

AGENDA ITEM # 9

Report of the National President to the October 2018 National Executive

Sisters, Brothers and Friends,

I wish to start by thanking each and everyone one of you for your dedication to CEIU and its membership. Together, with the help of our staff, we can, and we do, make a difference for our members. Our work is not easy and is always very demanding, so we must, and we need, to take time for ourselves.

The months since our March National Executive meeting have been busy ones. The relocation of my family and I is complete as we are now finally settled in Ottawa. There have been numerous meetings with each of our three (3) departments for which CEIU represents the members. I have travelled from coast to coast – east to west – since our last NE meeting attending Presidents' Conferences. During this time, we have also had the PSAC Convention and the PSAC Bargaining Conference for which CEIU members played an important part. I congratulate the four (4) CEIU members that were elected at the PSAC Bargaining Conference to be part of the PA bargaining team.

Phoenix continues to be an issue for the majority of our members. IRCC was the 1st department to have a Joint Union Management Phoenix (JUMP) Committee. We are hopeful that the launching of the national television ad campaign by the PSAC 'Here for Canada' which highlights the dedication of public service workers throughout the Phoenix pay system disaster, will show the public how our members continue to work day after day despite missed paycheques and endless uncertainty.

The Vegreville Policy Grievance against IRCC at arbitration was a win for the Union and its affected members. A win that we can be happy of winning for our members, even if we were not successful in stopping the move altogether! The decision to relocate the IRCC CPC from Vegreville to Edmonton has been and continues to be an ordeal for our members. Some of the members have accepted to relocate, while others have resigned or retired. Others were not able to relocate or commute. IRCC has always maintained that the decision to relocate was to address the growing needs of the Department, and not to reduce the workforce and as such employees were being offered a guarantee of a reasonable job offer. However, members were not provided any compensation or packages that could be provided for by the Workforce Adjustment Appendix and this showed callous disregard for the impact of the relocation on the employees, our members.

The choices made by our members working at IRCC Vegreville were compromised by the wrong information given out by the Department since April 2017. The Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board (PSLREB) ruled in favour of the PSAC and its members in that the Employer has an obligation to establish a voluntary departure program that could entitle affected employees to compensation or packages.

I must thank the members that came out to testify at the hearing. Their direct testimony of providing the impacts for all those members who could either not accept the relocation to Edmonton or could not commute, and which meant that they could not accept the 'reasonable job offers' was gut-wrenching to watch, but thankfully, heard loud and clear at the hearing. The Employer and the Union have 60 days to agree to a remedy. Now we wait on the remedy, hopefully for ALL the affected members, even the ones that have relocated, perhaps only because of the wrong information that was given out by the Department.

Another win! This time for our members working in call centres at ESDC. CEIU has been putting pressure on the Employer to remove the 3-strike rule that was put in place. The Employer has now concluded that our members should not have to give a minimum of 3 warnings to a caller that is being hostile or harassing them before being able to hang up on them and therefore have removed the 3-strike rule. The call centre agents, our members, can now use their judgement when they feel they are being harassed by a caller, and end the call without being afraid of a reprimand.

CEIU also reminds and encourages their members in call centres to use their '5-minute not on a call time', as per Article 58 of the collective agreement that was gained in the last round of bargaining. This usage of time is a win for our members' mental health.

CEIU held meeting with the three (3) departments and signed an Operational Framework in negotiating Essential Services Agreements (ESA) with each of them. These frameworks outline how parties will negotiate agreements in principles on the various positions that will be identified as essential for those employees who are prevented, by law, during the hours of work, from participating in legal strike activities. The regions and/or Locals will be contacted for some input on various positions to determine the tasks that are deem essential. Once done, agreements in principle will be transmitted to the PSAC and Treasury Board will finalize the lists of essential positions for all PA positions across the departments.

For IRB, the Neil Yeates' Report raised some concerns which the Union is following up on.

Other issues that CEIU is still actively involved in with the Employer are, to name a few, talent management, staffing/hiring processes, duty to accommodate and telework policy. Our work continues!

The CEIU National IRCC Advisory Committee and the CEIU National IRB Committee held a first joint committee meeting this year, and from what we have heard, it won't be their last joint meeting. The CEIU National Women's Committee, the CEIU Human Rights/Race Relations Committee and the CEIU National Call Centre Committee also held meetings for which I attended.

The dedicated commitment of our members that sit on these national advisory committees is truly appreciated, and each of these committees plays an important role in CEIU. As always, I wish to thank Sister Crystal Warner for her guidance and her perseverance which she continues to show towards each of these national committees.

For 2019, I plan to devote more time to attend local meetings (AGM) and on-site local visits, when and where possible. Meeting the members and answering questions and hearing your concerns has, and always will be, one of my main priorities. When available, Sister Warner and I will be dividing our time to attend the various union activities.

In closing, I wish to thank our staff and union activists who work hard on a daily basis to improve the lives of our members. To all the local executives of CEIU locals, thank you. Your members and the National Executive appreciate everything that you do and your endless work does not go unnoticed.

And once again, I thank you, the members of the National Executive for your continued support to myself and the NEVP, to the members in your regions, and to CEIU as a whole. As I have stated in my previous report, I cannot imagine a more effective Component executive.

In Solidarity always,

Eddy Bourque
CEIU National President