (President Breton Local and Cape Breton and District Labour Council) represents postal workers as the General Vice President on the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Executive Council; Philip Crocker (St. John's) is the Executive Vice President on the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour Executive Council – Representing all Unions Under 1000 members; Nicola Boone (New Glasgow) is a member of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Women's Committee; and Dave Dudley (Fundy) is a member of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour Health and Safety Committee.

In 2015, Postal Workers joined with other Health Care Sector unions (Nova Scotia Government Employees Union, Service Employees International Union, UNIFOR, Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Nova Scotia Nurses Union) to launch a constitution challenge of the newly elected Liberal government's Bill 37. Through a coalition organized by the Federation of Labour, the unions filed a claim in the Nova Scotia Supreme Court that the Bill contravened the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and international law by directly interfering with the right to strike by all health and community services workers.

Under Bill 37, the Essential Health and Community Service Act, unions and employers in the health care sector are required to have an "essential services agreement" in place before any strike or lockout action could be taken. Bill 37, one of the most regressive pieces of legislation imposed on workers anywhere in the country, essentially stripped workers and their unions of their constitutional right to bargain collectively. Members in the Nova Scotia Medical Communications Local were among the 40,000 health care and community service workers in Nova Scotia impacted by the legislation.

Throughout this term, we continued to ensure locals participated in their labour council. While there still remains a small percentage of locals who are not regularly sending delegates and simply paying their per capita, most Atlantic locals are involved and playing an active role in the important work being done in their communities through the labour council.

The Region continued its work with coalitions and organizations working for the betterment of our communities. We worked closely with them on projects, as well as provided financial assistance. Over the course of this mandate, we worked together with:

- Nova Scotia Advocate and New Brunswick Media Coop (Alternative media)
- ACORN
- Nova Scotia Cuba Association
- Canadian Network on Cuba
- New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Peacemakers Leadership Camp for Young Women
- Mi'kmaq Water Defenders of the Sipekne'katik First Nations

Over the past four years, our Regional office and many locals have provided solidarity and financial support to several unions engaged in struggles with their employers:

- Members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Locals 1431 and 227 on strike against Halifax Water (Halifax, NS) over employer attacks to their pension plan;
- Members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1288P who struck Covered Bridge Chips (Hartland, NB) for a first collective agreement; and
- Members of Unifor Local 597 who have been locked out by their employer, DJ Composites (Gander NL), for more than 2 years.

Many of the struggles undertaken by other unions with their employers are the exact same struggles we have with our employers. We must constantly stand with them if they are to see us as real allies. Atlantic locals have shown that building solidarity requires more than lip service and a cheque.

## **SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

As I reflect back over the past term, I cannot help but feel that we are truly very fortunate here in the Atlantic Region to have such an amazing number of members who are always prepared to step forward, who never shy away from any challenge, and who are consistently and militantly passionate in their defense of our union.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize and thank a number of members who, throughout this mandate, have worked tirelessly and sacrificed countless hours away from friends, families, and loved ones to do the important work of CUPW. On behalf of the Atlantic membership, the Regional Officers, and Union Representatives, I want to thank all the Local Executive Committees, Committee members, Shop Stewards, Labour Council delegates, Worker Facilitators, Worker Advocates, and shop floor and community activists for their dedication. Without all of their hard work, our union work would not be possible.

On behalf of the Region, I want to thank Matt Lent (Nova Scotia Medical Communications) for his work with Toni MacAfee on the region's STDP caseload. Matt came to the office and shared his years of experience and knowledge as a certified Acute Care Paramedic, assisting Toni on many appeal files.

Special thanks also to Gordie MacDonald for his work as the Region's Organizing Co-ordinator. Gordie's actions led to successful certification of both the Nor-Pel and Bee Clean bargaining units.

I also want to acknowledge the work of the Region's National Committee members. As in past mandates, members volunteered their time and efforts to ensure great representation for our Region:

- National Board of Trustees Member Kevin Peterson (New Glasgow) and Alternate Trustee Scott Gaudet;
- National Women's Committee Member Melanie MacKenzie (Nova) and Alternate Member Edith MacDonald (Woodstock);
- National Human Rights Committee Members Anita Bock (Nova), Brian Lee (Nova), Dwayne Corner (Nova), Annette Davis (Happy Valley-Goose Bay), and Alternate Members Mike Nelson (Nova), Paulette Foote (Annapolis Valley), Nadine Kays (Nova), Richard Hopper (Moncton) and Krista Ricketts (Corner Brook);
- National Work Measurement Committee Members Nicola Boone and Tony Rogers (Nova);
- National Health and Safety Committee Member Debbie Hollis (Moncton) and Alternate Member Nicola Boone;
- National Appeal Board Member Anita Bock and Alternate Member Krista Ricketts;
- National Disciplinary Committee Member Bobbi Jo Brown (Truro) and Alternate Member Jackie Robichaud (Miramichi);
- Regional Disciplinary Committee Members Krista Ricketts, Geof Turner (Annapolis Valley), Melanie MacKenzie, and Alternate Members Darlene Steele (Exploits Valley), Debbie Hollis and Marc Andre Caron (Edmundston).

I want to say a special thank you to the members who served during the mandate on the Region's Resolutions Committee, which, in addition to their duties associated with Regional Conferences, also administer the Region's International Solidarity Fund: Pearl Gillis-Palmer (Charlottetown); Line Doucet (Moncton); Edith MacDonald; Krista Ricketts; Jamie Patterson (Labrador City-Wabush); Gina Miller (Nova); Nicola Boone; Barb Anstey (Deer Lake); Gordie MacDonald; Todd Murray (St. John's); Craig Dyer (St. John's); Don Watson (Fundy); Tony Rogers; and Dwayne Corner.

As always, the membership have benefitted immensely from the knowledgeable, dedicated, and hardworking staff at our National Office; members of the Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union Local 225 and the Canadian Union of Public Employees Union Local 1979. Here in the Atlantic, we have seen a passing of the torch with the retirements of both Delores Smith and Valerie Richardson and we were very happy to welcome Nicole Jacklin and Teri Mejias to our office. Their hard work and skills ensure that we are able to represent members effectively day in and day out. Everyone here wishes Nicole and Teri long and fulfilling careers with CUPW.

I am truly honoured to have worked alongside people who are so knowledgeable, passionate, and dedicated to the work they do for the membership every day. Their thorough commitment has allowed us to achieve so much, especially given we are the smallest region in the country.

Our Union Representatives Mike McDonald and Anita Bock have both devoted much of their time to ensuring the locals they serviced received timely information and outstanding representation. Once again, in Spring 2016, Anita answered our call to come to the Regional office as Alternate UR, this time to replace Brother Garnier during his long term absence. Thanks Mike and Anita for all that you do.

Regional Grievance Officer Jim Gallant has once again reduced the Region's use of lawyers this mandate, arguing almost all of our formal arbitration cases, and with a very high success rate. Jim, along with Toni, also acted as the Union's negotiator for all of the Region's Combined Urban Services contractor negotiations.

I want to personally thank Jim for stepping in and assuming my duties during a very hard time for Toni and I. Without any hesitation, Jim went to Ottawa and participated on the Board during a challenging and no doubt stressful time.

Finally, I want to say thank you to Toni MacAfee, the Region's Education and Organization Officer and my partner. In addition to all work she does ensuring the Region's education needs are met and organizing several new bargaining units, Toni stepped forward this mandate to be responsible for our STDP caseload, a daunting task for anyone, but especially someone with limited arbitration experience. Toni has done a remarkable job representing members on their STD appeals.

Apart from all of that, Toni has been my inspiration. Without the advice and guidance she has provided me over the years, I would not have been able to perform my duties and responsibilities as National Director to the extent I have.

## CONCLUSION

Delegates to this 2019 National Convention have many important decisions to make, from union dues to electing our leadership. Convention delegates will more importantly be setting the course of the Union for the next four years and beyond.

Thanks to changes made at the 2015 National Convention, a number of members have already been elected to serve the membership during the 2019-2023 term. I want to thank those members elected at our Pre-Convention Regional Conference for stepping forward and wish you all the best as you undertake your obligations and responsibilities on Regional and National committees and boards. Finally, I want to wish everyone safe travels to Toronto. I look forward to seeing you all there and having a positive and productive National Convention.

Respectfully Submitted In Solidarity,

Jeff Callaghan  
National Director Atlantic

nj/cope 225

# **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR QUEBEC REGION**

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Sisters and Brothers:

Under section 3.04 of the National Constitution, I hereby submit my first report to you as National Director, Quebec Region.

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the last half of the preceding term, the Union had considerably increased pressure on the conservative government through its “Save Canada Post” campaign. For a simple reason: federal elections were approaching, and there was no way the Union could let the Conservatives remain in power and pursue their agenda to dismantle our public postal system.

On October 19, 2015, after the Union’s relentless efforts, the Conservative government was defeated, and CUPW was proud to have helped Sister Karine Trudel get elected as Member of Parliament for the riding of Jonquière. On October 20, 2015, the day after the elections, the Liberals, who had just won a majority government, announced an end to the implementation of the “Five-Point Plan” and to the rollout of community mailboxes. Following this announcement, the government began a public consultation process, under the auspices of a government task force in which CUPW was heavily involved. Following this public consultation, the task force produced a discussion paper entitled *Canada Post in the Digital Age*. A Parliamentary standing committee studied this paper, and, in December 2016, issued its own report, entitled *The Way Forward for Canada Post*. The government responded to the Committee in April 2017 and, in January 2018, made a decision that, in the end, would only superficially address the issues.

During this entire period, and so far, the Union has taken on Canada Post in two rounds of bargaining. It revamped its information technology system with the ultimate goal of improving not only its efficiency, but also the service it provides directly to the membership. The Union continued its Save Canada Post campaign, adding to its mandates. However, one of the most significant highlights of this term was undoubtedly the 37 days of rotating strikes that occurred in the fall of 2018. These would lead to back-to-work legislation that stripped the Union of its constitutional right to free collective bargaining, and also included mandatory arbitration.

The 2015-2019 term was marked by various changes and improvements, but also continuing struggles. By Convention time, we will very likely still be involved in an unwanted arbitration process.

## **THE 2015-16 ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS**

The 2015-16 negotiations began under a new federal government. The Liberals had appeared to be more favourable to our demands during the election campaign and, soon after being elected, shelved Canada Post's "Five-Point Plan."

That being said, this new attitude would be slow in coming to Canada Post's leadership. Not surprisingly, when the Government House Leader wrote to Canada Post, the Chair of the Board of Directors' reply was to confirm that Deepak Chopra would not be leaving Canada Post. Chopra's departure would not happen until the next round of negotiations.

Once these negotiations got underway, Canada Post very quickly asked for mediation on April 4, 2016, during negotiations, which led the Union to a round of votes in the spring and the employer's lockout notice just after Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day (June 24). The employer used its "1-billion-dollar" and "decreasing lettermail" arguments throughout the summer and early fall. Our media coverage made a difference in public opinion, and the employer's bluff in early July and late August was unsuccessful. Finally, special mediation late in the summer led to a tentative two-year agreement for both collective agreements (urban and RSMC units). The 2019 federal election, the pay equity process and the completion of the Canada Post study would take place during the following round of negotiations.

## **THE 2017-18 ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS**

It was as a negotiator that I was most involved in the last round of negotiations, which was marked by the departure of Deepak Chopra, the arrival of Jessica McDonald, multiple rounds of mediation during the process, and back-to-work legislation that imposed binding arbitration. The employer had tried to influence negotiations through its communications with the membership. From late October to early December 2018, members across the country went on rotating strikes to support their demands and show their determination right up to the implementation of the back-to-work legislation.

Forced arbitration was preceded by a short period of mediation that did not help in any way. The employer had wanted arbitration from the very start, and once the Prime Minister publicly said, "all options are on the table," the employer closed all channels of communication and let the negotiations period expire. Even though the Union is well equipped to face arbitration, there is no doubt that this process is a violation of our ultimate right to free collective bargaining.

## PAY EQUITY

By the end of the 2015-16 round of bargaining, the Union had negotiated a pay equity review for rural and suburban mail carriers (RSMCs). After two years of hard work, mediation and comprehensive arbitration, the Pay Equity Committee finally got a decision that would give RSMCs pay equity at Canada Post. While negotiations went on, the Committee worked hard to achieve this result, which is this term's crowning achievement.

## CAMPAIGNS IN QUEBEC

After the 2015 Convention, the Save Canada Post and Save Door-to-Door campaigns continued, the Union highlighting that Canada Post acted brazenly and disrespectfully towards the municipalities. By the time the October 2015 federal election rolled around, the Save Canada Post campaign, which had begun in 2014, had generated some 350 resolutions adopted by various Quebec municipalities in support of our fight-back against Canada Post's Five-Point Action Plan, which included rolling out community mailboxes.

Throughout the campaign, the Quebec campaign coordinators took part in various activities organized by and for our allies. In late 2014, MP Alexandre Boulerice joined with CUPW to organize public townhall meetings across the province. The Union was able to meet with hundreds of resident from every corner of Quebec. It also attended various labour conventions (Unifor, FTQ, PSAC, etc.). The Union supported community groups and individual members of the public who were protesting Canada Post's Five-Point Action Plan. It also sat on various FTQ committees to reach out to allies and raise awareness.

The Union was involved IN a large number of activities at the national and provincial levels, including municipal associations, labour federations, political party caucus meetings, party conventions, community associations, and more. Thirty-one of these events took place in Quebec, not to mention events for francophones that the Quebec coordinators attended outside the province. At most of these events, including the NDP convention, we set up information booths where participants could sign petitions and postcards.

The Union was also involved in the inter-union planning of the 2016 World Social Forum (WSF), where it worked at a booth that led to forming various alliances of benefit to the campaign. It took part in events sponsored by the Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ) and the Fédération québécoise des municipalités (FQM), where it also had information booths. It made presentations to various groups, including the *Regroupement des syndicalistes à la retraite* (retired unionists group), the *Association populaire autonome de quartier* or APAQ (an independent grassroots neighbourhood association) in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, a similar APAQ in Rosemont-St-Michel, student associations, the *Comité social Centre sud* (South Central Social Committee) and many others. We urged allies to draft submissions and presentations to the public meetings of the federal government's Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates (OGGO). We attended every session.

Politically, the campaign in Quebec led to several achievements. The Union carried out a last-minute effort to lobby senators in an attempt to block Bill C-89, and was able to postpone its adoption by two and a half days.

The Union was actively involved in many municipal council meetings, with a view to informing the public on the impact of ending door-to-door delivery and getting municipalities to adopt resolutions. It met with several mayors, including Montreal mayor Denis Coderre. We did massive mailouts to Quebec municipalities, asking them to adopt resolutions and write Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. These efforts produced an enormous number of resolutions.

For its appearance before the OGGO committee, the Union drafted and presented a brief on the Canada Post mandate review. The brief was aimed at providing a picture of the situation in Quebec, helping stop the rollout of community mailboxes (CMBs), and promoting service expansion.

We took part in every public consultation (before the mandate review) that Quebec MPs organized around the elimination of door-to-door delivery.

The Union also lobbied certain Quebec MNAs sitting on the province's Land Use Commission, which held hearings on access to banking in rural areas. The ensuing report urged the Quebec government to lobby the government of Canada with a view to having Canada Post provide postal banking. We also met with members of the Quebec National Assembly as part of its work on the issue of underbanking in rural areas.

We met with the Mayor of St-Roch-des-Aulnaies on several occasions, as well as with the mayors of Rivière-Ouelle, Kamouraska and other small municipalities on the Lower Saint Lawrence that had lost their ATMs. We also made public presentations.

We mobilized members so they would appear with us at various townhall meetings organized by Prime Minister Trudeau in 2018.

The Union also went to various Liberal Party caucus meetings, in Rivière-du-Loup, Bromont, Halifax and Kelowna, among other locations. It worked to obtain political party support against Canada Post's plan and to ask for a public review of its mandate. Four out of the five political parties in Quebec committed to supporting us.

We launched a campaign to lobby MPs across the country on Canada Post issues and to promote the Union's seven-point plan on its vision for Canada Post in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which deals with service expansion, pay equity, Bill C-27 and the greening of the postal service.

After the 2015 federal election, the Quebec coordinators met with Quebec MPs, except Denis Lebel and Maxime Bernier, who refused to meet with us. However, Denis Lebel went on to resign, so we approached his successor. As a result, we have so far met with 77 of 78 MPs from Quebec. We talked to them about Canada Post profits, to show the ludicrousness of the Conference Board of Canada report. We worked to persuade them, one MP at a time, that eliminating door-to-door delivery was unnecessary. We also met with Francophone MPs from outside Quebec, mainly from Northern Ontario and New Brunswick.

We also lobbied municipalities to adopt resolutions favouring service expansion at Canada Post. So far, 393 of the more than 900 resolutions adopted across Canada have come from Quebec. It is worth noting that the Canadian Federation of Municipalities (CFM) also adopted a resolution in favour of service expansion.

Moreover, as part of the campaign, the union organized a large number of events, including door-to-door canvassing with union members and private citizens, in municipalities affected by the elimination of door-to-door delivery. We telephoned every member who lived in conservative-leaning ridings to dissuade them from voting Conservative.

The Union conducted several mailouts to members and locals encouraging them to get involved in its various campaigns. For example, we mailed them a sample letter to sign and send to their MP, municipality, the OGGO committee, Canada Post, etc.

The Quebec campaign coordinators attended the plenary sessions given as part of union education sessions. They organized strategy sessions for union leaders of Quebec locals to provide campaign updates, and information on how to lobby, canvass door-to-door, mobilize members and deal with media, etc.

## LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

In this term, the Union was fortunate to see locals getting more involved. The Quebec Region has 32 locals. Over the past two years, a group of members and elected representatives took charge of organizing various activities and events in support of the Union and its negotiations.

Their ideas and commitment led, among other things, to the “heart” picture, an activity that involved taking a group picture from above of urban and rural members standing in a heart formation (*see picture on last page*). In the fall, they also organized a “Letter Carrier Christmas,” an event aimed at reminding the government that we have a long memory, and which, incidentally, took place in the pouring rain. In addition, the group developed *Moi, mes souliers ont beaucoup voyagé*, a video based on a popular Quebec song by Félix Leclerc about shoes and travelling, and another video in support of negotiations. Both videos proved very popular.

## EDUCATION

Over the course of the 2015-19 term, the Quebec Region has offered more than 40 courses to its members. In our offerings, we sought to provide variety, which can be seen in the following list of 30 courses.

### **Courses offerings – 2015 to 2019:**

- Local Administration
- Collective Agreement Analysis
- Facilitating (2 sessions)
- Welcome to CUPW
- Solidarity Skills: Confidence in Conflict – Level 1
- Know Your Rights
- RSMC Collective Agreement – Update
- Urban Operations and RSMC Collective Agreements – Update
- WCB Accident Reporting and Claims (2 sessions)
- Social Stewards (2 sessions)
- Union Stewards (Basic Level) (2 sessions)
- Union Stewards (Advanced Level)
- Human Rights
- Leadership Training
- Turtle Island (2 sessions)
- Initiation to Union Life
- Mental Health
- Secretary Treasurer (2 sessions)
- Leadership (2 sessions)
- Union meetings and grievance hearings
- Strike Readiness and Mobilization– Group 1
- Strike Readiness and Mobilization– Group 2
- Arbitration Advocacy (3 sessions)
- National Convention Preparation
- “Taking Charge of Your Future” Retirement Course
- Preparation, Investigation and Writing of Grievances (3 sessions)
- Claiming our Power “School for Union Women”
- Social Steward Workplace Awareness Training
- LCRMS (3-day course) (3 sessions)
- LCRMS (5-day course) (2 sessions)

In addition to course offerings for, among others, union stewards, members of local executives and new members interested in getting involved in the union, several courses were developed for social stewards. For example, we offered two sessions of the Turtle Island course, and one session of the Human Rights and Social Stewards courses. Courses provided to social stewards in the network also included Solidarity Skills: Confidence in Conflict – Level 1, Mental Health, and Social Steward Workplace Awareness Training.

To prepare for a potential labour dispute with Canada Post, we also provided Levels 1 and 2 of the Strike Readiness and Mobilization course.

Moreover, we organized three 3-day sessions and two 5-day sessions of the Letter Carrier Route Measurement System (LCRMS) course, which allowed us to greatly increase and improve our network of observers.

Finally, please note that a session of the School for Union Women course was provided to sisters in the region under clause 7.58 of the National Constitution.

## **GRIEVANCE AND DISABILITY FILES**

In 2016, we undertook a major overhaul of our grievance system. The new system promises to streamline the administrative side of grievance management, but for the time being, we still have to work with the current system. This should also provide for a more realistic overview of the situation in terms of grievance numbers.

Grievances sent to the regional office for a recommendation will normally be processed for referral within a maximum of six months. The number of active grievances is very low, and sometimes a grievance may even end up being referred within two months.

As for problems observed during this term, one is of particular concern to us. For some two years now, the employer has been attempting the use of a new operational tactic that is generating a number of grievances, i.e. monitoring frequently injured members and removing them from their assignment to “prevent” future injuries, so it says. The employer then assigns them to modified duties, sometimes outside their group, to “avoid future accidents.” We are now responding to this tactic through a grievance, but also using current legislation and CIRB (Canada Industrial Relations Board) provisions, which may change in the coming months.

In terms of injury-on-duty and disability claims, it should be noted that, during the 2015-19 term, the Regional Office received and dealt with 222 worker compensation (CNESST) cases and 196 STDP (short-term disability program) cases.

## **COMMITTEES**

Worthy of mention is the increased involvement of members from Quebec in the various national-level committees. In the past, the Quebec Region had not done enough to encourage this, but seems to be on the right track since the start of this term. The Region is very happy about several achievements: All union representative and alternate positions on the National Human Rights Committee for the next term have now been filled. The Quebec Region gave the Turtle Island course for the first time, and provided two sessions of this course. For the first time in the Region, local human rights committees and local women's committees are being set up. Activities related to the mandates of the national committees were organized in the region, and courses designed specifically for women are being developed at the regional level.

This list of achievements is no doubt incomplete, but these initiatives need to be recognized, as they have been made possible by dedicated activists.

## **SOCIAL STEWARDS**

Over the current term, thanks to amendments to the National Constitution and the Union's major efforts in developing the Social Stewards Network, the number of social stewards has increased from 30 to 64 in four years. We were able to do so with the support of the FTQ and an already well-established network in the Region. We expect this number will continue growing during the next term.

In addition to the efforts already made through the provision of training courses, we have invited volunteers and specialists in the field to present post-training evening conferences.

The network coordinators also have a Facebook page they can use to reach out to social stewards as needed, and to share relevant information.

The FTQ, which has already incorporated a hugely significant network into its organization, sponsored a meeting that was well attended by members of the Quebec Region. It is worthy of mention that our locals helped ensure the Quebec Region's large attendance at the meeting by subsidizing delegate travel and accommodation costs.

## **THANKS**

The last term, for those working at the Regional Office (both CUPW and COPE), was not an easy one. The many absences, combined with work created by two consecutive rounds of negotiations, meant that the staff had to work extra hard. Without their commitment and hard work, we would never have got through these past four years.

Let me begin by commending the work of our two administrative assistants. They have no doubt been instrumental in our success, helping members in the office carry out their work. I humbly thank them for being there and for their outstanding work.

My thanks also go to the union representatives, officers and alternates. You have kept the regional office above water in the most difficult of times, and you are to be commended. Working untold hours on weekdays and weekends, you made it possible to get everything done to serve our members.

I would like to salute the work of the negotiating committees. I had the opportunity to see the hard work done by the Pay Equity Committee and majority of members on the Negotiating Committees. Unending hours worked under not always ideal conditions tested the limits of the committee time and time again. Congratulations, and thanks for your commitment.

I would also like to thank the members, union representatives and officers in other CUPW regions with whom the Quebec Region has worked with throughout the term. I have learned from you, both in my work on the NEB and in other union duties, and I am grateful for your support. A special mention to the Metro-Montreal Region, with whom we worked on joint training for the Save Canada Post campaign and negotiations.

I also wish to thank those union activists who retired during this term. I know several of you, and your involvement throughout these years has been an inspiration to many. I have endeavoured to learn from you and to apply what I have learned over these past few years.

Finally, I want to thank the locals in the Quebec Region, and their membership, whom I especially salute and express my heartfelt

thanks. You made me proud throughout the term, but especially in negotiations. You always found very innovative ways to support your members and demands. At the most difficult of times, you reminded me how important it is to keep one's head high and march forward. To you, I express my gratitude, my respect and my sincere thanks.





## CONCLUSION

I would like to end by saying this is only a brief report that could not cover everything that happened during the term. We have developed incredible strength over these four years. No matter what happens in the future, we will do what needs to be done to ensure it.

I hope for a constructive Convention that will debate the real issues for our members and hope we will be able to come together whatever the outcome of elections. There is, however, one cloud that has hung over this term, and that is in the realm of internal politics. We know how to use politics – we just don't know when to stop.

Greetings and solidarity,

François Senneville  
National Director, Quebec Region

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cd/cupe1979

# **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR METRO-MONTREAL REGION**

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This is my last report as National Director of the proud Metro-Montreal Region, since I will not be seeking another term in this capacity. As I say in every Convention report, the past four years have gone by at breakneck speed. Looking back, I realize the sheer magnitude and number of challenges we have faced together.

## **“SAVE CANADA POST” CAMPAIGN**

As described in my report to the 2015 Convention, the goal of the “Save Canada Post” campaign was to save our universal, public postal service. Of course, saving Canada Post meant defeating Harper’s Conservatives.

Few people thought that we could make door-to-door delivery an election issue.

With members from different locations, and from several other locals, we delivered thousands of postcards to the public over many weekends. Our mobilizing efforts and determination enabled us to save door-to-door delivery for some four million households and, in doing so, thousands of decent jobs.

Our vision of the postal service is not based on reducing labour costs, as Canada Post would like, but on improving the services we currently provide and adding new services, such as financial and banking services.

Our campaign continues to raise a fundamental debate about the type of society we want: one filled with precarious jobs and starvation wages, or one where workers’ dignity is respected through the preservation and creation of decent jobs – in short, a just and fair society.

The Conservatives’ vicious attack on the postal service and our jobs must serve as a lesson. We cannot ever rest on our laurels and must always work to defend our universal, public postal service.

## **THE OCTOBER 15, 2015 FEDERAL ELECTION AND THE UPCOMING ELECTION**

Worker mobilization, including our membership, was successful in defeating nearly ten years of conservative reign by Stephen Harper. There is no doubt that if the Conservatives had been re-elected, we would have faced massive job losses and a private sector employer, because the Conservatives' way forward would definitely have led to privatization.

We will have to give this serious consideration when deciding on the actions we undertake during the next election campaign, and between now and then. If the Conservatives were to return to power, it would be devastating for all workers, and especially for postal workers and the universal, public postal service.

## **THE 2015-16 NEGOTIATIONS**

These negotiations began with the Conservatives in power and Deepak Chopra in charge of Canada Post, as was the case in the previous round. However, Stephen Harper's reign ended, as previously mentioned. Once again, Canada Post proposed many rollbacks to reduce labour costs (annual and pre-retirement leave, paid breaks, etc.), increase productivity and replace the Defined Benefit pension plan with a Defined Contribution plan.

These negotiations took place while the new Liberal government had launched a review of Canada Post's mandate.

Considering the lack of movement by Canada Post on our demands and its desire to impose rollbacks, we were not surprised when we received a lockout notice in June 2016, a few days after receiving global offers for both the urban unit and the RSMC unit. The surprise came instead when Canada Post informed us that it was withdrawing this notice, and later gave us a second one, which it also withdrew without subsequently issuing another one.

Canada Post then simply waited for the end of the Union's 60-day period to launch a strike. It was only near the end of this period that the government appointed a special mediator.

While it is true that the Union did seek a limited number of improvements to our working conditions, it was successful in stopping the rollbacks that Canada Post had put forward. In addition, the Union was able to negotiate what will always remain in our memories as a major gain: the Memorandum of Agreement on pay equity for RSMC members. Thanks to the hard work of the sisters who worked on this for nearly two years, this memorandum of agreement finally came to fruition. RSMC members now have pay equity with members of the urban unit.

The National Executive Board then had to decide whether it would recommend that the membership of both units accept these tentative agreements. Considering, among other things, that the agreement was for only two years and that we were in the middle of a Canada Post mandate review, it was decided to recommend acceptance.

This was a difficult time for everyone... There were still many unresolved injustices as a result of the June 2011 back-to-work legislation, which had been deemed unconstitutional, and these were made worse by serious health and safety issues, insufficient staffing levels and operational changes that did not take into account the human beings doing the work. Resolving these issues was being pushed back to the next round...

## **THE 2017-19 NEGOTIATIONS ...**

The time has come! The National Executive Board and the Negotiating Committee approached this round of negotiations with much conviction and determination. Issues such as respect, health and safety, decent steady jobs, and fair and equal treatment were and still are at the heart of our struggle.

After 37 days of rotating strikes, the government once again deprived us of our basic right to free collective bargaining. We had a new CEO, who we believed could change the direction at Canada Post, recognize the issues experienced in the work place, and repair the damage done by previous administrations.

Unfortunately, that was not the case, quite the contrary. While there was a lot of talk about openness and “cooperation,” the employer still approached negotiations with the same complete unwillingness to address the problems mentioned above. What is more, the employer falsely claimed there was a serious backlog in mail delivery even though our rotating strikes only affected delivery for a day or two in each municipality.

Its goal was to try to convince the public and the government that back-to-work legislation was essential. In addition, Canada Post had offered binding arbitration a few days prior to the adoption of the back-to-work legislation. The government had granted that request.

The fight is now taking place at three levels: before the courts, to have the law declared unconstitutional; before the dispute arbitrator appointed by the government, and through our actions on the work floor and in the communities, including the riding offices of federal Members of Parliament.

We must spare no efforts to win our just fight.

## **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

Obviously, no one can predict the future. However, we know that the government will always contemplate back-to-work legislation to deprive us of our right to free collective bargaining. Knowing that, we cannot simply wait for their announcement before we act. Better coordination and cooperation amongst all unions are essential, not only in times of need, but on an ongoing basis.

We also need to think seriously about identifying ways of reaching the membership and fostering their engagement and participation. Our future success cannot depend solely on a few individuals.

## **THE TIME HAS COME TO STEP ASIDE**

As my good friend, the late Michel Chevrier, said when he decided not to run again for the position of Secretary-Treasurer of the Montreal Local, in 2015, “the most difficult thing is knowing when to go,” and he was right. It is difficult because we love the members we represent, the cause, the work, the many challenges and the people around us.

That being said, it is time for me to step aside. I had the great privilege of having you place your trust in me to perform the duties of Regional Grievance Officer, for one term, and of National Director, for the past eight years, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I have also had the privilege of serving as Chief Negotiator for the past two rounds of negotiations (in fact, at the time of writing this report, the second round is still not over). I mention this because I want to acknowledge the additional work that my absence has led to for regional and local representatives.

I am leaving my position as National Director, Metro-Montreal Region, knowing that the region will be in good hands.

Representing you was a real honour and privilege. While I know I have not always had unanimous support, I can assure you that I gave it all my energy, and that what I accomplished, I did with the firm conviction that it was in the best interest of the CUPW membership.

Once again, thank you for placing your trust in me and for your support over all these years. Know that I will continue to defend the interests of the CUPW membership in other ways.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND GOODBYE**

This is the moment where one may come to regret, later on, forgetting to mention one or more important people. Be that as it may, here I go...

First, my thanks go to the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. No matter where I end up after Convention, whether in a position within the union structure, on the work floor or possibly even retired, I will always be grateful to CUPW. Thanks to CUPW, I was able to have a job for over four decades, knowing I would always be able to provide for my family. I also know that, without CUPW, Canada Post would have imposed working conditions and wages that are significantly less favourable than those we have all enjoyed.

I have always been amazed by the fact that workers can sit across from upper management and deal with them as equals without risking discipline or discharge. Not to be attempted in a non-unionized job! Thank you for the training I have received all along the way.

I would like to thank the regional officers, union representatives and alternates (who pretty much became permanent given that Sister Nancy Beauchamp and I were away negotiating collective agreements) who had to compensate a lot for our absence. Thank you to the members of the Local Executive Committee for their excellent work on behalf of the membership.

Thank you to Nathalie Forest, administrative assistant at the Metro-Montreal Region, who held down the fort while we proceeded with the hiring of a second person. You do amazing work. Thank you to the new hire, Natasha Alarie, with whom I did not spend much time, unfortunately, during this term.

Four people have announced their retirement, who I believe deserve our profound gratitude.

Brothers Mario David and Paul Vincelette of the Local Executive Committee, I applaud all of the work you have done on behalf of the membership. There is one particular issue that is worth mentioning, and that is the social stewards' network. Your commitment to developing and improving the network is nothing but exceptional, if not exemplary. Building on the strength of the members who are part of this network, you have made a difference for many people going through difficult situations. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Yves Chaloux, my friend from the beginning. Over the past 11 years, you have taken on so much work and so many additional responsibilities because of the role Nancy and I have played for the past three rounds of negotiations. You were able to both train the secondary leadership we now have in Montreal and continue to serve the membership. You also created a congenial atmosphere with the *Cantine du Bonheur*. This helped maintain and build relationships by giving everyone somewhere to eat together.

Your retirement is well deserved. I wish you a very long retirement filled with good times. Thank you my friend.

Lise-Lyne G lineau! The first woman elected President of the Montreal Local. No matter what role you have played, you have always done so with the same discipline and dedication. So many people benefited from your help in challenging decisions regarding injury-on-duty claims.

As Local President, you represented the membership brilliantly in the media during negotiations, in addition to the more onerous responsibilities of the presidency.

I would like to thank you for your continuous support and good advice. You can always be counted on to set the record straight. Thank you for everything you have done for the membership without ever sparing any efforts.

I am proud of the fact that you are my President, but above all, that you are a dear friend.

I wish you a well-deserved retirement, but, knowing you, it will be anything but restful!

Thank you to the members who worked on the Negotiating Committees. This is a demanding and sometimes thankless job. You showed discipline and determination. It was an honour to work with you during all these long months.

A very special thanks to Brother Geoff Bickerton, CUPW's Research Director. Your knowledge and dedication to the membership is nothing less than exceptional. You are a source of inspiration. You have helped so many people learn, and I am one of them. I do not dare imagine the void you will leave after your departure from CUPW.

Thank you also to Béatrice Thébault, administrative assistant, who has shown exemplary efficiency and who sacrificed many evenings and weekends during the last round of negotiations. Thank you to Julie Larivière, who agreed to work on the 2015-16 negotiations and who also showed exemplary efficiency.

Thank you to the administrative assistants at the national office for their good work and support. Special thanks to Angèle Morin, administrative assistant, who has been with CUPW for many, many years. It is always a pleasure working with you.

A big thank you to the Translation Department for their excellent work.

Thank you to the membership of our proud region. You were ready to answer when we called on you. Your participation and involvement truly made a difference.

Finally, thank you to all those whom I did not mention, but have met over the past four years.

I sincerely hope that the 2019 Convention will bring us all together and allow us to move forward and obtain what we, the CUPW membership, deserve.

In solidarity,

Sylvain Lapointe  
National Director  
Metro-Montreal Region

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# **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR CENTRAL REGION**

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Sisters and Brothers,

This report is presented for your review and consideration as provided for in article 3.04 of the CUPW national constitution.

## **INTRODUCTION**

We have some good news to begin our reports. During this mandate not only did Canadians collectively manage to oust the Conservative Harper government, but we also achieved pay equity for the RSMC bargaining unit through negotiations and arbitration, stopped the elimination of door-to-door mail delivery, and we accomplished the most successful rotating strike action in our history. Of course, Canada Post sat back and waited for legislation and once again used inflated and erroneous information to get action from the Liberal Government, who dutifully complied by enacting a special law, and interfering in our right to strike, without looking into the facts. Had the Liberal Government not interfered perhaps we would have had a collective agreement by now.

We must understand one thing from these accomplishments. They were achieved by a united and active membership and that is something that we not only need to be proud of, but something we need to preserve and nourish so that we can be prepared for all future challenges. As I have stated on many occasions CUPW is fiercely democratic, and that democracy affords us representatives who are all elected from the work floor, who have a stake in what is happening, and are frankly some of the most engaged union activists in the country. We just need to remind ourselves once in awhile that our collective power is mighty and can produce results. Congratulations are due to everyone for their local's actions, canvassing, lobbying and solidarity in our two rounds of bargaining this term, the ongoing Save Canada Post campaign, and our Postal Banking campaign. Your determination is something to be proud of and is recognized by everyone at the National and Regional offices.

“It always seems impossible until it is done.” – Nelson Mandela

## **TOW ROUNDS OF BARGAINING, ONE MANDATE**

This mandate was difficult with two rounds of bargaining for the Urban and RSMC bargaining units. We managed to get through the first round relatively unscathed, and were legislated back to work in the second one. The legislation that sent us back this time will hopefully help address some of our issues as this time the guiding principles for the arbitrator largely address the concerns of the membership. I think it is time that the press do a story on Canada Post and their reliance on legislation, as there has to be a story there. As of this writing, we are still in the middle of arbitration but I can report that this is something we are incredibly good at, much better than the employer is. We offer our many thanks for the all the members and officers who played a part in negotiations.

## **PAY EQUITY**

The work done by Sisters Nancy Beauchamp, Barb McMillan, Cathy Kennedy and Brothers Geoff Bickerton and Paul Durber (pay equity expert) on this file was a thorough success. We achieved pay equity for the RSMC bargaining unit and are in the process of arbitration fighting for equality. Why is this important for all postal workers? Because now all postal workers in the two bargaining units have equity, and we can stand as one against any future attacks on our hard-earned rights under the collective agreements, and Canada Post can no longer pit one unit against the other in bargaining. Congratulations are in order for the committee members and the tremendous work they have done for the members of CUPW.

## **NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The NEB meets once every six weeks. This mandate the NEB meetings have presented many challenges due to the multitude of large issues we had to grapple with. There were many new members elected to the NEB last convention. Everyone's strengths and weaknesses were witnessed and as the NEB meets so often throughout the mandate to deal with day-to-day issues, I am open to discussing my personal views within our regional caucus at the convention about the functioning of the NEB. Overall, I would say that the demeanor on the NEB this mandate has been more positive than from previous boards.

## **CAMPAIGNS**

Postal Banking, Save Canada Post and Delivering Community Power. All heady campaigns in their own right, but having all three run at the same time has required the use of coordinators to push these agendas forward. These campaigns are all necessary and despite the differing opinions from the work floor regarding the appointments, they were largely advertised to the members and the work that they have done on behalf of the union has been very good and moved our agendas forward. We need to keep pushing for postal banking. Why Canada Post does not seriously look at this as other countries have, and succeeded, may forever remain a mystery; unless the government mandate for the parties to get along together is taken seriously, and the postal banking studies they have completed are finally shared with the union.

It should be noted that the RV that was purchased for the Save Canada Post campaign was used in such a manner that we did not get the resale value we were promised due to the damage the vehicle sustained.

## **GROUP 2 WORK METHODS**

This mandate the Corporations decision to strip routes of relay boxes during restructures caused headaches, and likely backaches and injuries to letter carriers. After repeated attempts to explain to the employer that Appendix “K” would not fix the problem, because the issue was not necessarily weights, but volumes, we were advised that relay boxes would be available upon request to compensate for the increased parcel volumes.

The increase in parcel volumes, which are increasing exponentially year over year, had also caused the employer to implement Separate Sortation and Delivery (SSD). This project was implemented to deal with the lack of real estate in letter carrier depots for parcels. It involved removing the sort and tie out portion of routes so that letter carriers either only sort a number of routes, or deliver for 7 hours a day. We have resisted this initiative since its inception. This year they announced a number of depots throughout the country only to rescind them slowly one by one. If I was the suspicious type, I would suggest this was part of a hearts and mind campaign to scare workers, and then withdraw the initiative to ease their frightened minds.

## **IMIS – ENGAGING THE MEMBERSHIP**

The computer software at our national office was seriously out of date. Therefore, the National Executive Board decided to have it replaced. The result will be software that will be accessible to the membership. In the near future, each member will be provided with a code that will allow him or her to access his or her portal. Here they can change their personal information, see what stage their grievance is at; see what education seminars they have taken and many more things. Local executives may have deeper access to a grievance module as well as be able to communicate with their local members. Overall, this should take us into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and play a strong role in engaging the membership more.

## **CONVENTION AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

This convention may prove to be the most interesting since I have been able to attend in 2005. The reasons will likely reveal themselves during the debates and I suspect that there will be strong opinions and feelings on many issues. It is fine if we disagree and debate but we must leave the convention hall on Friday united in our fight for a better tomorrow. And when it comes time to elect our new full-time officers and union representatives, we must elect the members based on substance and not populist rhetoric. We should always be cognizant about the knowledge and experience of our elected members, and preserve some of it so that we can continue to be a positive force for change. I would be happy to speak in our regional caucus about this aspect as well.

We were always aware that the employer monitored social media sites, but this mandate we had definitive proof that they are reading it thoroughly every day. This is why we should all be vigilant about posting things that can be used by the employer to their advantage. There are avenues to address issues members have with their elected leaders and processes, and they are not online or on social media. The avenues are through being involved and speaking to the elected members, they have issues with, or attending general membership meetings and voicing concerns there. All elected full-time union representatives, and all Local executive members have telephones as well, and those numbers are readily available. Everything on the internet is public.

## **CENTRAL REGION**

There have been changes to many local executives over the past mandate. This mandate there have also been a number of locals that have been and are in trusteeship mainly due to locals not having a minimum of three local officers. However, despite this I believe that most of them will be out of trusteeship by next mandate as there are members there ready to step into those roles—it will just be a matter time.

One common denominator in some locals that were placed into temporary trusteeship was the retirement of long standing local executive members. I am not stating that the retired members did not try to get others involved, but it cannot be understated that we must all work on creating interest for new members to take on these union roles, or simply help out, in an effort to provide the future leadership of the union. As noted above, we are a fiercely democratic union. Our leadership is provided by our co-workers, Sisters and Brothers. We must always have the interests of the organization placed before our own and therefore should always be creating a space for new or interested members to take part in our locals and regions. There are numerous committees that each local should have under the constitution. Most locals do not have these committees. These committees provide an opportunity for members to be active in their locals. If after time it appears members are not interested or strong in their roles, there are plenty of other roles that members can play a part in the union. We all have to focus on building our secondary leadership so that we can enhance the strength we possess, which allowed us to accomplish an unprecedented rotating strike. Let us not take that strength for granted and let's all encourage as much involvement in the union as possible.

Union work can be frustrating, challenging and satisfying, but it can also provide an opportunity for personal growth and confidence. Personally, I have found union work to help me grow into a person I could never have pictured in my youth. And all that began when I decided that I wanted to push beyond the boundaries that I felt comfortable in, and CUPW provided the best education possible to do so. Overall, there was always tremendous support from many union activists who were always encouraging, and that is something I will always remember and is something that I try to duplicate during my work.

## **THANKS**

I would like to thank the administrative assistants in our region, Lucie Pagé, Sandra Roy and Joanne Louiseize. Their work continues no matter who is elected and their work is invaluable.

The region will also be having changes this upcoming convention as Lori and Doug Hacking have decided to retire. I want to thank them both for their years of service to the members and the union. I have worked with Lori at the regional office for 10 years and we have experienced a lot together. I first met Doug in Toronto when he was chief steward, and I first became a shop steward. Doug was also a Union Representative in the Toronto region and National Director there as well. Thanks to both of you and enjoy your retirement.

And thank you to Maddie Cleroux for her work as Regional Grievance Officer (RGO), and to our two new additions to the office from last convention, Doug Toms and Don Chartrand (MSC) who have both proven to be solid additions to the office.

And finally, thank you to all the local executive members who are really the lifeblood of CUPW. Your daily work for the membership is recognized and appreciated even though sometimes some members do not grasp the work that you do for them on a daily basis. Being a local executive member can be difficult and trying at the best of times, but by doing that work you, with the support of the members, make CUPW the organization that strikes such concern into governments that they continuously pass special laws to stifle our constitutional rights as we fight for what is just. There is contentment knowing that we will land on the right side of history supporting the policies in our constitution with the organized power we hold.

Finally, I would like to thank previous delegates who have elected me. They have provided me the opportunity to learn new things on an almost daily basis; to quote a song lyric “the more I see, the less I know”. I always try to apply what I have learned to my work, and with the passage of time believe that this was the work I was suited for. I hope for the current delegates support so I may continue learning and apply that to my work. I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to everyone in the region for the privilege of being able to work for CUPW and the membership at large.

Thank you.

In solidarity,

Mark Evard,  
National Director

*ME/lp*  
*cope 225*

# **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR ONTARIO REGION**

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Dear Sisters:  
Dear Brothers:  
Dear Comrades:

As provided for in section 3.04 of the National Constitution, I submit this report for your review and consideration.

## **THE ONTARIO REGIONAL OFFICE**

This mandate has been unusual in that it has seen many transitions at the Ontario Regional office. Three of our members elected to the Ontario Regional Office at the 2015 convention had decided it was time to leave. I do not believe any of the brothers made the decision easily and it was not their intent when offering for the positions at last convention. Life events, however, can intervene at any time and force a person to reconsider their decisions.

The members of the Ontario Region were called upon to make some decisions. In October of 2016, the first three decisions were made with the Ontario Region electing a new National Director, Regional Education and Organization Officer and Regional Union Representative. Then, six months later in April of 2017, the members of the Ontario Region elected a new Regional Grievance Officer and two new Union Representatives.

These were some major changes in our Region and due to the hard work of everyone in the Regional Office and the Locals, this Region successfully completed the mandate without missing a step or beat. This is an example of what the members of the Ontario Region can accomplish when members work together with respect and a common objective. That objective being to represent the members of this Ontario Region and provide our members with the best support we can.

I applaud you all, with special accolades to those that ran for positions in the Regional Office. Not only those that were successful, but to all those who took the challenge to offer for positions and allowed democracy be a part of this Union.

These changes however, may influence the content of this report. For the first eighteen months of this mandate, I was in the position of a Regional Union Representative and the perspective is different from that point of view than from the office of National Director. What may unfold here, could be slightly disjointed or subject to a dual perception. The perception of a Regional Union Representative and then a National Director, please read this report with that in mind.

## MANY CHALLENGES

Where to begin? Our members are caught in the expedient growth of the parcel industry and the resulting impact on Canada Post, but more importantly the impact on workers. Canada Post is a public service that evolved for the first class letter monopoly. The Post Office systems, equipment, facilities and mindset have been structured around the concept of moving letter mail, but that is no longer the case.

This change from letters to parcels, this challenge, was not a slow moving one but has come barreling down on us like an avalanche. It has impacted all of our members affiliated with Canada Post. Letter Carriers that had their days built under the influence of letter mail are faced with insufficient time values, vehicles and equipment to deal with parcel growth. Clerks are processing mail that has a totally different make up, forced to deal with more parcels impacting job rotation. Even our members that are cleaners in the plants are dealing with crowded work floors and increased traffic.

It has been documented the changing work is increasing debilitating injuries. Increased injuries mean more members seeking accommodations. These accommodations are harder to find because the work is heavier with parcels on the rise. Sadly, more workers are working in pain.

All of these issues could be addressed if not for the employer we are faced to work with every day. Canada Post showed their true colours again in negotiations this past fall and in 2016. The Union brought forward issues and solutions regarding the health and safety of our members. Canada Post however would not discuss or negotiate anything that had a price attached, no matter how reasonable or important it is to the members of the Union. As you know, the Union cannot and will not stop seeking justice and remedies to these problems.

The Union made great strides in the working conditions of the RSMC but there is so much more to do. Again, in negotiations Canada Post would not listen to the rationale that every hour worked must be paid and paid at the applicable rate.

Canada Post in its arrogance commented the Union may have achieved pay equity but the company will not allow for equality for its predominately female workforce of RSMC. The Corporation would not relinquish this competitive advantage. This competitive advantage provides the Corporation with profits to pay out bonuses to the corporate executives. Directly, the labour RSMC does free lines the pockets of the bosses, and that is not justice. Actions by the Corporation to perpetuate these conditions against the workers will not instill labour peace.

The struggle continues, and that is the truth workers must face. That is the truth workers must embrace and thus take up that struggle. The workers challenge the boss with every grievance, every picket line, every political action, every act of solidarity, rally and voice they raise for change.

The Union has a vision for the Post Office. This vision of expanded services, social responsibility and transition to a green operation is being heralded around the world as a bold and necessary step. A step that should lead anyone, with an ounce of sanity, to the conclusion that this is the direction to take, by industry, governments, as well as the workers, if we are to sustain our futures in life and in work.

I believe it can be done. It will take time and there will always be that struggle going on as long as there are individuals or groups in power that are short sighted and greedy. Workers cannot and will not give up, because we have more at stake. We are bettering our lives and the lives of those that will come after us. In the same way that workers before us fought for the eight-hour day, weekends, vacation, and the benefits we enjoy today, this Union and its' members will fight to hold onto those precious working conditions and obtain new gains, including equality for the workers of today and tomorrow.

## **SEPARATE SORT FROM DELIVERY**

Directly linked to the growth in parcel business is the latest implementation of separate sort from delivery (SSD). The employer is currently restructuring approximately more than thirty letter carrier depots across Canada under this new initiative; the sole purpose behind this move as advertised by Canada Post; to create more floor space to accommodate the parcel business. Once again, Canada Post applies a piece-meal implementation, to provide a band aid fix, to a problem that requires solid thinking and permanent applications. The Union has identified the current letter carrier route measurement system for establishing the work for letter carriers is obsolete and does not properly address the workload creating overburdening. Nonetheless, Canada Post has decided to remove the sort and to apply the system of overburdening to a full day of delivery.

The Union and the locals impacted by this latest abuse by Canada Post will have their work cut out in thwarting the implementation of this SSD system. The Union's National Office has filed a National Policy Grievance against the action of the employer and in one location the members and the Union were able to head off the implementation of SSD. The Union was able to find the floor space in other ways. Be patient Sisters and Brothers, well-orchestrated resistance can take time to reap rewards.

## **NEGOTIATIONS: URBAN AND RSMC**

The two largest bargaining units of this Union saw not one, but two rounds of contract negotiations during this mandate. As a Union Representative, I saw the first round result in establishing a platform for the second round. I know the negotiators and the Union wanted to address the problems we have faced with Postal Transformation, downsizing of Retail, and the mountain of injustices faced by the RSMC and the 2011 back to work legislation.

What we saw come out of that time was a review of the Post Office, a memorandum of agreement to address pay equity for RSMC, some gains in working conditions and a short term for the contract. Although it may have been far from all the Union wanted to achieve, it was movement forward for the Union and provided us some separation from 2011. The next round of negotiations would be moving forward from 2016 and not from 2011, although the Union still had much work ahead to address the unconstitutional back to work legislation from 2011.

As the Union moved towards the second round of negotiations, during this mandate, the Union was prepared, unified and determined. Our demands were solidified into a few core issues. Health and safety for all workers was a predominant issue. Injuries are on the rise in our workplaces and it is clear that it is due to overburdening and changes in the work and how the work is done. As parcels exploded in volumes, health and safety fell off the table. The employer greedily sacrificed our health and safety for productivity. Long hours placed stress on our home life, as all balance was lost. RSMC are being forced to work hours each day without being paid. This is free labour being forced upon a bargaining unit of predominantly women. Wage charts which trapped Urban Temporary workers into lower paid precarious positions to satisfy the Corporation's pockets.

These core issues of health and safety, equity and ending precarious employment, were not only justified by the Union's evidence, but reflected the platform of the newly elected government, a Liberal majority government elected in 2015 that professed pay equality, health and safety and job security for workers. This Liberal majority government often labeled themselves as friends of labour.

With about eight months of negotiations aided by mediators, the Union did make some gains in non-monetary issues, the most significant being Access to Information (ATI). This ATI will assist the Union in addressing staffing problems that have escalated with Postal Transformation (PT). For Group 2 it has been difficult to verify restructures when all the calculations are hidden in a computer program. With access to this information, the Union will finally be able to verify if the calculations and thus the workload for carriers is correct. The Union has been grappling with this problem since the introduction of GeoRoute and PT.

After eight months and with the beginning of more intense negotiations, the Union was becoming more frustrated. In July, Canada Post did not contact nor respond to Union's negotiators for several weeks. Small advancements during negotiations would occur from time to time leading to optimism that perhaps, now, real negotiations will begin, only to stall again.

The Pay Equity process was also happening in arbitration and even though the pay equity should not have any bearing on negotiations, it appeared for a time that the company was waiting for that outcome. When it was concluded and we had the decision by Arbitrator Flynn, the employer commented the Union may have pay equity but Canada post was not going to recognise equal pay. It seems the only impact pay equity had on Canada Post was to behave badly and to dig in more firmly against any movement on Union demands that had a price tag attached.

The Union had to exercise the strike mandate to pressure Canada Post to begin negotiating in good faith and in a reasonable manner. The Union began rotating strikes in late October. I believe, as the Union did, that these rotating strikes were an excellent strategy. The strike actions frustrated the employer and kept hardship to a minimum for our members and the public. There is another positive side to the rotating strikes; it weakens any argument of Canada Post and the Government that the strike put the country into economic crisis. Yes, there were delays due to the rotating strike action, but the mail was still moving, still getting to the public. The Union will be presenting this evidence in the constitutional challenge of Bill C-89, the back to work legislation.

After six weeks of rotating strikes, Big Business and Canada Post convinced the Government to trample over the Union's constitutional rights and order us back to work, the same Liberal majority government that self-proclaimed to be a friend to labour. The Union was forced to comply or face heavy fines as an organization or as individual members involved in strike activity.

What came as a surprise to Canada Post and the Government is the fact that the labour movement and citizens saw this constitutional affront as an attack on all workers and the public as well. There were numerous actions where other unions and members of the public set up picket lines across the country at various postal facilities. These groups also made visits to the offices of many Ministers of Parliament to ask for explanations on how they voted on Bill C-89 and to challenge their political platform.

The Union will comply with Bill C-89, but we will not give up our fight. Our fight to challenge the legislation by the collusion of the Government and the Corporation, or our constitutional right for the Union to negotiate collective agreements.

## EDUCATION

The Region's Education Program has been ongoing and working to meet the needs of our Locals. It is evident that, during this mandate, the Union has seen quite an influx of new activists. These new activists are hungry for education and tools to combat the employer.

The Union also saw many Locals host local education to meet specific needs, including Shop Steward training, Grievance Preparation, and Local Administration.

The Union has also seen the implementation of two new courses that should be mentioned. Both courses are very important and relevant in their own particular way. "Turtle Island" was introduced to many of our members, raising awareness of the real history of Canada. Turtle Island renewed some conversations and started new conversations for some members. As Canadians and as a Union, we must never forget what happened to the indigenous peoples with colonization of this continent. Our Union is and should be proud of this course.

Another milestone is the Social Steward Course has been reinitiated this mandate. I have seen dedicated individuals put themselves forward for the members. To be available to help our troubled members find the help they may need. It is a difficult task to recognize the issues our members are faced with and to offer support and direction. It is a special kind of Sister or Brother that voluntarily takes on this work that greatly benefits our members. I would like to thank those individuals for their selfless commitment to help our members.

One overdue demand, that has been brought to the negotiation table, is to increase the funding of the education program under appendices of the two bargaining unit contracts. It has been a number of years since any increase has been made to education funding and like all programs, the cost of providing a status quo program has increased.

Education is fundamental to the growth of the Union and education must be maintained. To achieve more education programs the Union will have to continue to put forward demands in negotiations to increase funding. This is an investment in our members and the Union that must not be overlooked.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR BARGAINING UNITS**

Proudly, the Ontario Region represents the workers for Bee Clean in three mail processing plant locations, Hamilton, Windsor and London. All are in the plant locations in these Locals. The Union negotiated a renewed contract for the cleaners with gains and a standardizing of wages and benefits. By the time of this convention the Union will have begun the negotiation process with the development of demands for the coming round. I wish the members great success in the round ahead.

The Union also represents the workers for Eazy Express holding the contract for Combined Urban Services operation for Burlington. The members in this bargaining unit have held on a very long time to achieve a first contract. At the time of this writing, negotiations have reached an end and the members just voted to ratify this first contract.

I was not a part of the original effort to obtain a first contract for the Eazy Express members, but it is my understanding that the employer, at the time, greatly resisted the efforts to negotiate. The employer had become ill and passed away and there were changes in the company's leadership and little interest in dealing with the Union. Finally, in the fall of 2017 the Union was able to restart the negotiations. Unfortunately, much of the originally covered issues needed to be revisited and the parties re-establish the clauses of the proposed contract. Gains and seniority rules have been achieved for these new members and a contract to build future gains as well.

## **GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION**

Grievance and arbitration is a large portion of our Union work and this mandate has been no different. Everyone in the Regional Office has a hand in the grievance arbitration department. I believe in this mandate there has been a significant change in how the Ontario Region has attacked the grievances we have flowing through the office.

The direction of this Regional Office is to address the backlog, while seeking closure to files, both new and old. The Union is refusing to allow the company to deflect files with tactics of review and respond, where the Union sees no review nor response. Our grievance department is moving on the files and insisting they be settled, or they be addressed by an arbitrator. There is still a significant backlog, but hopefully this direction will continue and the backlog will diminish and we will see current files being scheduled and resolved in a timely fashion.

This mandate has seen a more efficient handling of formal grievances for discharges. Discharge files are now assessed when they arrive at the Regional Office, to determine what options lend themselves to the circumstances of the grievance. Can the file be resolved sooner through settlement or discussion with the employer? Is the reality that the file cannot be successful? Often, a file will have to be decided by an arbitrator because the employer refuses to be reasonable. The work of the grievance arbitration department has been able to address more files in less time and more cost effectively. This is due to the hard work of everyone in the Regional Office, including the Administrative Assistants.

I must point out that the Ontario Region has had some important wins in regards to accommodation issues. Canada Post had refused to recognize obligations of accommodation and as a result one member was forced to resign and another was discharged for refusing to work in an environment that would be detrimental to the health of the worker. Canada Post was found by the arbitrators in each case to be negligent in its obligations to provide accommodation and ordered to compensate the members. These were not easy files, and the employer fought hard to win their position. It was due to the dedication of our Union Representatives, the members received some significant compensation. We need to remember however, regardless of any compensation, these injustices should have never occurred. This is where the hardest challenges for the Union remain. To ensure our members are treated with the respect they deserve and to defend the members day to day from the bias and mistreatment of the corporation.

## **SHORT-TERM DISABILITY PLAN**

The Short-Term Disability Plan is a double-edged sword for the members. The plan can provide much needed paid leave for new members who, under the old plan, would not have accumulated leave for illness or injury not attributed to work. Unfortunately, if a member received benefits and then the claim is denied, there is the financial peril of not receiving benefits and having the benefits recovered.

The process of the final appeal is proving to be costly for the Union as the final appeal is decided on by an Independent Medical Physician (IMP). Although the cost of the IMP is split between the Union and the employer, each appeal can cost the Union up to a thousand dollars, or more. This Region has submitted about 250 appeals to various IMPs since the fall of 2015. These 250 appeals also represent a vast number of person-hours of work.

I include this in my report, because the STDP is still a fairly new aspect of the Regional Office's work, introduced in 2013. Whether the STDP stays or not, it is important the members become aware the work that goes on for appeals is demanding and comprehensive and is now a significant role of all Regional Offices.

## **NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF RETIRED POSTAL WORKERS (NORPW)**

This mandate saw the development of the National Organization of Retired Postal Workers. The organization has been integrated into our National Constitution and our Local bylaws. Retired members from the Ontario Region are currently elected to a Vice-President position and two trustees.

Retirees of our Union not only have knowledge to share, but are a great resource for communication, distribution and support of the CUPW vision and goals. A connection between the Locals and this developing organization will only be helpful and supportive of workers not only once retired but also now, in the labour force.

Please support these retired members in the Locals and consider becoming a NORPW member once you retire.

## **CAMPAIGNS**

The Union has been using Campaign Coordinators this mandate to communicate the Union's message for the future of Canada Post to the public and to local, provincial and federal governments. The Union has produced petitions and pamphlets and circulated these through our Locals and union and community events. The work these Campaign Coordinators are doing is laying the foundation for expansion of new services at Canada Post.

New services will need workers to provide these services and thus the achievements are twofold. We will see an improved Canada Post for the public and more jobs and security for the workers.

We saw the impact of this campaign work come to fruition in several areas of support throughout our negotiations. The public, politicians and communities came out and supported our Union in its fight for a fair and progressive contract. Other labour groups and the public saw our vision of expanded services, and transition as a viable means for Canada Post to stay current and sustainable.

Much of this recognition was due to the hard work, lobbying and supporting locals by our campaign coordinators. The coordinators are not restricted to their originating Regions, and have worked in multiple Regions to provide support.

Brother Derek Richmond, of the Scarborough Local, has been doing this work and achieving support from our Locals, other unions, and the public. I believe this work was instrumental in raising the awareness with the Government, at all levels, of what Canada Post can truly be. We have seen MPs, cities, towns and community groups, speak out and campaign for a better Corporation. The dedicated work of the Campaign Coordinators has the potential of being a major engaging device that can adapt to the message of the moment.

Thank you to Brother Richmond and all the coordinators, past, present, and hopefully future, for the work you have done, are doing, and will do.

## THANKS TO ALL

This was an unusual mandate with all the changes that took place in the Ontario Regional Office. I started the mandate elected as one of the Union Representatives, but ended the mandate as the elected National Director of the Ontario Region. As a result, there were more individuals holding positions in the Regional Office then we have ever experienced.

Brother Gerry Deveau began the mandate as our National Director. A position he held since 1993. He held the position because he had the confidence and support of the delegates at convention. Brother Deveau worked tirelessly on behalf of the membership. He established ties with Locals and the memberships within them. The members respected him. The employer respected him. His representation of the members and the Union placed him in consultations, marches, conventions, demonstrations, and every facet of Union life. Brother Deveau had done it all and done it with respect for the Union and the members. Brother Deveau decided it was time for him to retire. I thank Brother Deveau, most sincerely for his service to this Union, this Region. He is already missed.

Another giant in the Region, Brother Wally Polischuk, Regional Grievance Officer since 1990 and a Union Representative before, decided it was time for retirement. His stature was only exceeded by his humour, his dedication and his knowledge. This combination made him invaluable and instantly recognizable as a pillar of this Region to the members. Brother Polischuk has been involved in the shaping of this Union. His history is rich and intertwined with CUPW. He is a sage to the Region and to us in the office fortunate to work with him.

There are many times since Brother Polischuk's absence I have reflected on how he would have approached a particular issue or problem. Many thanks to Brother Wally Polischuk for every contribution you have made to CUPW over your years of service to the members.

We also had to wish Brother Jim Morris a happy retirement. Brother Morris, another long-time activist in the Regional Office filling the position of Regional Union Representative since 2002. Brother Morris was the Representative dubbed as a living resource. His knowledge of the history and evolution of the contracts, along with his information on legislation and resource material on case law and jurisprudence, made him the cornerstone of grievance arbitration. When Brother Morris was not assisting our members with Long Term Disability appeals, he was arguing grievances and consulting with the employer. Brother Morris' support to everyone in the Regional office and the Locals of the Region was instrumental in the glowing reputation the Ontario Region achieved in our struggle against the employer. Brother Morris' presence lingers through his contributions to CUPW.

Sister Shelley Sillers was no stranger to the Regional Office before the 2015 mandate began. She had been here on assignment in a previous mandate as an Alternate Union Representative acting as a Union Representative. At the beginning of the mandate, Sister Sillers held the position of Regional Education and Organization Officer. Sister Sillers had worked hard and spent long hours tending to her duties and ensuring the Region maintained the quality educational program it had been known for. Sister Sillers also spent countless hours working with Locals to organize and assist them into functioning facets of the Region.

Sister Sillers was also the first RSMC to hold a position in the Ontario Regional Office. She was also a member of the RSMC National Negotiating Committee in previous rounds of negotiations. Her intimate knowledge of the RSMC contract and her history as an RSMC made her an invaluable resource to the Region. Her cheerful infectious personality made it easy to talk with her on various aspects of the Region, from administration of the Regional Office, to organizing busses for demos, to having a coffee and a chat about today's events.

As fate would have it, events unfolded and Sister Sillers returned to the work floor before the end of this mandate. I have little doubt Sister Sillers is keeping a watchful eye on the employer and offering assistance to her Sisters and Brothers when they request it. Sister Sillers is an asset to CUPW wherever she may be and in whatever capacity she involves herself in CUPW.

One more Sister retired and left our Regional Office. She worked in a different capacity than our CUPW Officers and Union Representatives, but she was no less important to the Union and the members. Sister Amy Scott decided it was time to retire during this mandate. Sister Scott was one of three COPE Administrative Assistants in our Regional Office.

Our COPE Administrative Assistants are our constants in the Regional Office, through mandate, after mandate. Elected officers and representatives may change, but it is our Administrative Assistant staff that remains constant and seamlessly transitions from one mandate to the next. Without their contributions and dedication, this operation would surely flounder. I extend my appreciation and thanks to Sister Carol Greer, Sister Karen Calder and Sister Kristi Fuhrman, for providing the solid foundation we build our work on.

For the rest of us, Officers and Union Representatives, we have all worked diligently through the changes and movements we have experienced in the Ontario Region.

Sister Debbie Carmichael, elected to Regional Grievance officer, has demonstrated focus and planning to achieve goals for the Grievance department.

Brother Glen Fillier, elected to the Regional Education and Organization Officer, took the challenge head on. It was no small task to step into the role mid-way through the mandate and maintain the level of education and organization this Region has come to expect. His success is reflected in the success of the members that have participated in the education and organizational exchanges.

Brother Mark Platt is a Union Representative who held the same position from the beginning of the mandate to the end. In that way, he became the constant, the one that provided much of the introduction of our office to our new talent, the three mid-mandate elected, Brother Chris Tremble, Sister Kim Smith and Sister Gisèle Miller. These four exceptional Union Representatives have aggressively, with the help of Sister Carmichael and Brother Fillier, been putting the Corporation in its place. All are passionately defending our members in the areas of health and safety, staffing, restructures, accommodation, discharges, work place compensation, human rights and so much more in the day to day conflicts we as a Union face.

Through the many changes that have occurred in the Ontario Regional Office during this mandate, I have never doubted the abilities of all who work here. My pride and confidence in the Ontario Regional Office never wavered. We are making the hard choices and focusing on educating and defending our members against the Corporation. I am confident the Ontario Region, officers and members, will continue to excel from mandate to mandate.

## **IN CLOSING**

In closing, I wish to recognise the hard work of the Local Executive Committees (LEC). The Union experienced two rounds of negotiations this mandate, for both the Urban and the RSMC bargaining units and with that came a vast amount of local organizing and planning for the labour actions brought on by those circumstances. To support the Union's demands, our Local Executive Committees met that challenge and excelled. This is not an easy trick as this very important challenge was in addition to all the day-to-day work the LEC are already committed to doing. Thank you to all the LEC for all the work and an extra thank you for the work during the rotating strikes.

The members also deserve recognition for staffing the picket lines and participating in all the job actions taken. The strength and solidarity of the workers terrified the Corporation so deeply they had to convince the Government to go back on promises and take away our constitutional right to try to hold the Union at bay. This story is yet to be finished. It is important to have all members involved in the final chapters of this round of negotiations. Keep our members talking and acting. Remind the Corporation the Union is still in this fight.

I wish to thank my partner Brenda Laslo, for all her dedication to the members, Union, labour movement and thus keeping me informed and updated on events. Brenda has helped me to be confident in my daily work, she has supported me unconditionally, and my success is a testament to that strength and love.

Thank you to my daughters, Lindsay and Ashleigh for understanding my absences over the years. I also thank Jason, Sarah, Billy and Rick for taking care of the home in Niagara Falls while I have been in London and Ottawa these past seven and a half years. I appreciated having things well taken care of at home.

I want to extend my appreciation to all the families of the Officers and Union Representatives of the Ontario Regional Office. These very special families, because their support and understanding, have made it possible for the Officers and Union Representatives to do the work they do so well each day.

I wish to offer my sincere thanks to all the members, active and retired, for their support during my years as a Shop Steward, Local President, Alternate Union Representative, Regional Union Representative, and National Director. It is my hope that I have made a difference for workers but we activists never do this work alone.

I look forward to my retirement but hope to be called upon from time to time to support workers through Retiree Committees and organizations.

Finally, it is my sincere hope that this Convention concentrates on the future of the Union and how its' members can keep it strong and unified. We learn from the past but we should not dwell on its' failures. Look forward not back. As a Union, we still have great things to achieve for the labour movement and our members and together we will.

**“IF THE PLAN DOESN’T WORK,  
CHANGE THE PLAN, BUT NEVER THE GOAL.”**

— AUTHOR UNKNOWN

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Garbatt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tom Garbatt  
Ontario Region, CUPW

TG/cg  
cope 225

# **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR METRO-TORONTO REGION**

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## **POLITICS, POSITION AND BACKGROUND**

Like any other immigrant, I came to Canada with a dream, a dream to make a happy living for my family and myself. My dreams have been and continue to be fulfilled by the power of knowledge, compassion and strength. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers provided me with the power of knowledge through education, compassion through the endless struggle for workers rights and the ability to face endless discrimination with strength. In return, I strive each day to provide Members of our Region with support in fighting the Employer on all levels. My gratitude to the Sisters and Brothers of CUPW is overwhelming.

In writing this report, I am reflecting on not only the past few years but the years leading up to holding the position of National Director. I still recall the day I was elected as the National Director for the Metro-Toronto Region. Taking the oath at Convention. An oath to always work for the betterment of the Membership. Although I had been an active Union Member, I knew that the position of National Director of Toronto Region would be challenging; I was determined to fulfill my responsibility.

As the incoming National Director for the Metro-Toronto Region, I extended a friendly hand towards my Sisters and Brothers of the Union in my Region. During this time of transition in our Region, I endeavoured to make the experience as smooth and respectful as possible. I put forward an open invitation to everyone to bring forth any constructive input and/or criticism thus allowing our Region to benefit from experience. Unfortunately, transition can sometimes be difficult. But, no matter how difficult, we cannot allow ourselves to fall back into what we have struggled so long and hard to abolish; racism, disrespect or defamation of character. CUPW must continue to educate our Members and bring forward new voices in diversity and strength. Change can be productive if change brings forth more workers rights, more human rights and more understanding. Opportunity to work on behalf of the Union should be open to all Members. Not just a select few.

I certainly understood the seriousness of the National Director's job when I decided to run for election. However, I was to say the least, shocked when the news of a website slandering myself and my personal family was brought to my attention. Although I cannot say I was naive to the politics, I definitely was not prepared for the extreme level of nastiness that certain individuals will go to in order to hurt someone. It shook me and I certainly questioned the morality of the individuals who set out to harm me and others.

This is when and why I launched a formal complaint to the National Executive Board for them to take actions against the individual responsible for creation of the website. The website was being circulated throughout the entire country. Each new e-mail I received was disturbing. People I work with were turning my membership against me with the aid of the said website. I was under the impression that this complaint would put an end of to all the racism that I was facing but all it did was make everything worse

Through this whole ordeal, I have always stood my ground. I have found strength in this Region, in its Members, in this Union. In its teachings and in my Brothers and Sisters that have shared their wisdom. I thank all of you for showing solidarity and strength when I needed it.

During my term with CUPW, I have been a part of two negotiations; demanding votes, strike votes and ratification votes. For the past four years a significant amount of my time has been consumed by negotiation meetings in Ottawa. Through all these special meetings, the goal was always to serve the membership. Regardless of the day and time, my work has been my number one priority.

During my term, for the first time, two Negotiators were picked from Metro-Toronto Region by the National Executive Board. I am sincerely grateful to sister Bonnie Pollard (RSMC) and Brother Robby Jouhal (Urban) for all their hard work.

During my term, I made financial accountability one of my priorities as well. I was constantly monitoring office supplies, coffee etc. Based on comparison with previous terms, our costs have decreased by 70%.

Toronto Region continues to handle a high volume of grievances. Our Regional Grievance Officer, Brother Walter Woloschuk and Union Representatives, Gurmeet Dhillon, Pavneet Ver and Owen Edwards have worked endlessly to provide swift and appropriate resolve to workers issues.

Our Article 54 Representatives, Brother Gurpreet Nijjar, Brother Ilyas Modhi, Sister Christina DeCarvalho and Brother Jey Iydurai continue to provide support to all our Members who have experienced difficulties being accommodated back into the workplace. I thank them for their endless support to the Region.

Short Term Disability Appeals has been very challenging. Our Office has dealt with these appeals in a proficient manner. The STDP generates a numerous amount of calls since our Members are still uncertain about the process. I would respectfully suggest that we have more education on this and perhaps as a joint one day educational with the Toronto Local.

The Metro-Toronto Region thanks Brother Bhargav Trivedi, our Social Steward Co-ordinator; Brother Trivedi was able to train fifty of our Members to become Social Stewards. We extend a huge thanks to Sister Tish Glenn, Ontario Region and Brother Yves Henault, National Office, Educational Department; for their expertise and help in this training.

I thank Brother Mandeep Kalra, Regional Education Officer, for his dedication to the Educational Department in our Region and his dedication to our Members. I also extend the Region's gratitude to all of our Organizers. They continue to keep us aware of workers issues involving all workers across the country. They keep us updated on issues that involve not just CUPW but every one affected by this Government's decisions. An injury to one is an injury to all! Thanks to Sister Pamela Taschuk, who attended numerous events up to and including organizing and building our float in a parade. Sister Leah Rowlinson and Sister Lisa Schofield who continue to attend meetings at public forums supporting workers and their causes. Sister Kanwal Fervaha, Sister Lata Joshi and Brother Ronak Bhatt, thank you for all your work.

The purpose in Union Education is to inspire and provide knowledge. Our responsibility is to allow others to have the opportunity to learn, teach, organize and demonstrate.

For the first time the Metro-Toronto Region and Toronto Local jointly conducted a one day Educational Seminar which resulted in approximately over 200 Shop Stewards being educated on Mobilization and Grievance Preparation. Also for the first time, the Metro-Toronto Region conducted the "Turtle Island" Educational Course two times. The entire Regional Office participated and completed the Human Rights seminar as per our National Constitution. I will continue to work efficiently and supportive with the Toronto Local.

The Metro-Toronto Region also conducted 5 days and a 3 days educational seminar on Social Steward subject to have nearly 50 trained Social Stewards. The Region conducted several other Educational Seminars to have a better informed and educated Membership.

I encourage all Brothers and Sisters to continue to keep up the hard work as we still have the remainder of the negotiations and this process is very long. Federal elections are coming. We cannot trust the Liberals or the Progressive Conservatives. If Bill C-89 is passed, it will cause a huge issue on the work floor. Split sortation is a big issue as is parcel delivery. We should stand for our rights and remember that fair contract is our number one demand.

## **OUR STRUGGLE CONTINUES!**

My sincerest gratitude toward our COPE Sisters Laura Alviano, Patricia Reis, Vanni Sharma, Veronica Hannington and Krystal Mittoo. They have helped the Regional Office to run smoothly and efficiently.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Brother Gord Fisher, National Director of the Prairie Region. Brother Fisher will be retiring and we will miss his wisdom and knowledge that he has brought to CUPW. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours. I thank you Brother!

In closing, I believe that as a Member of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and as a National Executive Board Member, I must continue to grow and learn. I look forward to serving our Membership with all my abilities and fight for our Workers to have a safe and healthy workplace.

In solidarity,



Sanjay Sapra  
National Director  
Metro-Toronto Region, CUPW

SS/l  
cope 225

# REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR PRAIRIE REGION

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Dear Sisters and Brothers:

In accordance with section 3.04 of the National Constitution, the following is my report to National Convention.

In the fall of 2015, the Harper led Conservative Government was thrown out of office. Postal workers and their allies played no small roll in this. In fact, many news outlets and political pundits listed Postal issues we had raised as being one of the key reasons that the Conservatives were defeated. The fightback campaign that began in December 2013 was a success.

The Liberals, who had made many promises, were in office and we now hoped that they would live up to their promises. Justin Trudeau, who was now Prime Minister, had promised to return door-to-door delivery to those that had lost it. They also promised workers that pay equity would finally be a reality. They promised that Labour Relations would improve at Canada Post and that changes would be coming. They even had one of their senior ministers' request that the CEO of Canada Post resign.

Turns out, they were lying on most accounts. When the CEO refused to resign, they did nothing about it. They did stop the door-to-door conversion eventually but did nothing to restore it for those that had lost it. On pay equity, we had to fight like hell to achieve it.

In June of 2016, CUPW held strike votes across the country. We hoped to make significant gains for all members and we expected to achieve pay equity for RSMCs. The difficulty is that nothing had changed at Canada Post; the same CEO was in charge, most of the upper management was the same, the Board of Directors was unchanged and the employer had the same people representing them at the bargaining table.

We ended up achieving pay equity through negotiations and agreed to a short-term Collective Agreement.

The one thing we could say was that we had positioned ourselves well for the next round of bargaining and that we would not have to wait too long to get to it.

We commenced the next round of bargaining with the same high expectations. Unfortunately, nothing had really changed at Canada Post; the employer's bargaining team was still the same old gang from the previous round. Finally, we saw the old CEO leave and some other changes at the top. The employer, not surprisingly, did not want to bargain and did nothing to address the real and important issues of workers at Canada Post. The new interim CEO talked nice but did nothing to improve the climate in collective bargaining.

In October 2018, we commenced rotating strikes. It was a very successful strike. The Union had a great strategy and the employer seemed lost and confused. Canada Post's media strategy was inept at best. It appeared that we could not lose and then, the Liberal Government did the same thing as Harper did in 2011 – they used special legislation to take away our right to strike.

We are currently dealing with the arbitration imposed by the legislation.

This is not a solution to the problems postal workers face. It will not improve wages and benefits and it will not force Canada Post to treat workers with dignity and respect. Most of the health and safety issues will not be resolved through this process.

Turns out Trudeau is not a lot different from Harper and the next CEO was not a lot different from the old one.

The only answer for postal workers is to continue to fight – we will never lose as long as we keep fighting.

## **NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Meetings of the National Executive Board and the work of the NEB consume a great deal of time for all NEB members. This term, numerous issues had to be dealt with, including:

- two rounds of negotiations with Canada Post;
- three separate negotiations with our own workers who are represented by COPE and CUPE;
- a Federal Election.

The NEB also dealt with many internal issues including an abundance of Article 8 charges, many of which were debated and submitted by the NEB.

## **EDUCATION**

Union education is vital to the future of CUPW. At the regional level, we held two 3-day Education seminars each year with approximately 80 participants at each, as well two 5-day Education seminars every year with approximately 20 participants at each.

In addition to the Regional Education Seminars, many of our Locals, on their own or with the assistance of the Regional Office, put on courses for their members. There were several national courses and the UEP Program at Port Elgin where members from the Prairie Region attended.

We need to continue our work in this area and to expand the number of worker facilitators. We also need to create new courses to deal with new issues as they arise.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Canada Post continues to claim that health and safety is a priority for them. Their actions demonstrate the exact opposite. Most notably is their plan to expand Separate Sort and Delivery (SSD). They have done nothing to limit overburdening of Letter Carriers and RSMCs and they refuse to provide a proper rotation of duties in Group 1.

We continue to raise problems at the Divisional Health and Safety Committee with limited success.

We must continue to fight to force the boss to take health and safety seriously.

## **GRIEVANCE ARBITRATION**

During this mandate, all Formal Cases in the Prairie Region were presented without the use of lawyers. We were the only Region to accomplish this. In order to ensure that we continued, during this mandate, to have Officers, Union Representatives and Worker Advocates handle Formal Cases, we jointly held a Formal Arbitration Course with the Pacific Region. This allowed those with extensive experience in Regular Arbitration to continue to develop skills and confidence for Formal Arbitration.

In February 2019, there was a Worker Advocate Course held in New Westminster, B.C. We trained a further six advocates at that time and expect that they will all be handling regular arbitration files.

A significant amount of the Union's resources are utilized in Grievance Arbitration at the National, Regional and Local levels. Some have suggested this needs to change and that our resources would be better utilized in training and education. The problem is that the employer continues to discharge and discipline our members and to violate the provisions of the Collective Agreement. We also have legal obligations to represent these members. There is no simple answer to this problem as to how our limited resources are utilized but there are some solutions, which will put us on the right track, many of which we are already doing. They include the following:

- Improving the information in grievance files prior to referral to arbitration;
- Severely limit or eliminate the use of lawyers for all Regions and at National Office for Formal Cases including National Policy Grievances;
- Continued training for advocates, including advocates who are currently handling Regular and Formal cases;
- Forcing the employer to proceed when arbitration is scheduled, the toughest job for an advocate is trying to make the employer show up at hearings.

## **EXTERNAL ORGANIZING**

During this mandate, there was only one new bargaining unit in the Prairie Region. A group of couriers approached Brother May, who is the Director of the Work Center, indicating they wished to be organized by CUPW. The workers were certified under the Manitoba Labour Board but have not yet achieved a first collective agreement, although it is likely one will be achieved through first contract legislation in the very near future.

In my opinion, we need to be engaging in more organizing drives throughout the country. Not only can it protect our current members' job security, it is also the right thing to do. Every worker should be entitled to the negotiated benefits of collective bargaining.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR NEGOTIATIONS**

Currently, we have seven Private Sector Bargaining Units for which the Regional Office is responsible for bargaining, the vast majority are Courier Companies. We have recently ratified a tentative Collective Agreement for a large number of members who are couriers and work for Transforce Final Mile formerly known as Dynamex.

I would like to thank those who served on the Bargaining Committee. It is hard work that is time consuming and stressful.

There are still two collective agreements being bargained: the new Bargaining Unit mentioned earlier in this report and Transforce Final Mile Red Deer.

## **THANK YOU**

Several weeks ago, I announced that I would not be re-offering for the position of National Director. I will be returning to work as a PO5 in the Winnipeg Plant. I would like to thank the members in the Prairie Region who have supported me in the different positions I have held over the past 30 years. It has been an honor and a privilege to work on your behalf. Although many of you were not yet involved, I would like to thank the Prairie Region delegates who elected me as a Union Representative in 1989. At the time, I was a PO4 from Brandon and had no idea what I was getting into but I haven't regretted doing it for a minute.

**I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST FOR THE FUTURE,  
THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!**

In solidarity,

Gord Fischer  
National Director  
Prairie Region

/akm  
cope 225

# **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR PACIFIC REGION**

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Dear Delegates and Members,

In accordance with Section 3.04 of the National Constitution, please accept the following report to the National Convention for your consideration after my first term as National Director of the Pacific Region.

## **UNITED AND WORKING FOR YOU**

To begin with I would like to acknowledge and thank all the Local Executive Officers, shop stewards, committee members, and work floor activists who dedicate their time and expertise to our Union. Your contributions are invaluable to the successful operation of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Through your collective efforts we have provided effective representation for the membership, kept the pressure on the corporation during negotiations and the rotating strikes, and built support for our vision of the future of our public post office. The strength of our union comes from the grassroots membership. Therefore, I want to acknowledge and thank each and every one of our local activists who have stepped up to take on the work of the union. Without your dedication and hard work our union would not be as strong as it is.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the current members of the Regional Office, Karen De Francesco, Cindy McDonnell, Rick Hansen, Angel Hoare and Wes McIntosh. They are a committed group of individuals who all bring a wide variety of experience as well as strong opinions yet, they have all demonstrated an ability to work together and to engage in open and respectful debate. That has allowed the Regional Office to develop and maintain solid and united positions when representing the membership. We also mentor each other to make sure we broaden our communal skills. It has truly been a pleasure to work with such a dedicated, knowledgeable and hard working group of people. I can unreservedly endorse all of the members of the Regional Office if they choose to reoffer for their positions. They will all have my vote if they do.

I am extremely proud of the Regional Office, the people who work there, and of the work we have accomplished together. Not only has this been the most cohesive and positive term that I have experienced since first joining the Regional Office, collectively we have managed to accomplish a great deal for the membership. Everyone has worked extremely hard this term. They have all worked far in excess of 40 hours per week and have given up many evenings and weekends for the membership often spending time travelling away from home. Plus because we are all connected by cell phones, internet and email, which makes us all accessible to you, that also means we continue to work after normal business hours.

I am also very pleased that our Regional Office represents a wide variety of diversity and equity. We have worked hard to maintain gender equity in the elected positions in our office and remarkably two of the three Regional Executive Committee members identify as female. We have also built a strong contingent of secondary leadership in the Pacific Region. The Pacific Region has 3 members in our office who represent equity seeking groups (workers of colour, differently abled workers and LGBTQ members) and sit on the National Human Rights Committee. The members of our office also represent the RSMC and Groups 1 and 2 of the Urban Bargaining units. We can all be proud that our Regional Office reflects the diversity of the work floors in the Pacific Region.

Most importantly of all, I must thank our amazing Administrative Assistants, Irene Kwan and Nicole Van Dijk. They are members of the Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union (COPE) Local 225. Without the knowledge and hard work of these loyal professionals, our office would simply not function.

## **OUR FUTURE IS BRIGHT IF WE ARE WILLING TO FIGHT FOR IT!**

The 2015-2019 term has been a non-stop rollercoaster ride. Not only did we go through 2 rounds of negotiations for our 2 largest bargaining units we also had negotiations for a number of private sector bargaining units across the country including TForce Final Mile on Vancouver Island and the BC Interior.

When we started this term Postal Workers were facing one of the most significant and concerted threats in CUPW's history. However, through the combined efforts of the entire membership and with the support of our allies in the labour movement and civil society we were able to turn the ship around through our "Save Canada Post Campaign" and the "Delivering Community Power" coalition.

We made public postal services one of the top five issues in the 2015 Federal Election, which helped to defeat Stephen Harper and his Conservative Government and replace them with Justin Trudeau and the Liberals. The new Government asked Deepak Chopra to resign and his last day was March 31, 2018. Over time they have also replaced the Conservative appointees on the Board of Directors with candidates that had diverse backgrounds including, for the first time, a voice from labour with the appointment of Jim Sinclair, the former President of the BC Federation of Labour. The Liberals also held a two phased review of the Post Office which resulted in a number of positive recommendations including, but not limited to, a moratorium on ending door-to-door delivery, redirecting the corporation to be more orientated to serving the public, to examine ways to expand services and to reinvest profits into that expansion while improving the infrastructure that supports it.

The Liberal Government's review of the Post Office opened the door for potential improvements yet, they have fallen short on securing a long term future for our public postal service and for maintaining permanent, full-time, family supporting jobs with benefits for current and future generations. The Review of Canada Post failed to make any concrete recommendations on how to expand services despite CUPW's numerous suggestions.

Postal Workers have a lot to be proud of and we must celebrate our significant victories. However, the members of CUPW still have much work to do in the future. That is why the National Executive Board chose the following slogan for the 2019 Convention: "No Struggle. No Victory." I believe that Postal workers have a lot of power right now. We have the opportunity to create the conditions to ensure the long term viability and sustainability of Canada's Public Post Office that will benefit Canadians for generations. Our future is bright if we are willing to fight for it!

## **RSMC AND URBAN OPERATIONS NEGOTIATIONS**

There have been two rounds of negotiations for the two largest bargaining units during the 2015-2019 term, which have taken up a great deal of the Union's time, energy and focus. The current RSMC Collective Agreement expired on December 31, 2017 and the Urban Operations agreement expired on January 31, 2018. The RSMC have been fighting for equality with their Urban Sisters and Brothers since long before their first Collective Agreement came into effect on January 1, 2004. The Union achieved an historic victory when Arbitrator Flynn issued her Pay Equity decision in September 2018. On the Urban front members have essentially been fighting to regain what Stephen Harper stripped from them in June 2011 when he imposed the most draconian back to work legislation (Bill C-6) in Canadian history and violated their Charter rights.

We all hoped that this time might be different. We had broad public support. We were receiving positive media. The membership was united. Prime Minister Trudeau had promised that his government would develop a new and improved relationship with Unions and the workers they represent. Both he and Labour Minister Patty Hajdu had both stated in Parliament and in the media that they would not interfere in our negotiations with Canada Post.

Then Trudeau showed his true colours. He rewarded Canada Post for their refusal to negotiate. He fell for the corporation's manufactured backlog crisis and he sided with the demands of right wing conservatives and big business that the government had to strip us of our Charter Rights to save Christmas.

Like a bad version of "Groundhog Day" postal workers have once again been legislated back to work and we are facing binding arbitration due to Bill C-89 "an Act to provide for the resumption and continuation of postal services" (assented to 26 November 2018). Out of the 13 rounds of CUPW bargaining since 1978, the Liberal and Conservative Governments have resorted to back to work legislation on 6 occasions (1978, 1987, 1991, 1997, 2011, 2018).

Like we did in 2011 the Union has filed a Charter challenge in the courts on the legality of Bill C-89. We have also filed a complaint with the International Labour Organization at the United Nations. Unfortunately, those complaints will likely take many months before decisions are issued.

Now instead of negotiating a Collective Agreement we are reluctantly engaged in binding Arbitration. The Government appointed Elizabeth MacPherson as the Arbitrator who will determine our new Collective Agreement. Bill C-89 originally required the arbitration process to be completed in 90-days. However, in order to allow the Union and the corporation enough time to present their evidence she applied to the Minister of Labour for an extension to August 20, 2019 to complete the process. That extension has been granted.

There are many inequities and serious problems that still have to be addressed. After 24 months of negotiations we are still fighting for increased job security, improved wages and benefits, finding solutions to the deteriorating working conditions that have been imposed on us over the past decade, the explosion of parcel volumes, and the corporation's unilateral changes to work methods. All of which have resulted in numerous health and safety concerns and the worst injury rate in the federal sector. Our demands include better staffing and procedures to address such issues as forced overtime and overburdening.

The Union also put forward proposals for expanding services such as checking in on senior citizens, postal banking, internet access, grocery delivery, government and fighting climate change be greening the postal fleet and retrofitting post offices to be more energy efficient.

For the predominantly female workers in the RSMC unit, the Union sought to achieve equality by negotiating the same basic rights that Urban unit workers are entitled to, such as job security, guaranteed hours of work, pay for all hours worked (including overtime), as well as post-retirement extended health care benefits.

According to Canada Post's financial reports they have been profitable and sustainable for the past quarter century. Restoring the successful postal bank and expanding other revenue generating services would more than pay for the improvements to our wages, benefits and working conditions. Moreover, it would ensure that our public post office would remain viable and sustainable for many generations in the future.

Therefore, we must continue the fight for our future. We must empower our members to take back their work floors and to build alliances in their communities to push our vision of Canada Post.

## **DELIVERING COMMUNITY POWER**

The Delivering Community Power Coalition was launched 3 years ago. The founding members included Acorn Canada, the Canadian Postmaster and Assistants Association, the LEAP, Friends of Public Services, and CUPW. That coalition has ballooned to over 50 organizations and it is still growing.

With over 6,300 outlets, our public post office has the largest retail and logistics network in Canada. We believe the government should use the infrastructure that Canadians already own to expand public postal services, improve the environment, grow the economy, create jobs and strengthen our communities.

Delivering Community Power wraps our vision into one realistic and holistic package. Here are the main components of our plan:

- Installing charging stations for electric vehicles at post offices;
- Converting the largest fleet in Canada to electric vehicles;
- Restoring postal banking to provide inclusive financial services, especially to those underserved by commercial banks, like in rural and many Indigenous communities;
- Door-to-door mail carriers checking in on seniors and people with mobility issues, keeping more people in their own homes for longer;
- Post offices as community hubs for digital access and social innovation, connecting communities and climate-friendly businesses to customers;
- A consolidated last-mile delivery service that eases congestion in urban centres and reduces the environmental impact of our cities.

Canada Post could be a world leader and an example for other Canadian businesses on how to reduce carbon emissions, fight climate change and provide a just transition that ensures workers are not left behind.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast support our vision and they want our public post office to deliver it. All it takes is the political will.

## **2019 FEDERAL ELECTION**

Postal Workers successfully made public postal services one of the major issues in the 2015 Federal Election campaign. As a result, we sent Stephen Harper and his Conservative Government packing. Unfortunately, the Liberal Party received a majority despite the fact that the only party in English Canada that supported our vision of public postal services was the NDP. That was largely due to the fact that Canadians were desperate to find a progressive alternative to Stephen Harper and Justin Trudeau made numerous promises that lead voters to believe that his party would deliver that alternative.

Sadly, many of his promises have been broken: restoring door-to-door delivery to Canadian homes, implementing electoral reform, protecting the environment, ensuring pay equity for women who work in the Federal sector, reconciliation with Indigenous people, building a new relationship with the labour movement, and respecting our Charter Rights to free collective bargaining and the right to strike. Clearly, Justin Trudeau was not paying attention to the power of Postal Workers in the last Federal Election.

The next federal election is scheduled for October 19, 2019, unless the Prime Minister calls one earlier. One of the key planks in our fight back campaign is working to elect a worker friendly Government that supports public services, like the Post Office, ensures that women receive equal pay for work of equal value, and respects workers rights.

Conservative Governments have proven time and time again that their policies are bad for Postal Workers and our families. Conservative Party policy is to privatize Crown Corporations like the CBC and Canada Post. While the Liberal Party policy is not as extreme they are still killing us softly. The party that forms Government controls Canada Post and therefore has a direct impact on our members, our jobs, and our Union. Therefore it is essential that our Union plays an active role in federal elections.

Our job between now and the next federal election is to make the proposals in our Delivering Community Power Coalition an election issue. You can help by contacting your Member of Parliament and the candidates running for election in your riding to ask them where they stand on our plan to green the post office, to expand public postal services and to reinstate Canada's successful postal bank. Then get out and vote for the candidates and political parties that support our vision. We also have to encourage our family, friends and coworkers to vote in the next election. In the last Federal Election, the voter turnout was only 68.5%. Low voter turnout only helps the Conservatives. So, it is essential that we all do our part to get out the vote.

Workers must vote for the political party that puts our best interests as part of its platform. The Conservatives and Liberals have repeatedly shown that they are not on our side. It is time to vote for a political party that has our backs.

## **RURAL AND SUBURBAN MAIL CARRIERS**

On January 1, 2004, 6,400 Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMC) became employees of Canada Post. Since that time this bargaining unit has grown to approximately 9,300 members and the rights in the RSMC Collective Agreement have improved although, not as fast as the members and the Union had hoped. Despite these improvements at the start of this term the Union was facing the blatant disregard of the contract by management and a certain amount of skepticism and frustration from the membership.

In arbitration Canada Post would often hide behind its right to manage and the corporation was winning a high percent of their cases. The corporation's expectations were that the RSMC were responsible for all volume and expenses related to the bargaining unit.

During this mandate the Regional Office has been successful in advancing RSMC rights and enforcing the language in the Collective Agreement.

At Arbitration the Regional Office has repeatedly received positive decisions in the following areas:

- Winning pay for On Call Relief Employees (OCRE) and Permanent Relief Employees (PRE) who were bypassed for work by the corporation;
- Winning extra compensation when the corporation adds work to RSMC routes;
- Compensation for personal days and annual leave;
- Stopping Canada Post from using contractors in offices with over 5 routes, including a cease and desist order for the Kelowna local;
- Recognition that the normal work week for RSMC is 5 days;
- Preventing management from using "other means" to staff routes as there is no language for this procedure in the RSMC Collective Agreement;
- Recognition that contractors are defined as dependant under the labour code and therefore the corporation cannot use them to perform work in the RSMC bargaining unit where relief employees exist (Article 28 – Work in the Bargaining Unit);
- Winning pay at time and a half when RSMC work on a designated holiday (Article 16) rather than the dollar a parcel that the corporation was offering;
- Recognition of seniority for OCRE and PRE.

These positive decisions are setting the stage to achieve further gains at Arbitration. To that end the Pacific region is currently working on the following issues:

- Forcing Canada Post to pay overtime;
- Forcing Canada Post to pay actual wages as defined by the Collective Agreement when performing work on other routes;
- Eliminating overburdening of OCRE and PRE (ie management forcing relief employees to deliver two or more days of mail in one as a staffing option).

The Pacific Region has also been very successful in convincing the corporation at the local level to hire additional relief employees where we could demonstrate the need for additional staff. This term we created 53 new OCRE positions and 33 PRE positions.

Arbitrator Flynn's Pay Equity saw a massive improvement in wages and benefits. However, we have still have to achieve equality through negotiations and the binding arbitration in front of Arbitrator McPherson. We shall continue to fight to ensure that Canada Post pays all RSMC members an hourly rate of pay for all the hours they work including overtime.

## **TFORCE FINAL MILE (FORMERLY DYNAMEX CANADA LTD)**

We originally started with one TForce Final Mile (TFFM) bargaining unit of 19 members in Kelowna in 2011. Subsequently we organized a second bargaining unit in Victoria and then a third in Nanaimo. Then after winning a representation vote against Unifor the Canadian Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) certified CUPW as the bargaining agent for TFFM workers on Vancouver Island and in the BC Interior on September 2, 2014. There are also TFFM bargaining units in Red Deer, Saskatoon, Winnipeg and Ottawa. TFFM is a wholly owned subsidiary of TFI International (formerly TransForce).

All of the Collective Agreements across the country expired within a couple of months of each other so; the Union decided to try to negotiate one Collective Agreement for all TFFM members. We formed a negotiating committee of members from all the bargaining units and the Regional Grievance Officers of the 3 regions that had TFFM members. In the Pacific Region our negotiators are Laurie Ezako, a courier driver and Shop Steward from the Victoria Local, Patrick Ward, a courier driver and former President of the Kelowna Local, and Cindy McDonnell, the Pacific Regional Grievance Officer. Jan Simpson, 1<sup>st</sup> National Vice-President, is the Chief Negotiator. We developed a program of negotiation demands with our TFFM members and then we served notice to bargain to TFFM.

TFI refused to agree to the Union's demand for one Collective Agreement unless the Union agreed to give up our claim that the owner-operators who work as couriers for TFFM were employees with all the rights that entailed. The corporation wanted them classified as independent contractors. The Union refused to give up fighting for those rights and proceeded to renegotiate the separate Collective Agreements while still using the united negotiating committee from all 3 regions.

TFI and TFFM dragged their heels at negotiations so, CUPW applied for conciliation with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services of the Federal Government. It was only after the Union schedule strike votes that TFI and TFFM started to negotiate. As of the writing of this report the Union has reached a tentative agreement for the Saskatoon and Winnipeg bargaining units and the National Executive Board is recommending that the members vote yes. It is now up to the members to decide if they will ratify that agreement and we still have to negotiate agreement for the bargaining units in Ottawa, Red Deer and BC.

We currently have just over 100 TFFM members in the Pacific Region who are spread over Vancouver Island and the BC Interior. Originally, with the members' agreement we tried to integrate them into existing locals that matched TFFM's management structure. Currently, we have TFFM members in the following locals: Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George and Victoria. There are pros and cons to integrating newly organized members into our existing structures. However, while that worked initially we will likely have to look at changing the way we represent members of private sector bargaining units (PBSU) in the future. For example, there are no PBSU delegates from the Pacific attending the 2019 Convention and that is a shame. We need to work with our PBSU members to find ways to ensure their voices are heard at all levels of the Union.

## EDUCATION

During this term we have tried to ensure our education program met the direction set by the delegates to the 2015 National Convention and the needs of Locals in the Pacific Region. There exists an ever increasing list of priorities for courses that are required from the Union's education program. We have attempted to balance these competing needs by offering a wide variety of courses. The Pacific Region organized eight 3-day and eight 5-day regional education seminars this term where we trained over 800 participants. We have also continued to schedule education seminars at the Local level that meet the needs of Locals and the membership.

The start of the term saw the Pacific Region being hit with the tail end of CMB conversions. Now Canada Post is rolling out their latest attack on Letter Carrier work methods – the separation of sortation from delivery (SSD). This term we have continued to schedule Letter Carrier Route Measurement Courses on an as needed basis that focused on training Union Observers on the most up-to-date restructuring methods.

To address the turnover of Local Executive Committee members we scheduled the Local Administration course at the Spring 2016 and Fall 2018 3-day education seminars and we held the Roles & Responsibility of a Secretary-Treasurer Course at the Fall 3-day education seminars in 2015 and 2017. It would be much easier to schedule these courses and provide training to newly elected Local Executive Members if Locals followed the recommendation in Section 9.05 of the National Constitution to hold elections after the National Convention every 4 years.

Delegates to the 2015 National Convention passed a resolution to revitalize the union's Social Steward Program. A social steward's role is to engage in active listening and to assist members who are struggling to find the help and resources they need to deal with various problems they are facing. Coordinators were trained and the Social Steward Course was revamped and scheduled at the 3-day spring education in 2017 and at the 3-day fall education 2018. To help develop the skills of the new Social Stewards we have also scheduled the Mental Health in the Workplace course two times this term.

Shop Stewards are the backbone of our union. They are on the frontlines and they are the face of our Union to our members and to local management. Therefore, we have scheduled Basic Shop Steward training as often as possible at our 3-day educations and at the Local level to support local efforts to recruit and support new Stewards to represent the membership. We have also scheduled Advanced Shop Steward, Grievance Handling and Collective Agreement courses to continue to develop knowledge and skills of the Shop Stewards body.

We are also proud to be one of the few regions that has followed the recommendation of the National Human Rights Committee and the National Executive Board to educate our members about the rights of Indigenous peoples and to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by scheduling the Turtle Island Course on an annual basis every year of this term.

## **ORGANIZING IN THE PACIFIC REGION**

According to Stats Canada Union density in Canada has dropped to 28.4%. In BC that number is only 27.4%. Ever increasing automation and centralization continues to threaten our jobs. While Canada Post appears to have reversed its slash and burn mentality and is now creating positions and hiring new employees we cannot rely on that to continue.

CUPW must adapt as the nature of postal services continues to change. As the percentage of first class letter mail declines as a percentage of the overall products that we process and deliver we are losing the protections that come from Canada Post's monopoly to deliver letter mail. At the same time the other product lines and services we are expanding into are subject to increasing pressures of competition. To combat those pressures and the reduction in membership at the Post Office CUPW, like other unions must organize new members from outside our traditional sector. Our focus is the logistics sector: companies involved in the movement of goods from one location to another.

Organizing is not simply about signing up members in new bargaining units. It is essential that we welcome these members into our Union family and fully integrate them into the fabric of CUPW. That is no easy task and it will take a collective effort on behalf of all members at the local, regional and national levels. It will also mean making proactive changes to our National Constitution to ensure Private Sector Bargaining Unit (PBSU) members are included in our Union. It is a shame that there will be very few PBSU delegates at the 2019 Convention. That clearly demonstrates that we need to do a better job of representing these members.

The National Executive Board has taken this challenge seriously and we have expanded our organizing efforts by hiring 3 professional organizers (2 in Toronto and 1 in BC) who are members of CUPE 1979 to work with under the direction of the 3rd National Vice President and the National Union Representative for Organizing. Christopher Sano (Sano) is the organizer in BC. He is based in the Pacific Regional Office and works closely with the REOO and the National Director. With his help and expertise we are recruiting and training Worker Organizers from the membership. The Pacific Region is currently conducting 4 organizing campaigns to sign up new members in the delivery and logistics sector.

There are resolutions to delete the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Vice President position and to distribute those duties to the remaining National Officer. I believe that is a bad idea. Other unions like BCGEU, Unifor, MoveUp and CUPE to name a few are successfully growing their membership through organizing. If we do not invest in our future we risk being left behind and losing our power and influence in the labour movement.

If your Local knows of any workers in your communities who may wish to join CUPW or if members are interested in becoming Worker Organizers please contact the Regional Education and Organization Officer.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Canada Post, TForce Final Mile and other employers have the prime responsibility for ensuring their employees have a workplace that is safe healthy and free of harassment and violence. Holding our employers accountable for the health and safety of our members is one of the highest priorities for all levels of the Union.

Canada Post holds the disgraceful record of having the highest injury rate in the Federal sector, which is 5 times higher than the next highest employer. Shamefully, disabling and life changing injuries at Canada Post are 8 times higher than other federally regulated employers.

Many of the hazards to our health and safety are systemic. Low wages for new employees, poor working conditions and bad management lead to a lack of staffing that exacerbates the problems. Constantly changing work methods imposed by Canada Post such as automation, motorization, multiple delivery waves, sequencing of the mail and the separation of sortation from delivery (SSD) and the multiple bundle system have led to higher stress and injuries.

Plus the negative effects of climate change caused by increasing carbon emissions have resulted in more extreme temperatures and weather conditions. The repeated and worsening forest fires in BC and the Western United States over the last several years are a stark example of the serious threats and challenges we collectively face, such as property damage, dangerous air quality conditions and evacuations of entire communities. In fact, the smoke from the 2018 fires spread as far East as Winnipeg. Sadly, management's responses to these threats to our health and safety are woefully inadequate. They often blame workers and put the onus on individuals to invoke their right to refuse unsafe working conditions. We must continue to put pressure on Canada Post and other employers to live up to their responsibility and legal obligation to provide employees with a safe and healthy workplace.

During this term in conjunction with the CUPW Prairie Region we have held quarterly Regional H&S Escalation meetings with senior management including the General Managers for the Pacific and Prairie Divisions with the exception of the November 14, 2018 meeting, which was cancelled due to the rotating strikes. The last meeting this term is scheduled for March 19, 2019.

These meetings are where we deal with issues that have not been resolved at the Local Joint Health and Safety Committees. We also use these meetings to standardize and support the work of Local Committees.

To that end we have started working with Canada Post to hold meetings with multiple LJHSCs to review the Terms of Reference for Local Committees and to review the legal and contractual requirements. We also continue to schedule Joint Health and Safety Committee training sessions several times a year for the Union and management members of our Local Joint Health and Safety Committees.

There is a need to train more Appendix "DD" and "HH" facilitators in the Pacific Region. These trainers facilitate Health and Safety and Human Rights training for members in their workplaces. The employer has failed to train employees in locations outside of the Lower Mainland and Victoria, which is completely unacceptable. We will continue to work with our National Office to schedule Train the Trainer sessions to train new facilitators and to force the employer to resume training for employees in all parts of the Region.

## **GRIEVANCE ARBITRATION**

Our strategy in the Pacific Region this term has been to reduce the use of lawyers in the grievance arbitration process. We have been using a higher number of Worker Advocates to present grievances at regular arbitration hearings than other Regions. We have also trained the Union Representatives to take on the role of arguing Formal discharge arbitrations. As a result, we have managed to maintain relatively low legal costs in our region compared to the rest of the country. We have had many fantastic wins, especially in the case of RSMC and medical/accommodation files. Our members are more than capable of taking on the Corporation's Labour Relations Officers and Corporate Lawyers and winning. That is something that we can be extremely proud of.

We have increased the number of scheduled arbitration dates this year, which has allowed us to maintain a minimal backlog of both regular and formal grievances. Most grievances are being scheduled for arbitration within 4 to 6 months.

On the regular arbitration front we are seeing the following trends: uncovered letter carrier/RSMC routes have increased while discipline in most areas has decreased.

We have also been able to resolve many discharge grievances without going to arbitration. However, we still have a number that we are waiting on additional dates. Canada Post is horrible about accepting additional dates for arbitration if they need to be rescheduled. That may be due in part to the high turnover at of Labour Relations staff. Currently, CPC is unable to retain advocates and the ones they have are leaving as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, many of the Arbitrators on the Pacific Region's list are nearing retirement and we will need to replace them in the not too distant future.

We have been successful in settling almost all of the grievances for the TForce Final Mile Bargaining Unit without going to arbitration, which has resulted in thousands of dollars going back into the hands of our members.

We trained 3 new Arbitration Advocates in January 2016 and another 4 were trained in February 2019. However, we still need more Worker Advocates, especially outside of the lower mainland. So, the Regional Office will continue to recruit and mentor new candidates going into the next term.

## **SHORT TERM DISABILITY PLAN**

Dealing with appeals of the Short Term Disability Plan (STDP) has increased the workload in the Regional Office by around 35%. We have developed a great tracking system for appeal claims to insure that we are not missing the very tight timelines in the Collective Agreements.

Approval of STDP claims are based on medical evident and the support of employees' doctors. As a result the majority of claims for physical illnesses and injuries are approved. Of the claims that are denied approximately 80% have a mental health component, which are harder to prove as the medical evidence is often subjective rather than objective. Nevertheless, we have a fairly good record winning at the final appeal level.

There is a need to add additional Independent Medical Practitioners who specialize in mental health conditions. Plus the members put forward numerous demands to improve the STDP system so, now we will have to win those improvements at the binding arbitration in front of Arbitrator McPherson.

## **STRUCTURE AND THE FUTURE OF OUR UNION**

One of the main functions of our National Conventions is to examine the structure of our Union. The success of our fightback campaigns and the exponential growth of the parcel business at the Canada Post has provided us with some breathing room when it comes to addressing the financial sustainability of the Union.

Nevertheless, we need to have a thorough examination of our structure to ensure we can continue to effectively service and mobilize the membership, maintain the democratic and progressive orientation of our union, provide autonomy and voice for all Locals, and to ensure the equality and inclusion of all bargaining units. That will not be accomplished by random cuts or arbitrary deleting positions.

We also need to look at our dues structure and examine the possibility of increasing the Union's revenues to maintain the things listed above. The current formula is regressive system that exploits our temporary members and leaves them in a vulnerable position.

The CUPW National Constitution governs the structure, finances and operations of our Union. Due to the fact that we elect the majority of the people who work for our union from the membership to perform work that is usually done by hired staff in most other unions our National Constitution also acts a pseudo collective agreement for all of the National and Regional Officers and Union Representatives. So, it is important that we ensure those working conditions are fair and equitable.

If organizing new members into CUPW is to be a priority than we also have to find better ways to fully integrating them into the fabric of our CUPW family and give them an equal voice.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

This report addresses a non-exhaustive list of issues that have faced the Pacific Region and CUPW during this last term and where we need to go in the future. There are so many issues that we have dealt with in the past 4 years and not enough space and time to report on them all.

As always the future will present Postal Workers with challenges and opportunities. The National Convention is where we come together to set the direction of our union and to elect the leadership at the National and Regional level to take us there. At Convention and at every level of our union we must ensure we hold open, honest and respectful debate on how we will collectively deal with the issues that confront us.

Once the Convention is over we must leave united. We will only overcome the obstacles in our way and achieve our vision of our public post office if we stick together and work collectively. Postal Workers have won many victories and the future is in our hands.

I wish you all strength and wisdom as you deliberate the best path for that future and for a successful Convention.

**No Struggle. No Victory. Together we will win!**

In solidarity,

Tim Armstrong  
National Director, Pacific Region  
March 2019