



NSFL CONVENTION NEWS

Wednesday, October 26, 2005

Tories a no-show at political panel

Convention reconvened Tuesday morning with a political panel that was most notable by the absence of a Tory panelist. While NDP Leader Darrell Dexter and Liberal Leader Francis MacKenzie fielded questions on health care, job opportunities for youth, child care and workers' rights, Deputy Premier Ron Russell stayed away. The premier's failure to send a substitute panelist raises questions about where the government stands in relation to labour issues.

In a press release issued by the Federation yesterday President Clarke commented that "the government's absence on this panel

speaks volumes about their attitude towards working people in general, and more specifically, the lack of regard they hold for the labour movement."

While the NDP leader was able to offer examples of initiatives his party has put forth in its role as opposition — from the public health protection act to improvements to labour standards — the Liberal leader was more general in his support for fairness for workers. He said he would welcome the opportunity to sit at the table with labour and put workers' issues on the Liberal agenda.

Delegates showed appreciation for the respect both leaders

No Sweat

Thanks to the No Sweat Committee for the excellent job they did on yesterday's Sweat Shop Fashion Show. The committee asks that you take a second look at the tag on the next garment you buy and use your consumer power to support clothing companies that ensure fair working conditions for workers. Talk to Paulette Sadoway, CLC if you are interested in getting involved in the campaign.

showed for the labour movement by giving both of them a standing ovation at the end of the session.



Resolutions

Day two of debate saw delegates give approval to the funding of Labour Day activities to increase labour's visibility in our communities.

In an effort to expedite the post-convention process of getting committees up and running, delegates further approved a resolution calling for a three-month time period to appoint committee chairs and solicit members.

Delegates upheld a compassionate, proactive resolution to support people with disabilities by holding a conference to better identify the barriers posed by collective agreements and legislation and to develop a plan to help them achieve full employment.

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Building on our STRENGTHS — MOVING forward

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Research makes us stronger

Delegates heard from John Jacobs and Judy Haiven from the Nova Scotia branch of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, a research organization that provides statistical support for many of our issues. President Clarke reminded delegates that the organization needs sustaining donations in order to continue its valuable work.

Labour honourees

We are glad to see that most people enjoyed themselves at last night's banquet — some people more than others! We were pleased to present a long-time activist award to Garry Murray, retired CAW member, and to present a special activist award to Barb Kowalski's daughter, Andrea Currie, on Barb's behalf. Barb was a long-time CUPE member and staff rep and dedicated social activist who passed away this year.



Support for striking gypsum workers

Convention welcomed workers from National Gypsum who have been on strike for 12 weeks. They told delegates their employer has hired a strike breaking security firm from Ontario and is using scab labour. Pensions are a key issue in the strike — pensioners who worked at the

company for more than 30 years are trying to survive on less than \$200 a month. In addition, this large US company only pays the Nova Scotia government about 48 cents per ton of gypsum, and has been shipping this resource out of province for more than 50 years. Delegates were encouraged to

lobby their politicians and the government to stop the exploitation of this resource and return dignity and respect to the employees. Affiliates and individuals generously donated monies to help the workers in their struggle. \$8703 was raised from the floor both in pledges and cash.

I'm stickin' with the union...

Seeing that the Federation reported a healthy and stable financial picture for the coming two years delegates gave swift passage to the Financial Report.

OFFICERS' REPORT

The Officers' Report described the critical work of the Federation over the past two years including the joint efforts of the Federation, the Bloc Quebecois and the CLC to raise support for the Anti-Strike-Breaker Bill that was introduced in the House of Com-

mons by the Bloc.

We also worked with the NDP and lobbied hard for Bill 219 which deals with expedited arbitration and duty of fair representation. We worked with health care unions on the Stop Needlestick campaign and held a very successful Off-Year Conference in Sydney. Over 100 delegates told us what they want from their unions — better communications, more political action, more organizing the unorganized and more

lobbying for worker-friendly legislation.

We are pleased to report that affiliation has increased and we welcome the new locals and the old ones that have re-affiliated into our growing union family.

During the debate it was pointed out that convention is the best way to educate members about the union and that all members should make an effort to bring a full complement of delegates to the next convention.