



# UnionUPDATE



Public Service Alliance of Canada • 233 Gilmour Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0P1 • (613) 560-4200

## Union wins victory over privatization of military supply chain

**P**SAC/UNDE members are celebrating their victory over privatization with the recent news that the Department of National Defence has "taken the off ramp" and stopped plans to hand over the military supply chain operation to a British multinational firm, Tibbett and Britten Group.

The decision is a signal that senior officials at National Defence have recognized the value of the efficient and professional work performed by our supply chain members. It also confirms our consistent message that no outside company could do this important work as effectively or efficiently as the public service.

"The union has been very vocal in challenging the large savings promised by Tibbett and Britten," says PSAC National President Nycole Turmel. "Ultimately, the only way Tibbett and Britten could produce the savings they promised would be to cut personnel and to cut corners wherever they could."

According to UNDE National President John MacLennan, "military logistics is recognized as a core responsibility. The decision not to privatize this responsibility is a good one. Our members are very pleased that their valuable work is being recognized."

PSAC/UNDE brought this message to the attention of

National Defence, Members of Parliament and the Canadian public through TV, radio and newspaper ads, leaflets, demonstrations, letters to and meetings with MPs and appearances before the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence. "This experiment in privatization was stopped before it became a disaster as a result of the work the union did in reaching out to our communities with the support and action of our members," says Turmel. "Some important lessons have been learned, including the fact that by working together we can make a difference."

"National Defence is going to be reviewing the supply chain operation and the union will be working closely with them to ensure that the department lives up to its commitment to make every effort to minimize any negative effects," explains PSAC Regional Executive Vice-President for Quebec Jérôme Turcq.

PSAC/UNDE members will have all the protection of the Workforce Adjustment Directive. No indeterminate employee who is willing to accept a reasonable job offer will have to leave the Public Service and for the first three years of this project, no one will be asked to relocate to take a reasonable job offer, unless they want to.

## SSO members deliver huge strike mandate

PSAC members employed by Statistical Survey Operations (SSO) have given their bargaining teams a tough mandate to take back to the bargaining table. The Regional Office Interviewers and the Field Interviewers have voted over 90% to take strike action if necessary to back up their demands.

"Such a large strike vote sends a clear message that the employer's offer of inadequate wage increases and roll-backs of benefits will not produce a settlement," says

PSAC National Executive Vice-President John Gordon.

"Anyone who relies on Statistics Canada surveys should be concerned about the impact of a strike," explains Andrew Jackson, Senior Economist with the Canadian Labour Congress. "Policy makers must have access to timely and accurate data. If data collection and reporting are interrupted, the validity of Statistics Canada surveys will be called into question and their reputation tarnished."

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## NEU Component holds second Convention

**O**n October 26, 2002, 23 Nunavut Employees Union delegates met in just their second convention since the Component was created in 1998. NEU's 2,800 members work in close to 30 different bargaining units across the territory. Delegates to the NEU Convention came from across Nunavut, from Resolute Bay to Iqaluit, from Chesterfield Inlet to Nanisivik. Simultaneous translation was available in both English and Inuktitut.

The Convention opened with an Inuktitut rendition of *O Canada* sung by local schoolchildren from Cambridge Bay. Guest speaker Bill Lyall, President of the Arctic Co-op, drew parallels between the Co-op and the union. Another guest speaker, James Eetoolook, Vice-President of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, talked about the need for better salaries and benefits for Nunavut workers and for training programs which will enable more Inuit people to successfully compete for government jobs.

Brother John Gordon, PSAC National Executive-Vice President, also addressed the NEU delegates.

He emphasized how the relationship between the PSAC and NEU had benefited all of us, and the many ways in which NEU members had taken their rightful place within the PSAC over the past four years.

"Together the PSAC and the NEU are a strong union with the ability to defend workers' rights," said Gordon. "The PSAC and NEU are a strong union, and strong unions make a difference. Strong unions like the PSAC NEU, focused on collective bargaining and on the broader issues of the day, make a difference for their current members and for future generations. That's what the PSAC and NEU are about, and why we are working to build a united national union that reflects its component and regional structure. A union that reflects its diversity and defends its members from one coast to another to another, from one community to another, and from one workplace to another."

Delegates debated a wide range of resolutions and agreed to the creation of a new position of Secretary-Treasurer on the Component executive, as well as a staff officer

position in Iqaluit. NEU will now have two Harassment Officers, one female and one male, with 15 days of salary replacement for each Officer to allow them to investigate complaints. Several collective bargaining demands reflecting the realities of our members in the North – such as family leave, and the re-definition of the family in collective agreements, were also adopted.

NEU members who took strike action in 2001 were recognized by a banquet held in their honour during the convention and a limited edition NEU pin. NEU also hosted a community feast of traditional food and an evening of entertainment in Cambridge Bay on October 19th.

Doug Workman was re-elected NEU President. Mitch Taylor of Iqaluit was elected First Vice-President, Doug Kaosoni of Cambridge Bay was elected Second Vice-President and Kevin Nipaniatiak of Kugluktuk was elected as the Component's first Secretary-Treasurer. Four Regional Vice-Presidents will be elected to the NEU Executive in the near future.

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## SSO members deliver huge strike mandate

According to National Component President Heather Brooker, "salaries for Interviewers have fallen well behind comparable positions in the federal public sector. In 2000, the last year they received an increase, both Field and Regional Office Interviewers were making over \$2.00 an hour less than the lowest paid clerks in the federal government. Since then, the gap has widened to the point that Field Interviewers are paid at least 40% less than their federal counterparts, while Regional Office Interviewers

have fallen at least 35% behind.

The Field Interviewers bargaining unit is seeking their first agreement. Their bargaining team has spent 49 days in bargaining to date. Meetings with a Conciliation Officer have been scheduled to take place from December 15 to 18. The Regional Office Interviewers group has been working on a renewal agreement without success after 28 days of bargaining. Their bargaining team will meet with the Conciliation Officer from January 6 to 9, 2003.

## Unity Conference resolutions give PSAC direction on human rights

About 120 racially visible and Aboriginal members of the PSAC debated and passed resolutions during the 2002 Unity Conference in Winnipeg last October that would provide direction to the union in dealing with issues of human rights and globalization.

For the first time, the Unity Conference will be able to take their resolutions directly to the PSAC Triennial Convention in 2003.

"This is, without question, another historic step forward for our union," said PSAC National President Nycole Turmel during her opening remarks at the conference.

The delegates passed 17 resolutions, including ones that would increase the participation and representativeness of racially visible and Aboriginal PSAC members in the union's activities and structure. Other resolutions carried include having a PSAC Triennial Pride Conference, an education strategy on globalization, establishing a solidarity fund that will support human rights works at a global scale and engaging in a campaign against the corporate agenda.

The conference opened on Friday, Oct. 18, with a greeting from Grand Chief Dennis White Bird of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. White Bird gave recognition to the PSAC's efforts in addressing racism and promoting diversity and stressed the importance of forging alliances in these efforts. "Canada is a very young country," he said. "We can mould it any way we want in terms of policy, in terms of legislation, particularly in the workforce."

Two speakers who attended the United Nations World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, presented their views on the event to the Unity conference delegates. Mary-Woo Sims, who represented the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies at the conference, urged the delegates not to believe the media's portrayal of the conference's complete failure. "Important strides were made in drafting a declaration and program of action," she said. "Durban should be seen as a beginning and not an end.

Leslie Spillett, who sat on the UNWCAR Advisory Committee and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee who also attended the Durban conference, said that the Indigenous Peoples from Canada used the Durban conference as an opportunity to raise the issues resulting from the impact of colonization. "Because of the deeply rooted denial of racism in Canada ... it is critical that organizations, especially in the trade union movement, work very hard to keep anti-racism on the local, national and international agenda," she said.

The Unity conference delegates also heard from Canadian Labour Congress Secretary-Treasurer Hassan Yussuff who painted a grim socio-political context in which the current

struggle for racism is taking place. "The system is flawed against working people," he said. "Who's going to change it?" The obvious answer: Activists like the conference delegates themselves. Yussuff impressed upon the delegates the strides the PSAC is making to enable it to address these pressing issues and pointed out that not many unions have conferences like the Unity



*Conference delegates voting on a resolution and being presided over by Ontario REVP Gerry Halabecki.*

Conference.

"It is important to give encouragement, hope and political space for our communities and their leadership to take their rightful place in this movement," Yussuff said. "This has always been what we've been trying to work toward in the trade union movement."

The conference held a banquet that evening where Dr. Ranjit Perera was honoured for his struggle against discrimination, including a federal court victory against the federal government for infringing on equality rights under the Canadian Charter.

Four new Equal Opportunities Committee representatives were elected during the conference. Tammy Davidson and Andre Paul are the new PSAC Aboriginal representatives and Terri Lee and Richard Sharpe are the new racially visible representatives.

## UPCE ready for the next three years

The convention of the Union of Postal Communications Employees (UPCE) has made sure that the Component will be in a better position to deal with whatever plans their employers, Canada Post Corporation and Purolator, may have in mind for the next three years which may have negative consequences for UPCE members.

UPCE's improved financial position going into the convention means that the Component can maintain its full-time executive structure to respond to employer initiatives and do so without increasing the percentage members pay in dues.

The convention, which was held in Ottawa from October 20 to 22, had almost as many Local observers as the 34 delegates. The delegates unanimously adopted a regulation which will see the Component pay for the

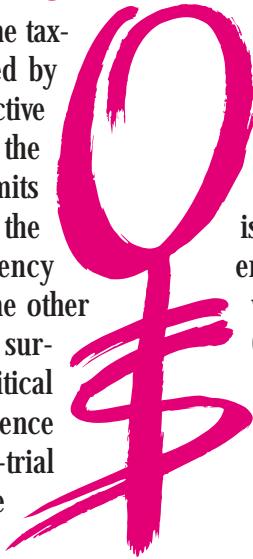
cost of two additional members on the bargaining team which will negotiate with Purolator.

Up to now, Local Presidents have been getting together each year in regional conferences. Delegates agreed to turn the regional conferences into a national Local Presidents' Conference every second year. They also joined together to award an Honourary Membership and offer their best wishes to UPCE's Comptroller to Michel Jacob who was in hospital at the time of the convention battling cancer.

National President Luc Guèvremont was re-elected for a second term. The other full-time officers elected include Directors Mike Moeller (Atlantic), Ginette Chartrand (Quebec), Richard Des Lauriers (Ontario) and Janet May (Western).

## Pay equity tax case update

The PSAC's test case challenging the taxation of the interest payments received by members who were entitled to retroactive pay equity adjustments is currently at the discovery stage. This process permits each party, in this case the union and the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA), to "discover" the case that the other party has in order that there be no surprises at the trial stage. This is a critical phase which can take some time. Evidence which is not disclosed during this pre-trial stage will likely not be allowed to be introduced at trial.



At this time, the union doesn't expect a hearing in the Tax Court before some time in 2003. Once the case is heard, it is expected that it will take several months at least for a decision to be issued, which could mean a decision by the end of 2003. However, this will depend on when the hearing actually takes place. Once a decision is issued, it will also be subject to appeal, which could further prolong the process.

## Term Study Update

The term study negotiated in the last round of bargaining for members at Treasury Board seems to be producing results. Treasury Board President Lucienne Robillard promised to abide by the study's recommended timeframe of having a new Term Employment Policy up and running by March 2003 and we are seeing action.

Treasury Board drafted a policy based on the study's recommendations and, in October, requested concrete and specific departmental input. They are now reviewing this input.

We are expecting the threshold for conversion to indeterminate status to be reduced from five years. The report recommends a two year threshold and this is what we're hoping to see in the new policy.

To make sure term employees are converted to indeterminate status where appropriate, please make sure your Component is aware of terms who are not renewed. The union will be monitoring this.