

WENDY SOL—SPRING REPORT

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REMAIN VIGILANT, POLITICAL AND ACTIVE

You will notice that my report has a distinct political flavour. Besides the highly anticipated Federal election, a majority of the western provinces will also be going to the polls in 2011.

Why is this important? Why as a union should we be involved in the political process?

What does grievance handling and bargaining have to do with provincial and federal elections?

Many members ask those questions and in fact many

locals have By-laws that prevent them from being partisan.

However in order to protect our member's collective rights, in order to ensure Canadians enjoy a respectful retirement, in order to preserve collective bargaining and Canadian jobs, and in order to protect our sovereignty and human rights we must be politically engaged.

Take a look at what is happening in Wisconsin. The Republican Governor Scott



Walker has tabled legislation that removes collective bargaining rights. He argues he was elected to deal with the financial crisis of Wisconsin and that public sector unions must give up their right to bargain to achieve this goal. Although the unions have agreed to

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE HIGHLIGHTS

- *Foreign ownership*
- *Committee roundup*

Montebello update

For those of you who watched with disbelief the violence against demonstrators in Libya, Bahrain and Yemen these past few weeks, just recall the Montebello Summit here in Canada and the "Provocateurs" who under the orders of politicians tried to incite violence.

In January Quebec Judge Real Lapointe ruled that the order to stop the demonstration was in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. CEP continues to call for an inquiry to find out who ordered the police to dress in black, with masks covering their faces, to incite violence during a peaceful demonstration.



SASK GOV'T ATTACKS HUMAN RIGHTS

In Saskatchewan, Bill 160—An Act to amend the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code—appears to restrict and or dismiss human rights claims.

Brad Wall's conservative government doesn't like to hold public, transparent and consultative hearings when introducing significant legislative changes. Bill 160 is no exception.

Bill 160 dismantles the tribunal system and directs complainants to the Court of Queens Bench. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission supports direct mediation (not necessarily voluntary) instead of cases going before the courts.

But sadly the Commission also supports dismantling the tribunal, citing a lack of financial security, administrative independence or security of job tenure for the tribunal members and the timeliness on decisions. The current tribunal members are lawyers with full case

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WE MUST ENSURE WE ELECT POLITICIANS WHO SUPPORT WORKING PEOPLE

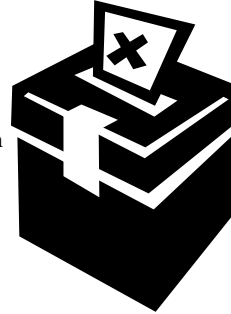
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negotiate concessions Governor Scott Walker refuses to compromise.

This isn't about balancing the books—this is a direct hit on unions and democracy. And it can happen here!

We know what happened in Saskatchewan when Brad

Wall's right-wing Saskatchewan Party was elected almost four years ago. He immediately attacked the Trade Union Act prompting legal challenges and complaints from



CEP, and other unions, to the International Labour Organization.

I encourage you to get informed on the issues and engage your co-workers, family and friends and ensure we elect governments that demonstrate support for working people and a just society.

“Equal pay is by no means just a women's issue, it's a family issue. And in this economy, when so many folks are already working harder for less and struggling to get by, the last thing they can afford is losing part of each month's paycheck to simple and plain discrimination.” - **U.S. President Barack Obama**

(Continued from page 1) **Human rights**

loads that they balance with their human rights work.

CEP supports a process whereby complainants have the right to be judged by their peers and not exclusively by a judge. To do otherwise would be an insult to working families. We do not want to move to a process like Ontario where complainants have direct access to the tribunal but must gather and present their own evidence.

We prefer a system where the Commission is properly funded and complainants have the support from an independent body to research and thoroughly investigate. The Commission must have the power and resources to investigate complaints.

What has happened to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission is not unique. This is part of



a deliberate strategy to condition the public to be receptive to changes because the current system isn't working - but it isn't working because the government purposely starves the organization of resources thus prompting the changes the government wants.

The Harper government recently made a more direct hit on human rights when it outlawed public sector unions from acting on behalf of their members on pay equity claims. A union will be charged \$50,000 for every incident where it advised or supported a claimant. Instead pay

equity must only be dealt with at the bargaining table or individuals forced to file their own complaints to the Human Rights Commission.

But it is not too late for the people of Saskatchewan. I encourage you and your locals to write or meet your MLA, discuss this with your family and neighbours and demand that Brad Wall hold public and transparent hearings on Bill 160 and explain the need for the proposed changes.

Check out our websites for more Info

- **Click on Western Region button**

www.cep.ca

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP AND HARPER: CANADA FOR SALE

The minority Harper government is reluctant to open debate to Canadians on foreign ownership, whether it is potash or telecommunications.

On the eve of CEP's telco lobbying effort, rank-and-file member Donna Fauchoux and I were in Ottawa representing Western Region when the Federal Government announced they were delaying a decision on loosening foreign ownership restrictions in the telecom sector until some time in 2011 or 2012— in other words until after the next federal election. After the public furor over the bid by BHP Billiton to purchase Potash Corp of Saskatchewan, Harper knew Canadians were not open to foreign control of our resources.

So instead of opening the debate Harper uses a back-door strategy by interfering with the CRTC, the regulatory body that oversees telcos. The Harper cabinet overturned the CRTC's decision to stop

Globealive, a wireless company that is majority owned and controlled by Egyptian company Orascom Telecom, from operating in Canada. Instead in December 2009 Harper let Globealive go ahead (it operates as WIND Mobile).



The Federal Court struck down this decision and cited "errors in law".

Judge Hughes confirmed that the Telecommunications Act is written to foster Canadian ownership and does not empower cabinet to do otherwise.

Harper's disdain for democracy is quite shocking; I can't imagine the damage he would do if he were to receive a majority government.

Guy Caron from our Ottawa office pre-

pared an effective lobbying brief that clearly shows how Canada already has more choice in wireless providers than anywhere else in the world. We do not need the introduction of foreign-owned carriers to create "more" competition.

We can show that it is only through regulation and not foreign ownership and competition that will drive accessibility and price for Canadian consumers.

And it is only consistent application of the rules that fosters investment and growth. This incessant interference by Harper in the regulatory bodies has left business reluctant to invest as the rules keep changing and rural Canadians are left without access to affordable service. That is the real cost to Canadians.

For more information and the facts on Foreign Ownership please go to the CEP website.

COMMITTEE ROUNDUP

Young Workers Committee: Western Region has two new members on the committee—Andrew Appleton from Local 1119 in Howe Sound and Cassandra Kresse of Local 707 in Ft McMurray. Andrew and Cassandra replace Jamie Andrei (who was hired as Vice President Jim Britton's Executive Assistant) and Pam Williams, who changed employers and is no longer a CEP member. A huge thank you to Jamie and Pam and a warm welcome to Cassandra and Andrew!

The YWC is organizing a conference for June 3-5 at Algonquin College in Ottawa. The theme "How to Make a Difference" will focus on organizing, bargaining and political activism.

Please consider participating in this year's conference. Our Young Workers are extremely important to CEP and it is vital we support and engage with young activists. CEP must be relevant and vibrant and the participation of young workers is essential for our future.

Equity Committee: WR's Dean Carvery was elected to the National Executive Board at convention representing Indigenous & Racialized Workers and is a member of the Equity Committee. Dean wrote an article for Black History Month about his family origins in a section of Halifax known as Africville. You can read this excellent article on the CEP website.

Women's Committee: The committee is actively planning a conference scheduled for December 4-6, 2011, in Ottawa. The theme is "Imagine", with a focus on financial/personal security and culminating with a breakfast and march commemorating the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The activities on December 6th will be open to the labour community and it is anticipated to be the event in Ottawa. Please encourage your locals to participate; detailed information will be available on the CEP website.





COMMUNICATIONS, ENERGY
AND PAPERWORKERS

CEP STRUCTURE REVIEW

Angela Adams, Rank and File Board member from Local 707 in Ft McMurray, and Mike Bocking, President of Local 2000 in Vancouver, and me were appointed to represent the Western Region on the Structures Committee. In accordance with the convention resolution a report will be sent out to the locals six months following the 2010 convention. The committee met in January for two days and has scheduled three 3-day sessions.

We are interested in your thoughts on how you would like to see your union re-structured—please don't hesitate to contact us.

CANADA PENSION PLAN REFORM

This past fall the Harper government told labour and other social activist groups that it would expand the CPP—not as far as we would like—but still a commitment to improvement. Then in December Finance Minister Jim Flaherty flip-flopped and blind-sided us with “his” idea for a new pooled pension plan that would be managed by the private financial sector. When faced with the choice of supporting Canadians or the business community the Harper government was once again predictable.

CEP actively supports the Canadian Labour Congress's excellent campaign on expanding the CPP and I encourage you to check out their website at www.canadianlabour.ca or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/labours.plan.retirement

SASK WCB Review

The Workers' Compensation Act Committee of Review in Saskatchewan was recently appointed. The Review Committee is holding public hearings in May and CEP plans on participating in those hearings. If you have any issues or concerns regarding the WCB Act please get in touch with me.

UNION DUES AND RELIGIOUS OBJECTION

A recent case of a Saskatchewan-based employee who was exempted from paying union dues because of religious affiliation has caught members' attention.

Successful religious objections to paying dues are rare. Generally the labour board must find that the religious objector has a deeply held belief and that their religion actually forbids membership in a union. The objector in question is a Seventh Day Adventist, a religion that openly advises its congregation to not join unions.

Ellen G. White, a pivotal figure in the establishment of the church in 1863 wrote: “Unionism has revealed what it is by the spirit that it has manifested. It is controlled by the cruel power of Satan. Those who refuse to join the unions formed are made to feel this power. The principles governing the forming of these unions seem innocent, but men have to pledge themselves to serve the interests of these unions, or else they may have to pay the penalty of refusal with their lives.”

Most non-Seventh Day objections are frivolous, made by anti-union employees. Even if an objection is successful, the amount of dues is still deducted but forwarded on to a mutually agreed upon charity. Most “casual” objectors drop their objections when they find they still have deductions from their pay .

Please let me know if you are hearing of more cases like this.



A huge thank you to all the staff — 2011 is shaping up to be extremely busy and our staff are doing a remarkable job!!

