

26th Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress, Vancouver

CLC Convention Report

July 4, 2011

Attendees: Misty Hughes-Newman, Bob Linsdell, Dee Gillies (IFPTE)

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) which represents the interests of more than three million workers and its affiliated Canadian and international unions, provincial federations of labour and regional labour councils, held its Constitutional Convention in Vancouver, May 8th – 13th, 2011.

The CLC holds its Convention every three years to debate resolutions submitted by members and adopt policies. The resolutions, committee reports and policies discussed at Convention form the basis of the Action Plan which guides the activities of the Congress and its affiliates for the next three years.

The Canadian IFPTE Locals took advantage of being together in Vancouver and held a Canadian Area Meeting on Sunday May 8th, 2011. Much of the discussion was about organizing in Canada, the recent Federal Election and the upcoming Provincial elections in Ontario and Manitoba.

The CLC Convention was very well attended and delegates debated and passed 170 resolutions brought to the floor by convention committees. Numerous delegates spoke in favour of composite resolution ESP-53/55 (see page two) regarding restrictions of foreign ownership of key Canadian resources, manufacturing, as well as high tech, telecommunications, and cultural industries. Several speakers spoke against the resolution, not because they disagreed with the fundamental principles, but because they said the resolution didn't go far enough on the action to be taken. In voting by the delegation, the composite resolution was adopted as presented.

Resolutions on fairness in labour standards had many young people on their feet speaking of the difficulties they face and on issues of social justice.

This year's Convention brought together an exciting mix of great speakers, including New Democratic Party Leader Jack Layton's first major address following the NDP's amazing showing in the May 2nd election, informative panels, and an opportunity to network with other unions and IFPTE locals.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the first woman to lead an international labour organization came to Vancouver with a message of praise and encouragement. "You, your unions and your Canadian Labour Congress are a bright spot in a world where unions and workers are under attack," she told delegates to the CLC convention.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka brought a message of solidarity to the delegates – a message of renewed, global effort to organize and re-organize working people the world over. But first of all, he took time to thank Canada's unions for their solidarity. "You were at our side in Wisconsin, in Indiana and Ohio when we called. You kept your promise of solidarity. For that, your brothers and sisters to the south say thank you and we will stand beside you whenever you call, for as long as you need us."

Jack Layton, leader of the NDP and of the Official Opposition, thrilled CLC convention delegates with a ringing speech that called for a united front to strengthen retirement security for Canadians. "Working together we can put pressure on the Harper government to finally improve the Canada Pension Plan," said Layton, "and the NDP won't stop until it's done."

There were many informative presentations to help Unions engage and rethink how they communicate with their members. Juliette Powell, author, digital media consultant and co-founder of *The Gathering Think Tank* encouraged delegates not yet using social media to seize the opportunity. "You are not in the union business, you are in the community-building business," Powell said. "People live with Facebook and Twitter in the palms of their hands. You have to reach out to them."

She said the fear of change is not a good enough excuse to avoid social networking, which adds value when organizing workers. Statistics show that more than 500 million people use Facebook. The key to success lies in the calls to actions, Powell said, but she cautioned that success must be measured and strategic. "It's not just a campaign, it's ongoing dialogue about co-creating our future."

More information can be found here: http://clc.informz.ca/CLC/archives/archive_118917.html

Composite Resolution – Foreign Ownership composite resolutions ESP-53 to ESP-55

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will work to have the federal government protect the interests of Canadian workers and their communities by imposing a more stringent review of foreign takeovers that involve key Canadian resources, manufacturing, as well as high tech, telecommunications, and cultural industries;

The CLC will seek to strengthen the Investment Canada Act by:

- a) lowering the threshold for public review;
- b) ensuring public hearings are held in affected communities; and
- c) requiring publication of the reason for decisions and conditions to be met by foreign owners;

The CLC will oppose any amendment in the Telecommunications Act allowing foreign ownership or control of the telecommunications and broadcasting industries, and lobby to maintain the current limit of 20% of common voting shares of telecommunications companies that can be held by foreign investors.

Passed: Monday May 9, 2011
