

CONVENTION NOTES

May 1 2009



TAKE THE PLEDGE AND BE A PUBLIC SERVICE DEFENDER

National President John Gordon called on all PSAC members to take the **Think Public** pledge in his closing remarks to the convention.

“Leading the way for quality public services cannot just be our theme for this Convention,” said Gordon. “We need to commit ourselves to take action to help build a better world.”

“Louise Arbour inspired us to have an inclusive view of human rights and that working towards this goal would create a more just, safe and progressive world, something that would benefit us all. We have to grow our network of allies and build more coalitions to help us in this important goal.”

In urging members to take the **Think Public** pledge, Gordon asked them to become public service defenders.

“Take advantage of every opportunity to explain and promote our quality public services with family, friends and neighbours,” he said. “Talk to 10 other co-workers about **Think Public** and ask them to become public service defenders. Take at least one action in PSAC campaigns and activities. Vote for and work on campaigns to elect federal, territorial, provincial and municipal representatives who support public services.”

Delegates passed a number of important resolutions this week that call on the union to campaign, to lobby, to organize, to reach out and to build more alliances.

“We must treat this like an organizing drive, building our activists and allies, building our collective power,” said Gordon. “We must treat this like a strike, where our collective solidarity and determination keep us motivated to continue speaking out and promoting quality public services. We must treat this like we are determining our future – because we are. We can do this, I know we can! Let’s make it happen!”

MAKE A COMMITMENT TO WORKERS AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS TODAY!

Liberals arriving for their convention session Friday morning were greeted by groups of PSAC members loudly chanting so-so-so, solidarité! Leaflets were distributed calling on Liberals to undo the damage caused by the Conservative budget Act.

Our message to the Liberals is blunt: Restore pay equity as a human right: repeal the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* and support the right to free collective bargaining: repeal the *Expenditure Restraint Act*.

MAY 1ST: LABOUR’S FIGHT CONTINUES

May 1st commemorates the massacre and violent dispersal of workers in 1886 during a peaceful rally at Haymarket Square in Chicago that demanded an eight-

hour work day.



In 2009, workers are still fighting to protect their hard-won rights to organize, to bargain collectively and to strike. In the last couple of years, workers’ rights have eroded in Canada and around the world.

The Harper government has enacted legislation that rolls back workers’ labour and human rights, including the right to bargain collectively and to demand equal pay for work of equal value. The Conservatives continue to make cuts to public services.

PSAC has been at the forefront of the resistance against these right-wing attacks on public services and workers’ rights.

“PSAC is building a movement to fight back and defend Canada’s valuable public services,” says the union’s May 1st statement.

“One hundred and twenty three years after the Haymarket Affair, PSAC celebrates our successes but we remain vigilant and ready to take action against attacks on our rights.”

Lead the way for quality public services – **Traçons la voie** pour des services publics de qualité



CONVENTION DEBATES

Correction

The information reported in the April 30 edition of Convention Notes regarding resolution CS-74 was incorrect. It should have read:

CS-74: tabled. The resolution would reduce strike pay for most members other than members in the three Territories.

General resolutions:

GEN092A: adopted. PSAC will launch a lobbying campaign to oppose the privatization of federal labs and to raise awareness amongst Canadians of the need and importance of public science and research. This resolution will raise PSAC dues by 0.0016%.

GEN078: PSAC will continue its campaign and conduct a strong regional and national lobby in support of funding for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in order to meet its mandate. This resolution will raise PSAC dues by 0.0013%.

PSI HEAD CALLS FOR MORE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY TO DEFEND PUBLIC SERVICES

“It is encouraging that PSAC and PSI are pursuing the same goals,” said Peter Waldorff in his video address to Convention.

The secretary general of Public Services International acknowledged the study co-sponsored by PSAC and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, *Quiet Bargain: The Benefits of Public Spending*, which concluded that taxpayers benefit immensely from the public services their taxes fund.

“I am convinced that the results are correct not only in Canadian terms but globally,” said Waldorff.

In a time of deep economic crisis, Waldorff called for stronger international solidarity in the struggle for social responsibility, against growing inequality and for larger investments in quality public services.

He denounced the neo-liberal policies of governments that have led to the current financial crisis.

“Those who have promoted deregulation and privatization should be named and shamed,” he said. “They have not served the interests of the people.”

Waldorff closed his address by wishing PSAC luck in its continuing work to defend quality public services.

IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS, THERE IS OPPORTUNITY

There are two lessons working people have to learn, related B.C. Federation of Labour President Jim Sinclair. The first is that working people never get a thing they didn't fight for and the second is that we don't get to keep anything unless we keep on fighting.

“This is the worst economic crisis we have ever faced,” said Sinclair. “Governments deregulated financial institutions and let them do what they want and now they're claiming that the crisis has been caused because wages are too high.”

“Autoworkers' wages which make up only 7% of the cost of a car are being blamed for the auto industry tanking. Stephen Harper took away legislated wage increases and pay equity as if these were to blame for our economic problems.”

Sinclair pointed out that the real crisis is low wages, particularly in B.C. which once had the highest minimum wage and now has the lowest. “We spend our money in our communities; we make the economy work.”

He also slammed the Campbell government in B.C. for billions in tax cuts, mainly for the wealthy, that have resulted in thousands of jobs lost, 177 schools closed, no child care program or health care for seniors.

“The economic crisis also provides us with a great opportunity. Working people need labour like never before.”

Sinclair thanked PSAC members for the work they do, the important jobs that keep our country strong, whether it's food safety, collecting the taxes that make our society civilized, defending our borders, protecting our environment or supporting our Armed Forces.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

Accredited delegates: 470

Observers: 245

Guests: 37

Total: 752