



News and Views

C.E.P. Local 433

Volume 12 Issue 3

December 2008



Make a New Year's
RESOLUTION to
ATTEND
UNION MEETINGS.



WE COUNT on
OUR MEMBERS
to MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!

Next meetings are January 15, February 20, and March 19. All meetings start at 8 p.m.

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This has been a bargaining year for our Local Union. To date, we have concluded Collective Agreements with Sulzer Pumps, ACR Group, Vision Packaging, and as of the writing of this report, we have a ratification vote scheduled for Iron Mountain.

During the summer we also took part in the bargaining for the pulp mill master agreements, which were reached with Canfor and Howe Sound Pulp. These agreements set the pattern for the pulp and related industries. Sometime in the new year we will be bargaining with Catalyst, Crown Packaging, and Norampac, with the intent of concluding Collective Agreements that include the pattern settlement with the addition and resolution of some local issues.

We will also be opening up negotiations with Unisource in early December.

As we look ahead to next year, we will obviously be busy bargaining the contracts that we have not yet concluded. We also however, want to put an increased emphasis on organizing. We have been very successful in organizing over the years, and it is important that we continue our efforts in this area. We are

always looking for opportunities to grow, so I would ask that if any of you know anyone who would like to join a Union, please give us a call and let us know. Anyone who contacts us will have their information kept in the strictest of confidence.

I would also like to congratulate Margaret Zheng from Custom Paper, whose son Robert (Yao) was recently selected as a CEP education scholarship winner. I believe the essay Robert submitted with his scholarship application is reprinted in this Newsletter and I would urge all of you to read it. I found it quite moving. (see page 6)

And speaking of congratulations, I'd also like to congratulate Jim Britton, who has now been elected as our Western Region Vice President. Jim served as our National Representative for over 15 years, and while his contribution to our Local Union will certainly be missed, we nevertheless wish him well in his new position.

And finally, I would like to wish all of our members and their families all the very best over the Christmas season. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

E Mail anyone?

The Editors of the *News and Views* would like to offer the members of Local 433 the opportunity to receive the newsletter by email in PDF Adobe format.

Just drop us a line at newsandviews@live.com
Otto, Dave and James

e-mail
us your
OPINION!

newsandview@live.com
cep433sec@infoserve.net

Custom Paper

Custom paper is slow, but no one laid off. The company has informed us that we will no longer have our napkin supplier in the New Year. The napkin company sold and the new owners already have a Canadian supplier. Congratulations to Margret who's son Robert won a CEP scholarship. Way to go Robert!!! Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Brian

Retiree's Council Report

Greetings Brothers & Sisters. As you are aware, there is a Retiree Council as part of Local 433. The Council Executive tries to make contact with all 433 Retirees past & present, and then advise them of any events planned. This at times, is difficult as Retirees move without the Local being advised. But one aspect that is lacking is the the lack of notification to the Council when a 433 member reaches retirement. The Plant Committees / Shop Stewards are always aware of a member retiring, and could easily drop us an email or phone call with this info. Further, we have yet to receive a single retiree name from some plants, Pioneer comes to mind as there a quite a number retired from that plant! Also there are recent retirees from other plants that I'm sure we aren't aware of. Hopefully in the future there could be some improved communications? Seasons Greetings to all.
Bill Newnham 433 Retired Member's Council President. bnewnham@telus.net
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Executive of C.E.P. Local 433

President - Otto Wittenberg
Vice-President - Mike Beniach
Recording Secretary - James Monks
Financial Secretary/Business Agent - Gord Campbell
Treasurer - Tom Fulton
Trustee - Tom LeClaire
Trustee - Stuart Weiss
Trustee - Ken MacDonald
Inner Guard - Brad Johnson
Outer Guard - Greg Duff



*are the "U"
in UNION!*

From our new Western Region Vice President, Jim Britton

I am very pleased to have been asked to write a Holiday message for your local newsletter. As you all know, I was recently elected as Vice President for the Western Region after being your National Rep for the past 16 years. I am very much looking forward to continuing to serve you in this new opportunity.

We are living in very turbulent times. It sometimes feels like there is no good news, but I believe that when things are in flux, openings are created for change. And that is why I am among those that are feeling hopeful.

In the US elections, President-elect Obama spoke of the politics of hope and his message resonated with citizens all across the world. Even in Canada, his message is being quoted and endorsed by just about everyone.

And the timing couldn't be better. We are now facing the most serious challenge to the global economy since the Great Depression. But instead of an every country for themselves approach, world leaders are calling for a global solution that protects people and the planet as opposed to protecting corporations and profits. This is good news. This is a reason to hope.

As I write this, the G-20 is meeting and calling for significant changes. We do not know what these will be and how long it will take for their effects to occur. However, I believe that we can be hopeful that for the first time in many decades governments are looking to find new ways to stimulate domestic economies, tighten up regulation of financial markets and to put people first.

And so in this holiday season, my partner Barb and I wish you a safe and happy holiday season and ask that you join us in hoping for a better future for all of us.



Montenay

First I would like to offer my sympathies and condolences to Brother Billy Gosse's family for their loss. He was a long time member and good friend to many of us and will not be forgotten! Cheers Bill!! :)

Things have been pretty quiet here at the Burnaby Incinerator for the most part but we have managed to initiate some new items and close some old ones over the past year.

With all members and management inputs, we were able to finally put together a long awaited Overtime Call-out Policy. This seems to have cleared up and balanced out, for the most part, the call-out overtime distribution in the plant. We've also offered to work with management to help put together a different training system one which would help address the gaps in the plant's qualifications and training system. Namely to speed up the process of training as well as many other benefits to having the membership trained to full potential.

We did have one grievance that had to go to arbitration in mid November. The issue arose when a member had been told to change crews with what we felt was an unwarranted reason as well as an unfair amount of notice to change crews. We were able to reach a settlement thru the arbitrator prior to the hearing. Both parties were pleased with the outcome and we will return to the issue at negotiation time in the New Year.

Also in a show of good faith for our upcoming contract talks next year and well.... tis the season!!! We are looking at a good turn out of members at the company Christmas party this year.

We look forward to the possibilities that more incinerators are being considered and may be in the works for the Metro area. It would be nice to see some new facilities being build and the industrial jobs that come with them.

To all our Brothers and Sisters, "Our warmest wishes for you and your families over the Christmas season and into the New Year"

Cheers and Merry Christmas!!!!

Articles appearing in *News and Views* express the views of the authors. They are not necessarily the policy of the CEP or views shared by the editors or CEP officers.

What The Labour Movement Means To Me

By Yao Zu

The labour movement has always been a part of my life. I still remember the day when I was seven years old; we were new immigrants to Canada from China and everything was so different. My mom had just come home from work and excitedly told me that from now on, every month, we would be able to see a movie for free as she had just become a member of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. At that time I did not know what a union was and I was very intrigued and interested. So I asked my mom about the union and what it was; it turned out that she was also unsure of exactly what a union was either but, she told me that there were also unions back in China. She described to me that in China, everyone was in a union and the workers were on the same side of the company's management, the Chinese government as the union was a subsidiary of the government. Each month she would pay a union fee and at each month's end, the union officers would reward everyone with a free movie ticket. That's all everyone knew about the union. Other than that, the union didn't really do anything else to help out the workers. So everyone in our family thought that unions in Canada would probably be the same. I was soon to find out this was not so.

When I grew up, I started to learn and understand more and more about the unions and the labour movement and how Canada's unions and China's unions were so different. When we were still in China, my Mom was an elementary teacher and when her superior left the school for good, the administration started looking for someone to fill the spot. My mother had been waiting to fill that spot for years but it was the management's decision to choose who to fill the position – this system was usually very corrupt as they could choose whomever the management favoured more. Finally the administration chose a relative whom was lower ranking than my mother to fill the spot and the Chinese union did not do anything to help my mom even though she was supposed to be next in line. This was our understanding of a union. This had all changed however, when a similar situation happened after we moved to Canada.

It was not until after someone of a more favourable position than that of my mom's left the company when we actually understood what a union could do. To replace the opening, my mother thought that, like back in China, they would probably choose a relative or someone who spoke English more proficiently would due, to union principles my mom was promoted to that spot because she was second longest union member after that person....it was incredible no one in my family would believed it. After that, we began to believe in the true power of the union. I couldn't help but look into the history of the worker's union and the labour movement. I immersed myself into encyclopaedias and many other books on the issue. I now understand that many of these benefits like the 8 hour day maximum and 40 hours a week rules are the products of the blood and sweat of labour movements. The fruits of these labour movements are now enjoyed by many people around the world, like doctors, government workers, even those not in unions. So the union can really protect the rights of workers and improve their working conditions – in my view, being something never experienced before, it was incredible to see the power in the hands of the people.

When I was in grade 10, in the midst of my studies, my high school teachers decided to strike and speak out against the BC Ministry of Education. The teachers' contracts were over and the government, who promised to raise their salaries, lied and just renewed their old contract.

They haven't received a pay raise in many years and could not support their families. I personally participated and helped out the teachers by photographing for them and buying them coffee as I knew what the teachers must have been going through at the time. They fought long and hard for many weeks for what they believed in. In the end, after negotiation between the government and the school board through a mediator, the teachers finally won and were all happy. I learned something important then: that everyone, no matter who you are, if you believe that prejudice or inequality has been imposed on you by one with greater power with help from others like you, you too can win. It was a just cause and I was pleased that I was part of it. The teachers were very grateful of what I did for them as it meant because for youth like me, we have yet to be an integral part of society by entering the working force and that it was an educational experience to be a part of such a movement.

The union and labour movement had a deeper effect on me when I experienced the effects of it myself. In the fall of 2006, especially with the gas prices at its highest and the workers' existing contract was ending, the worker in my mom's company hoped that the employer of the company would increase their salaries to compensate for the high cost of gas. But the employer defied them saying that the reason was not legitimate. So the workers all held a union meeting where all the members got together and decided to let the union leader negotiate with the employer. This exchange went on many times but the employer did not change his stance. Then, all the union workers felt that they had no other choice but to strike. They planned for the walk-out to be held on the busiest time of the season, the pre-Christmas rush. At the time my dad was still studying at BCIT and had a part-time job so the bulk of our household income came from my mom's work. So it was a hard decision for us when the worker at my mom's workplace wanted to strike. However, we still supported the decision and we were determined. I told my parents that we should be fine. We'll be fighting a greater good and that we might have to struggle now but the benefits on the long run would be much greater.

With that said, my dad took on a second job and I found a job myself as we continued to support the family. If we don't fight now, next time the employer won't even listen, not to mention to raise the salaries. So when the time came, when all of the workers got together as a whole, the employer started to get nervous. He finally broke down and began to negotiate again with the workers and the union through a mediator. Through any exchanges with the mediator, the employer finally agreed with part of the worker's demands. This was a huge step forward to all of the workers, the union and helped improve families' standard of living. Now my mom and my family all know how unions can contribute to society by helping to give the workers a voice and that a union can help and will help workers like my mother to fight for a greater good and equality.

Through all of these experiences, I now know that unions and labour movements are essential in Canada's democracy as it allows the people to have a voice, the essence of a democratic society; in contrast to the society in China, where the union is headed by the government, there is no doubt that Canada's unions are effective and do what needs to be done. I now understand that there is much more to a union than just another free movie.

(Yau Zu's essay continued from page 7)

ticket and that the presence of the unions and labour movements give hope to workers such that they know they can achieve the equality they strive for and that power in society does not lie just in the hands of the rich bourgeois and people of the higher classes. The labour movement didn't just teach me something, but it also built up who I am today. I am going into university later this year and I know that when I enter the workforce, I will always help out and support the labour movement like before because I know that no matter how much I contribute, I will be helping not only my generation but also future generations and that is what matters the most to me.



Sonoco New West

We continue to be much slower than last year, but relatively steady throughout this year.

We have recently said goodbye to two employees:

Roberto Flores has decided to return to school, and seek employment in the visual arts field.

Also leaving the company after 28 years is our shipper, Brian Young. Brian has decided to leave the company (and the area) in pursuit of "the good life".

We will miss Brian's unique character and style of humour! Things promise to be much quieter...

Good luck to you both from all the employees at Sonoco New West. Recently celebrating 35 years service is Donald Fong.

Season's Greetings from Sonoco, New Westminster!

Buckeye

What's happening around Buckeye these days, not much, our orders are staying the same, a few new ones that aren't enough to add more people into the picture. Just the some old hopes of more orders maybe coming our way, one day.

With Christmas around the corner I would like to wish all of our sisters and brothers at Buckeye and every one in our local, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, on behalf of our Plant Committee members. Here's hoping for a prosperous New Year, for every one.

Tom Leclaire

It's Time to Be Heard About Workers Compensation

Over the past year, I have had the rewarding, infuriating, and daunting task of writing a paper, together with my two colleagues, Janet Patterson and Stan Guenther, which will be released by the BC Federation of Labour in the New Year.

This paper is a comprehensive look at the ravages inflicted on the Workers Compensation system in BC by Gordon Campbell and the Liberals. We felt that someone needed to tell the world what this government has done to those who are injured or killed on the job and their dependents. We thought we would be in the best position to do this because we represent injured and sick workers every day and we see the real cost to human lives.

Despite decades of work in this field, we were still shocked and enraged as we met to work on the paper. When you are battling in the trenches everyday, you tend to concentrate on the trees rather than the forest. But when we stood back and assessed the damage on the grand scale, we were struck all over again with the heartlessness and inhumanity of this government.

The legislation is vicious; the policy that implements it (by the government-appointed Board of Directors of the WCB) makes it even worse. The end result for workers is that it's harder to get benefits, and when you get them, they are less, for a shorter period, with almost no vocational rehabilitation to get you back to work and a greatly reduced pension that is no longer for life.

Just a couple of quick statistics:

When you are injured on the job nowadays, you no longer get 75% of gross wages, but 90% of your net pre-injury wages. The withholding of 10% of your take-home pay is supposed to be an incentive to get back to work! (And remember that no matter what your pre-injury income was, the Board will not pay you more than 90% of net of their maximum which in 2009 will be \$68,500.)

If you need help getting back to work, you will not be reassured to know that under the new system the WCB has cut its vocational rehabilitation expenditures by *98.8% from \$130 million in 2002 to \$3 million in 2006*

And if you have a permanent disability, you are really in for a hit. Pensions are, of course, based on the reduced wage loss benefits of 90% and they are no longer for life, but just to age 65. On top of that, pensions are now de-indexed to *1% below the cost of living every year – with a maximum of 4%*, no matter how much the cost of living has climbed. This applies to the dependents of those killed on the job as well.

(continued on page 16)

NORAMPAC PLANT REPORT DECEMBER 2008

It's been a strange time at Norampac. A slow spring led into a very busy summer and fall, yet morale has never been lower. In May, the company eliminated two positions in the finishing department WITHOUT giving notice or offering severance. Needless to say no one is impressed and the finishing department is downright pissed. The grievance is headed to arbitration in the New Year. Then, in the middle of summer, we started running orders for the Calgary Norampac that was out on strike. Again, not very impressed. Many felt we should not be running those orders and thought we should stop. We had no legal option and had to run whatever they told us to run, even though we felt that they were jeopardizing our own customers by increasing wait times.

Just recently, we found out that one of our supervisors, a former bargaining unit member as recently as this spring, was sent to Calgary to work at that plant during their strike. I understand that he's got to do what he's told, and did nothing illegal, but both he and the management that sent him should have known how this would be looked upon by the members on the floor and gotten in front of the news. People have fought and died in this country over the right to strike for better working conditions. They should have known this would be a VERY sensitive subject to many of our members. Unfortunately, this has led to some disturbing and racist graffiti about this supervisor. That is TOTALLY unacceptable. There is nothing that would condone this. Racism and discrimination is something that the CEP, locally and nationally, is totally committed to ELIMINATING. I really hope that I never see anything of the sort, ever again at our plant.

In our finishing department, we've had a couple of well respected, senior members, Bill Egan and Prakash "Charlie" Chand, retire in the last six months, one of them earlier than he had intended due to the job elimination's. This leaves only six members in our department with more than 10 years of seniority making it easily the youngest department of any of the production departments in the plant.

As the end of the year approaches, the talk in the plant turns to the upcoming contract negotiations. We will soon be canvassing our members at the plant to create our agenda for our "local" items as the big item's (wages, vacations, pension and benefits) are covered by the pulp and paper pattern. There is no doubt that these will be a difficult set of negotiations, but the standing committee feels that there is nothing in "the pattern" that is unattainable.

There have been a number of questions in regards to the stability of the "pulp and paper pension plan" that we are in, due to the volatility in the stock market. Our trustees report that we had very little exposure to the equity markets and therefore our pension fund is in very good shape. A little good news to end the year.

I'd like to wish all our members at Norampac and throughout the local a happy holiday season and a healthy and safe new year.

In solidarity, James Monks

FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Far North greenhouse

INUVIK, NWT—Amanda Joynt reached down and picked a fresh tomato from the vine. That's no small feat when you are living 200 km above the Arctic Circle in Canada's Far North. Joynt, a resident of Inuvik, is a member of the town's community greenhouse, a former hockey arena that has been converted into an oasis of vegetables and flowers on the permafrost. The building is North America's northernmost commercial greenhouse, and all but a necessity for anyone wishing to eat a fresh vegetable in Inuvik that has not been shipped in from a warmer southern climate—at a shockingly high cost. People also save money by canning the greenhouse produce that they don't eat during the summer. Inuvik's annual mean temperature is minus 9.7C, and the greenhouse's indoor growing season lasts only from mid-May to late September, but it protects the plants as they soak up the sunlight that for 56 days each summer keeps the town in daylight 24 hours a day. The constant sunlight accelerates the growth of the vegetables, such as corn and squash, which seem to grow twice as fast as those planted further south.

—Allan Dowd, Reuters.

Australia's "hot rocks"

SYDNEY, AUS.—Barely one percent of Australia's untapped geothermal energy could produce 26,000 years worth of clean electricity, scientists said, as the government recently announced a \$50 million project to help develop the technology.

“Geothermal energy, which is sometimes called hot rocks, has a huge potential for Australia, both as a solution to climate change and in terms of national energy

security,” said Resource Minister Martin Ferguson.

To produce power from geothermal energy, water is pumped below ground, where it is heated and the heat energy used to generate power. Geoscience Australia has mapped the nation's geothermal energy resources, using temperature recordings from decades of drilling by energy and exploration firms, sometimes to a depth of five kms. “Just one percent of these reserves would produce 26,000 years of energy supplies,”

Geoscience's

Anthony Budd told Reuters.

Germany bans pesticides

BERLIN—The German government has provisionally banned a family of pesticides conclusively linked to the massive die off of honeybees. “It's a serious bee emergency,” said Manfred Hederer, president of the German Professional Beekeepers' Association.

“More than half of the bees have died, on average, and some beekeepers have lost all their hives.”

When government researchers tested the bodies of dead bees, they found that 99 of them had been contaminated with the pesticide *clothianidin*, made by Bayer. The pesticide had been applied to the seeds of oilseed canola in the Rhine River Valley.

Bayer blamed the dieoff on an improper application of the pesticide, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has classified as “highly toxic” to honeybees.

Clothianidin is a pesticide in the neonicotinoid family.

Based on nicotine, these pesticides are toxic to the nervous systems of any insect that comes in contact with them.

—The [UK] Guardian.

Books Palin wanted to ban included many classics

When Sarah Palin, the Republican party's candidate for Vice-President in the current U.S. election, was the mayor of the town of Wasilla in Alaska, she tried to have hundreds of books banned at the local library. They were books that conflicted with her religious beliefs.

According to *Time* magazine, Palin called the librarian, Mary Ellen Baker, "to ask how she could go about banning books that some voters thought had inappropriate language in them."

When the librarian refused to cooperate and give Palin her "full support," Palin threatened to have her fired. Mary Ellen Baker resigned soon afterward, after releasing a list of the 90 books Palin wanted removed from the library shelves. They included books by William Faulkner, Aldous Huxley, John Steinbeck, Mark Twain, Roald Dahl, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, George Eliot, Edgar Rice Burroughs, J.D. Salinger, Margaret Atwood, Stephen King, and Judy Blume. Also on Palin's would-be banned list was Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and all of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books. All the librarians in the United States are shuddering at the prospect of her becoming the country's Vice-President and, even more horrifying, the President.

Rolling back gains

"A fundamental problem in the last few decades has been the relentless campaign waged by the financial elite to overturn post-war social and economic policies that provided significant gains for the middle and lower classes in the decades following World War II.

"The campaign has been phenomenally successful. As a result, the poor have lost ground, while the middle class have barely held their own or made small advances—by working longer hours or having two-income families.

"Only the rich have thrived, with the top 1% of income earners, in both Canada and the U.S., now enjoying over 15% of national income."

—Linda McQuaig, *The Toronto Star*.



"What I really want for Christmas is the elimination of all paid holidays."

WORKER EQUITY INDEX

*A recent study by the McGill Institute for Health and Social Policy examined how 180 other countries in the world treat their workers, then compared the policies of these countries with those in effect across Canada. The research found that many policies covering Canadians' living and working conditions fall far short of those in dozens of other nations.

*At least 89 countries guarantee three weeks or more of paid leave per year. In most of Canada, workers with one year's service are guaranteed only two weeks' vacation. In Ontario, P.E.I. and the Yukon, even workers with several years of service are guaranteed only two weeks of vacation. Only Saskatchewan provides its workers with three weeks vacation after one year on the job.

*At least 156 countries provide leave for sick workers. Of these, 81 guarantee complete wage displacement.

Canada guarantees sick workers only 55% of their insurable income for a period of 15 weeks; most provinces and territories do not guarantee job protection during leaves of over 12 days.

*More than 100 countries officially provide mothers with complete wage replacement during maternity leave if they are in the formal workforce. In Canada, however, most women are guaranteed only 55% of their insurable income during maternity leave—except in Quebec, where women receive 70-to-75% of their insured income.

*Breastfeeding has been shown to dramatically reduce illness and death among infants and toddlers. That's why 114 countries have laws guaranteeing women the right to a break to breastfeed at work—but not a single Canadian province does.

*The news isn't entirely bad. Canadian policies guaranteeing paid leave to care for dependents with serious illnesses (55% of insured earnings during 6 weeks over a 26-week period) are among the best in the world. Of the 180 countries studied, only 39 others guarantee paid leave to care for a family member who is sick.

*There is wide variation in laws and practices from province to province in Canada, with Quebec and Saskatchewan most often providing superior benefits in areas such as sick leave and vacations. These two provinces are the only ones providing job protection for sick leave over 12 days. Quebec is alone in offering parents more choice, higher wage replacement rates, and 5 weeks' paternity leave for men's exclusive use. In addition, Quebec alone allows self-employed workers to opt into parental benefits.

SOURCE: The McGill Institute for Health and Social Policy international survey: the Work Equity Canada Index. The full report is available on the Institute's website at www.mcgill.ca/ihsp)





Jim Britton and Karen Cooling in conversation as Mike Beniach, Gord Campbell and James Monks watch Jack Layton give a speech during the CEP National Convention in Montreal.

CEP Local 175
locked-out for
more than
one year.



James Monks and Gord Campbell at the rally for locked-out Petro-Canada workers of CEP local 175

President's Report

Late October I attended our National Union's 8th Convention along with your Vice President, Mike Beniach, Recording Secretary James Monks, and of course, our BA, Gord Campbell. In addition to elections for senior positions in our Union, regional elections and caucus elections, convention is where the direction of the Union as a whole is set. It is an extremely democratic process which clearly shows that our Union's path and values are set by its' locals and not by any hierarchy.

Through convention the collective locals attending set the expectations the National Exec is expected to achieve.

How it works —

Long before convention Locals submit resolutions of what they would like to see happen. This includes changes to our Constitution, policy changes on issues such as organizing, political activism, etc. A committee is struck to review these resolutions and make recommendations as to whether or not they will be wise for our Union to adopt. It is these recommendations that the delegates vote on. Sometimes the issues become so divisive that votes on the floor are difficult to see clearly and a standing vote may take place. Even if the Union at large votes in one direction there will be locals that see themselves negatively affected and make it known. A good example of this can be seen on the CEP.ca website. If you go to video reports you can see a daily summary of what took place. On the Tuesday video you can see the disappointment of some locals with the National Energy Policy as they see it harming jobs for them yet it was overwhelmingly supported by the other delegates. I would urge all members to go to the CEP website and watch the daily videos of the convention. It really is worth seeing.

Another highlight of the convention for me was the opportunity I had of being involved in Brother Jim Britton's campaign to become our new Western Region Vice President. I know he will do a great job in his new role. With Jim now in his new job there is a vacancy for National Rep to service our Local and others. I am sure this position will be filled very soon.

Convention is good place for networking. We met Alberta members who work for NO rampac and talked with them about their strike. We tried to get a feel of what might be the company position on some issues that may be addressed in our upcoming contract negotiations with NO rampac. It is a good place to talk to other locals about how they run their affairs. (finances, conduct of meetings, organizing, etc).

Another highlight of the convention for me was the majority of us getting on buses and visiting the Petro-Can refinery picket line. As of November 17, 260 CEP members (Local 175) have been locked out for a year. Months of very difficult bargaining included the Union complaining to the Quebec Labour Relations Board citing obstruction, interference and bargaining in bad faith. The Board ordered Petro Can cease intimidating or threatening union members and most of all to bargain in good faith. On November last year the company presented its final offer, which had to be ratified by November 21. The offer was given to each member and the Union called a membership meeting for that date. On the 17th, Petro-Can locked out the employees.

Until this labour dispute is resolved please join in CEP's boycott of Petro-Canada.

If you want more info on this please check out www.cep.ca and links to Local 175.

If you wish to have more info as to what policy or constitutional changes were discussed or adopted please contact me.

I would like to thank all those who helped out our Local this year, both paid and volunteered. Also would like to wish all members and their families a Merry Christmas and a safe, happy New Year.

(continued from page 9)

If you suffer from disabling chronic pain, the Board has now capped any pension you can receive at **2.5%**! (By contrast, Ontario's scale for chronic pain goes from 0 -100 depending upon how disabling it is.) The WCB in BC doesn't like to admit that pain can ever be severe enough to prevent someone from working.

Worst of all to those who are most seriously injured on the job, the law has now been changed so that it is all but impossible to get a 100 loss of earnings pension . Through a series of deliberately complicated and regressive measures, the WCB has managed to cut the loss of earnings pensions it awards dramatically. *It has effectively cut the costs of pensions awarded overall by 50%, and has cut loss of earnings pensions by 90%!*

And let's remember who the Liberals did this all for: the Workers Compensation system is NOT funded from taxpayer money. It is funded by employers who pay an annual assessment to the WCB which is based upon their accident record. In return they get 100 immunity from being sued – a big benefit for them.

The Liberals have rewarded their supporters in the employer community by vastly reducing assessment costs. The changes they made have in only six years resulted in huge surpluses in the WCB's budget (\$474 million in 2005; \$987 million in 2006) and huge reductions in the average assessment rates charged to employers (estimated at 1.56 of payroll in 2008, down from 2.29 in 1996, and now at the *lowest level in more than 25 years*),

There's more; much more. We gave a report to the BC Federation of Labour convention in November and the paper itself will be issued by the Fed sometime in 2009 and will be posted on its website at www.bcfed.com

The BC Federation of Labour will be trying to keep pressure on the government and WCB changes in the spotlight in the coming year and during the 2009 election campaign. Your union local is a strong supporter of injured worker rights. Get out there on behalf of your local and on behalf of yourself and take action on this issue. Ask questions; be vocal. Remember that none of us know whether we will be the injured worker dealing with the WCB tomorrow . So let's stand up for our rights now.

