Hello Brothers and Sisters,

Well summer finally came for that whole month of August and wasn’t it wonderful!! I hope all of you enjoyed your vacations and really had time to relax and spend time with family and friends. We hearty Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can forget so easily. July? What about it? Let’s hope that fall is nice and mild and dry for us too.

We can all breathe a little easier now, knowing that our pension concerns have been alleviated. It was agreed by the pension committee and Memorial that deferring the legislated pension payment for one year was the best route to take for all concerned at this time. The issue of a study of our pension plan was also a hot topic and that too has been quashed. Our pension is currently very healthy and we do not want to see any study that could affect us in any way. This too was agreed by all parties involved. You should be aware that your very dedicated pension committee is very involved in all discussions and processes that take place and we strive for the best possible outcomes for all of us.

This fall I am sure is going to be a busy one for all of us. Through retirements, some contracts not being renewed and some positions not being filled at all we have to ensure our workloads and amounts of stress are not increased to an unhealthy level. You should always be aware of what is going on around you and if you feel that too much is being expected of you, you should speak to someone immediately. That could be your union or your department. A safe, healthy and respectful workplace is vital to a productive workplace.

As we all know both Provincial and Federal elections are coming up this fall and we as the voting public have the power to make change. Both CUPE National and CUPE NL support the NDP. This support was passed as a resolution at our 2013 National Convention. Whatever political stripe you carry is your business but I cannot stress enough how important it is to get out and VOTE!!! We can’t stand by and let others make decisions for us. We need to be heard loud and clear that we not only want change we need change!! So I will repeat myself, you need to get out and vote, no matter what political party you are supporting.

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WORKERS MUST REMEMBER HARPER’S ATTACKS WHEN THEY GO TO THE POLLS IN OCTOBER

By Haseena Manek (Reprinted from CALM with permission)

Harper has been Prime Minister for almost a decade. In that time, the Conservative government’s war on workers has touched nearly every sector and industry. Through a combination of policy and propaganda, the Conservatives have started to dismantle the system of protections that have been put in place by decades of advocacy by labour organizations and unions. Their right-wing agenda has generated policies that hurt the environment, social services and all workers, especially People of Colour, Indigenous communities, women, the poor and other marginalized groups.

“This government has been clear in its dislike of unions and collective bargaining,” said Angella MacEwan, Senior Economist with the Canadian Labour Congress. “There has been no respect for the important role unions play in the workplace and in civil society.”

LEGISLATIVE ATTACKS

Nine years is a long time in politics, and Harper has been extremely strategic in how his government has waged this war. The Conservatives have pushed pieces of union-busting legislation attacking labour organizations, attacking Canadian workers’ rights to unionize, and threatening access to pensions, employment insurance and healthcare.

Ground Zero for these attacks has been the House of Commons, where piece after piece of legislation has taken aim at unions and collective bargaining.

Bill C-60 Amends the Financial Administration Act (Clauses 228 and 229)

Bill C-60 is the omnibus budget bill that passed in 2013. Buried in this bill is a provision that allows for the Treasury Board to direct collective bargaining for 48 Crown corporations including the CBC, Canada Post, Via Rail as well as Canadian arts organizations like the Canada Council for the Arts and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. This amendment requires that the Treasury board approve collective agreements and the terms and contracts for non-unionized employees. It also mandates that a government employee should observe negotiations.

“Bill 60 ... essentially gives [the] Treasury Board unfettered authority to interfere in bargaining with Crown Corporations, removing effective control from the parties most directly affected,” said Chris Aylward, Public Service Alliance of Canada National Executive Vice President in a statement. “This is not a recipe for healthy labour relations.”

This will allow employees to be used as political pinballs if governments seek to impose management-friendly contracts as a way to cut costs.

Bill C-377: An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act

Bill C-377 was a private member’s bill that was pushed by government forces to eventually pass this past July. To pass C-377, Senators had to suspend their own rules of debate and extend their session into the summer.

C-377 requires unions to publicly account for every dime spent in a given year. This means that the financial information of unions, union federations and labour organizations – including the personal information of union members - would be publicly available. Of course, keeping track of such an enormous amount of information is going to cost millions, both for unions but also for Canada Revenue Agency.

Bill C-525, the Employee Voting Rights Act

This private member’s bill, subtitled “An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Public Service Labour Relations Act,” passed this past April and fundamentally changes the process of forming unions in the federally-regulated industries. C-525 eliminated card check
certification. In order to form a union, a secret-ballot vote must be held in which the majority of the bargaining unit - not the majority of voters - must vote yes to certify a union. Any worker who does not participate in this vote is counted as a "no" ballot.

“The Bill would make changes to laws that had been painstakingly negotiated by previous governments working together with both unions and employers to achieve balanced and respected workplace regulations,” said former Canadian Labour Congress President Ken Georgetti in an editorial for the Huffington Post.

The attacks don’t stop there. Harper’s government has made Employment Insurance less accessible, implemented tax cuts that decrease funding to public services, prevented the expansion of the Canadian Pension Plan, failed to enforce the Canada Health Accord, delayed access to Old Age Security pension, changed the defined benefit pension plans for many workers in Crown corporations and started to eliminate door to door mail delivery. His government has also made “economic deals that protect corporations’ rights over workers rights or environmental concerns,” added Angella MacEwan.

“Most of what they’re doing has not been good for workers,” she continued. “If you need something from Employment Insurance or if you need something from Veterans Affairs, it becomes harder to access those services. We’ve seen this erosion of public services, and as a worker that affects you, because workers are citizens.”

Relying on Back to Work legislation became a preferred negotiation tactic under Harper’s tenure, too. Former Labour Minister and Member of Parliament for Halton Lisa Raitt justified back-to-work legislation by arguing that workers for Canada Post and Air Canada perform nearly essential services. She went so far as to suggest that the economy itself is an essential service, a concept that plainly prioritizes profit over workers’ rights and that could put labour negotiations in those industries at risk.

**ATTACKING THE MOST VULNERABLE**

Unionized workers are hardly the only community targeted by Harper’s attacks. Workers who work through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program have been placed at the mercy of an oppressive and exploitative migrant labour initiative. The program leaves workers vulnerable to abuse from employers and without access to the support and benefits of labour organizations or Canadian public services.

“The government and the employer organizations will always argue and say that migrant workers have the same rights on paper as Canadian workers. This is not true,” said Chris Ramsaroop, of Justice for Migrant Workers, “because migrant workers can be deported or they can lose their temporary work status on a whim or at a moment’s notice, it denies them basic benefits.”

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“Immigration laws are being used to pit working class people against one another,” continued Ramsaroop. “We should not consider migrant workers threats to our jobs. Our challenge as working people is to be against federal laws that divide us.”

**HARPER’S ANTI-UNION AIR WAR**

In order to obscure their poor economic track record and fuel Harper’s war on unions, the Conservatives have employed a media strategy where the message is tightly controlled and journalists are rarely able to challenge Harper in press conferences. This has allowed extreme right-wing rhetoric to become the norm, making labour organizations vulnerable.

Also, despite having prioritized the economy over the people, Conservative financial strategies have not actually managed to aid economic growth in Canada.

This past July, Unifor released: Rhetoric and Reality: Evaluating Canada’s Economic Record Under the Harper Government which explains in detail the state of Canada’s economy under Harper in comparison to the record of each major government since WWII. The data of the report is organized into three categories: Work, Production and Distribution and Debt. The report says that in the post-war period, Canada’s economy has never been worse.

Harper’s government has the lowest numbers in job-creation, second lowest in employment rates and has averaged an unemployment rate of 10 per cent; the highest since William Lyon Mackenzie King’s last term as Prime Minister.

**ELECTION TIME**

After nine years of attacks, the labour movement will soon have the opportunity to vote Harper out of office and end the Conservative war on workers. There is hope that Canadian labour organizations will begin the new term with renewed strength and organization, ready to bring workers rights back to the table in Ottawa.

“I’d say right now we’re under attack, both federally and in some provinces and have been for the last couple of years,” said Mark Hennessy, Director of Political Action for the United Food and Commercial Workers. “I wouldn’t say we’re in our strongest position, but I think we’re becoming stronger because of these attacks. I think we’re becoming more coordinated and strategic as a labour movement and we’re finding ourselves working together quite a bit more.”

What is needed now is leadership that will work with labour to reverse the changes Harper has made to break down the labour movement, and build it back up - taller and stronger than ever. That’s why the 2015 election is such a vital moment for workers in Canada.

This election will be characterized by two important firsts: the first time that the NDP has a reasonable chance at forming government, and the first time that election third-party spending rules threaten union-lead elections campaigns.

The potential of an NDP government is enormous. But as many provincial governments have demonstrated, an NDP win isn’t an instant guarantee that workers’ rights will drastically improve. Instead, unions need to anticipate mounting pressure on government, whatever the stripe, post-October! And, in the lead up, union members must be engaged on-the-ground during the election.

This is where the second “first” becomes critical: among Harper’s other attacks on Canadians, includes the changes that his government has made through the “Fair Elections Act”. These changes make it harder for students and people with addresses that change frequently to prove residence when they go to the polls. On top of this, Elections Canada is no longer allowed to advertise the basic details around how to vote.

But for unions, stricter penalties and stronger definitions for third-party campaigns threaten to slow the advocacy that is needed on their behalf. With higher spending penalties, and language that seems to prohibit campaigns that target a particular party or group, many unions are shying away from campaigns to protect workers by voting out Harper.

Despite this, it is well within the rights of labour organizations to campaign openly in support of - or against - a particular candidate or party. Beyond this, it is necessary for labour organizations to identify and support a candidate that will be an ally to Canadian labour.

In 1991 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of “the idea that unions need to be able to participate in politics and culture beyond the workplace,” explained Jacob Saltiel, Human Rights and Social Justice Intern for Raven Law, based in Ottawa. Saltiel is working on a report tentatively titled “Unusual Practices, Unnecessary Acts: Federal Labour Rights in Canada Under the Conservatives. February 6, 2006”.

“There are some arguments out there that unions should be restricted to the workplace and workers, but as the Supreme Court commented in that case, they recognize that unions have to be able to speak to the wider public on issues that affect them, since otherwise it’s very difficult for them to do the things they need to do.

“I do think unions have a very important public role in that they should be allowed to support whichever party they think will work with them as partners.”
With the approval of the membership we held two events for our members at the Botanical Garden this spring: one was a family program and the other a garden walk for adult members.

As the Botanical Garden employs eight CUPE 1615 members the staff were eager to share their workplace with their fellow members and provide an opportunity for 1615 members to visit MUN’s (and Newfoundland’s) best kept secret. The 10 acres of cultivated gardens and 100 acres of natural area were voted botanical garden of the year for 2015 by the Canadian Garden Council.

Both programs showcased just a snippet of what the Garden has to offer, and hopes to see more members returning to the Garden in the future.

On Sunday, June 21st, 2015, the family program entertained adults and children alike; they learned lots about the nature, critters and flowers growing all around us. A 45-minute hike concluded with a story and snack time, followed with crafts in the classroom. It was a wonderful day and everyone really enjoyed themselves! One member said: “Both my sister and I were S-o-o-o impressed with the facility and the program for the kids. We are really glad that we went. It’s a lovely outing for CUPE family members.”

On Saturday, June 27th, 2015, Head Gardener, Carl White (a 1615 member for over 27 years!) took our members on a guided walk around the gardens. Although the group was fairly small, everyone really had an enjoyable time (the nice weather always helps) and it allowed members to share and talk with one another.

Some comments from the program were:

- “The garden walk on Saturday was absolutely fabulous. I was simply amazed at the gardens and the work that Carl has put in to it.”

- “Thank you, I enjoyed it very much.”

- “This was my first time visiting the Botanical Garden and I thoroughly enjoyed myself and will definitely be visiting again. Thank you and CUPE for arranging this garden visit … Memorial is maintaining an exceptional garden and sustaining a beautiful natural resource for all visitors. Thank you again.”

If you are interested in these programs happening again in the Spring of 2016 please send a message or speak with Christine Byers, CUPE 1615 recording secretary: cbyers@cupe1615.ca
RETIRED NEWS

The Queen Elizabeth II Library bid farewell to three long-serving employees in July. Ian Barrett wrapped up his 39-year career; Rose Power had been with us for 38 years; Debbie Spurrell, who worked at the Health Sciences Library before coming to the QEII has 40 years to her credit. We wish them all our very best!
Our first challenge was "Lose 16 pounds in 15 weeks". During the challenge, we had 4 guest speakers: a dietitian, an exercise expert, a representative of the Canadian Diabetes Association and a representative of the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Each week we discussed a healthy lifestyle topic. Some titles were: "Are Goals only for Hockey", "Enemy No. 1 - Your Plate", "Enemy No. 2 – Eating out", "Excuses, Excuses, Excuses" and "The Grocery Shop-a-holic".

Over the first 16 week session, the group lost 121.5 pounds. We had two people come very close to meeting the first challenge by losing 14.2 pounds each! The average loss was 8.1 pounds or an average of ½ pound per week.

Clearly, this program is working and working well!

The Summer Slim-Down Soiree

Our group has continued over the summer months with "The Summer Slim-Down Soiree". During these meetings we have looked at "Water, Water, Everywhere; How Much Should I Drink?", "Eating is Not a Boat Race" and "The Couch Potato Exercise Plan". We will be cluing up the summer sessions on September 8st, 2015.

The FUN FALL FIESTA

The first meeting for the Fall semester will be on September 15th. There are 16 meetings planned. We will meet on Tuesdays at noon. Any CUPE member can join us – male or female! In our group, weight loss is optional. Simply learning about a healthy lifestyle and its benefits is our ultimate goal. The usual meeting is divided into three parts: (1) Weigh-in (optional) (2) Round-table discussion (3) lesson.

Topics will include: "Hiding Veggies and Fruits", "Gratitude: A Key Ingredient", "Using a Rotating Meal Plan" and "Your Family in the Kitchen". We will start a new biggest loser challenge "Lose 16 pound in 15 weeks". We will also, have two small challenges: 1) "Reaping your Rewards" and 2) "Finding a Formula for Your Family".

At our graduation on December 15th, the biggest loser will be announced and rewarded. All group members will also be recognized for the challenges they met during the sessions.

Visit our website at www.cs.mun.ca/~cutpounds and click 'Fall' tab to see the Fall schedule.
MEMBERSHIP MEETINGSCHEDULE

Food served at 5 p.m., meetings start at 5:30.

ST. JOHN’S
September 8, 2015 – ED2018B
October 13, 2015 – ED 2018A
November 10, 2015 – ED 3034B
December 8, 2015 - ED 2018A

CORNER BROOK
Members meet in AS275

AGENDA
• Roll call of officers
• Reading of the Equality Statement
• Reading of minutes from last meeting
• Business arising
• Treasurer’s report
• Communications
• Executive board report
• Committee reports
• Unfinished business
• New business
• For the good of the union

CHILD CARE COSTS/COMMITMENTS KEEPING YOU FROM ATTENDING MEETINGS?

Your union will pay for your childcare so you can attend the monthly meetings. Just contact Theresa Antle at 864-2393, or email tantle@mun.ca

If you no longer want a paper copy of CUPE on Campus, please email tantle@cupe1615.ca today to have your name removed from the distribution list.

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