

Convention 2010 Coffee Break News

Agenda Highlights Saturday, April 24, 2010

CONVENTION RECONVENES

9:00 a.m.

Election: 3-Year Trustee

11:00 a.m.

Jim Sinclair, BC Fed president

11:30 a.m.

Moment of silence

1:30 p.m.

Dukens Raphael, Secretary-General, Confederation of Public and Private Sector Workers of Haiti

2:15 p.m.

ACTION PLAN

ADJOURNMENT

4:00 p.m.

Public forum on Haiti

(with Dukens Raphael and others)
Grouse Room, 34th floor, 4:00 p.m.



CUPE BC continues to grow Strong finances support activism

CUPE BC is growing, with 157 locals and more than 80,000 members – an increase of almost 3,000 over last year.

Secretary-treasurer Mark Hancock, in his Convention report, described “an incredibly busy year” marked by record activism and solid finances.

The General Fund is in the black for the second year in a row, and the Defence Fund debt has been paid off. Audited financial statements indicate that all three funds – the General Fund, the Defence Fund, and the Colleen Jordan Humanity Fund – are in good shape.

The year featured conferences focusing on young workers, education (K-12, college and university), and trades. We also saw civic by-elections and a provincial election where CUPE BC mobilized

members and resources to record levels.

Hancock acknowledged the work of many people, especially CUPE members who contribute so much as leaders in their Locals and in their communities. “We need to celebrate our victories and I know how hard that can be with this government, but we do make a difference – a positive one!”



“I’m really taking in the comments. That’s where I feel the

strength – from hearing members get up and speak. I wish I could take all those inspiring comments back with me. I’m excited to take that passion home.”

Alison Stewart, Secretary
CUPE 2298, Nisga’a Schools #92
Greenville

Delegates vow to fight HST

CUPE BC delegates overwhelmingly supported a resolution to stop the HST, citing hardship for consumers; cuts to education; and the fact that the BC Liberals have no mandate for such an unfair tax.

Tax fairness policy up for debate

Delegates will consider a policy paper on tax fairness today. The policy is a response to serious revenue problems at all levels of government due to tax cutting, tax shifting, and outright refusal of corporations like Catalyst Paper to pay their legally-assessed taxes. In response to the increasing unfairness of the tax system, the policy states that CUPE BC will:

- ▲ Campaign and work with forest-dependent communities to ensure assessed industrial property taxes are actually paid and that those communities have the revenues they need to provide the services their citizens require.
- ▲ Campaign and work with the BC Fed and the New Democrat Official Opposition to restore fairness to the provincial income tax system. As a first step, we will work to stop any further corporate tax cuts.
- ▲ Work with the Union of BC Municipalities to lobby the federal and provincial governments to diversify the revenue options available to municipalities so they are not so dependent on property taxes.
- ▲ Participate actively in campaigns to stop the new Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).

Layton slams Harper, BC Liberals for betraying working people



In a spirited address to Convention, federal NDP Leader Jack Layton focused on several key issues of importance to all CUPE members, including retirement security and strengthening public services.

Delegates gave Layton a standing ovation when he said that Canadian seniors and veterans “don’t need food banks, they need a strong pension plan that allows the people who built our country to live in dignity.”

Layton credited the women and men who work at all levels of public health care for keeping the system strong, despite severe funding cuts.

Delegates gave Layton an extended standing ovation when he called on Stephen Harper to scrap the \$15-billion tax cut for big banks and use those funds to support the more than 250,000 seniors living in poverty.

Layton urged CUPE members to join the NDP to create a national movement for change.



Time to take on gov’t scandals, says NDP’s Carole James

The BC Liberal government’s record of arrogance and deception is hurting working families and is making it tougher for families to make ends meet, NDP Leader Carole James told delegates yesterday.

James congratulated CUPE members on Vancouver Island for their successful work to keep the Capital Regional District’s sewage treatment public. “CUPE’s amazing campaign made the economic argument to keep this service public,” said James.

Delegates greeted James and several NDP MLAs with standing ovations. James said the NDP caucus would do everything in its power to stop the BC Liberals from bringing in the new 12-per-cent Harmonized Sales Tax. She urged delegates to support the anti-HST campaign.

James promised that an NDP government’s first act would be an immediate increase to B.C.’s \$8 minimum wage and the elimination of the Liberals’ \$6 per hour “training wage.” She also said that an NDP government would make every decision with “the most vulnerable British Columbians foremost in mind.”

James encouraged CUPE members to remain politically active in preparation for the 2013 election.