



Canadian Labour Congress

Congrès du travail du Canada

POLITICAL ACTION AND CAMPAIGNS REPORT

to the CLC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**February 11 & 12, 2008
OTTAWA, ONTARIO**

Overview

The Political Action and Campaigns Department is staffed by:

Danny Mallett	Director
Patty Barrera	National Representative
Mark Hennessy	National Representative
Hassan Hussein	Campaigns
Suzan Fergus	Secretary

Most of the Departments work in the period since the last Executive Council has centered around:

- I. The passage of Bill C-12 – An Act to Amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Companies Creditors Arrangement Act and the Wage Earner Protection Program.
- II. Made in Canada Jobs Campaign Phase II.
- III. The CLC Municipal Program.
- IV. Labour Outreach – Connecting to the NDP.
- V. Campaign.
- VI. Capacity Building.

Legislative Campaign and Advocacy

On December 14, 2007 after a three year campaign Canadian workers won some legal protection for their wages and pension contributions when their

employer goes bankrupt. The Bill, C-12 has received Royal Assent but still awaits proclamation in which various government departments must prepare the necessary documents and forms which conform to the Bill. The Bill originally Bill 55 had been renamed twice and was the result of hundreds of face to face MP lobbies by our collective membership across Canada. On two occasions, this Bill was part of the Executive Council lobby and a part of a lobby by advocacy activists on anti-scab legislation. The contents of this Bill had also been part of the CLC Made in Canada Jobs Campaign and what the Federal government needs to do. The role of the department was to assist in the tracking of this Bill, co-ordinate the face to face advocacy both in the field and on Parliament Hill and to ensure the Bill kept moving to the appropriate politicians and senators. Aside from the victory of its passage the important point to consider is that when the labour movement works together we can accomplish many things. The other point to consider is the length of time required to move a Bill through the Parliament minefield.

Made in Canada Jobs Campaign – Phase II

Since the last Executive Council meeting the department has produced a lobby kit for our affiliates and labour councils to lobby on the jobs crisis. The CLC has produced a number of demands to be taken by the Federal government to help alleviate the jobs crisis in the manufacturing and resource sectors. At the time of writing 97 MPs have been lobbied by the labour councils with many labour councils undertaken to lobby MPs in late January 2008. A number of affiliate unions have engaged in complimentary actions and many are building campaigns for a potential spring election in 2008.

The CLC has produced a brochure on Canada's jobs crisis that will be distributed to affiliates and labour councils across Canada. The CLC's Jobs Committee has decided to target 18 Conservative ridings with these leaflets in the potential pre-election period. This leaflet puts the blame for Canada's jobs crisis in manufacturing and resources squarely on federal government inaction.

The Department has also been working with the Canadian Health Coalition (CHC) and the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC) on their pharmacare lobby. This is the second issue that labour councils are lobbying (along with Jobs) and reports indicate good support for the issue.

At the time of writing, the Federal government has announced a review of work stoppages within the federal sectors. This is a cynical ploy by the federal conservatives to defend themselves around their vote against Bill C-257. Never the less, Bill C-415 (anti-scab Mario-Silva) is still alive and awaiting second reading. **This could see similar advocacy work on Parliament Hill co-ordinated by the CLC as in past anti-scab lobbies.**

CLC Municipal Programme

Since the last Executive Council meeting we've been engaged in the Alberta Municipal elections. In addition to organizing visionings, training schools (a week long municipal course and a number of weekend courses), we developed a newsletter and voter cards that were used by the labour councils and with affiliates to get out the vote. We targeted 4 cities (Calgary, Edmonton, Hinton & Red Deer) and endorsed over 40 city councillors and mayors. **We helped to elect 24.**

We also moved into 'Phase 4 the Accountability' phase of our plan in Ontario & the Prairies. In both regions we held day long debriefs, with full attendance in both places (we invited all those labour councils who had participated in the first 3 phases of our plan, prior to their election days (20 in Ontario + 12 in the Prairies). The debrief launched Phase 4 which means we'll be moving into relationship building, municipal advocacy and building on our 5 issue municipal agenda.

In the Atlantic Region we are preparing for 2 municipal elections in 2008, New Brunswick on May 12, 2008 and Nova Scotia on October 18, 2008. So far we have held 3 visioning sessions in Moncton, Saint John & Halifax. They were well attended and we received great media coverage locally. We will be moving those labour councils into Phase 2, the education & endorsement portion of our campaign this month. With the other labour councils in the region we are working on building municipal committees to get them active in the programme.

British Columbia will be going to the municipal polls on November 15th, 2008. We have started our planning process with the Regional Staff.

On the outreach front, we are developing our relationship with the FCM, last week the CLC met with the CEO & Director of Policy & Strategic Politics. We are exploring how to forward our common agenda with a focus on the infrastructure issue. We also continue to build with the affiliates, to bring more people into the municipal programme.

We've assisted the Winnipeg Labour Council in their fight to maintain their municipal public services after the local city council has launched into one of the largest privatization quests this country has ever seen.

Labour Council Leadership

Our department played a lead role in developing and instructing the new Labour Council Leadership training that we took across the country since last October. We piloted this new training: in Cornwall for the Ontario Region, in Glasgow, Nova Scotia for the Atlantic Region, in Gimli for Manitoba, in Regina

for Saskatchewan, in Jasper for Alberta and in Harrison for the Pacific Region. The objectives of the course are to train labour council leadership to respond to ongoing political priorities by developing strategic planning, targeting and capacity building within their councils. In some areas, media training was also given. We've received very positive feedback from the Councils.

Labour Outreach

The Department is working with the Federal NDP in several areas. First, the Director sits at caucus and liaises with MPs on NDP assistance and strategy. Second, the Director sits on the NDP Election Planning Committee. As a result of the lobby work and the work of the Labour Outreach Committee, several initiatives are occurring to assist the Federal NDP to:

- I. elect incumbent MPs
- II. target areas vulnerable to the NDP
- III. build labour capacity in those areas to assist NDP candidates

As mentioned earlier, the jobs leaflet will be distributed in targeted ridings to emphasize the lack of federal government action on campaigns. Local union leaderships and activists in those areas will be encouraged to come together under the CLC banner to plan a campaign to help the local NDP campaign. This campaign will be initiated and followed up by the CLC in the January - March period. The NDP will also be encouraged to send Jack Layton, incumbent Mps, nominated candidates and their campaign managers.

This work is the culmination of 1½ years of work among the CLC and the affiliated unions of the NDP.

The other major initiative that will support the work of the NDP is the training of campaign managers across Canada. With the support of the affiliates the CLC will train approximately 100 new campaign managers. This training is to occur in Harrison, January 20th-25th, 2008 and in Winnipeg, Toronto, and Memramcook February 17-22, 2008.

The CLC views this training as an important resource to its growing municipal work and will serve to help the provincial and federal NDPs campaign management capacity. Most of these candidates have worked in previous Better Choice campaigns and as organizers in Municipal elections so they have a depth of experience in working on labours political campaigns.

Other NDP work

The department had assisted the Saskatchewan NDP in its fundraising initiatives and was very successful in raising a large sum of money for the provincial section. In addition, the CLC sent five staff to Saskatchewan as organizers and campaign managers. In the end, the NDP lost the election but the party help on to the core of its support and a good number of seats.

The department also assisted the Nova Scotia NDP with its year end general contribution. Under the new finance legislation, unions can only contribute a global \$5000 in a calendar year. Many unions answered the appeal and the Nova Scotia NDP while not happy with the financing legislation is happy with the response.

Campaigns

The department continues to expand it's work on Anti-CLAC initiatives. It has reactivated the CLAC working group and worked with affiliates and federations of labour on anti-CLAC activists which included the December 4th OFL picketing of CLAC workplaces across Ontario. The department has produced two fact sheets on CLAC which has had widespread distribution throughout the labour movement. During this period of time there were 10 campaigns against CLAC by affiliates of which 5 were successful.

The department has started to develop a campaign against the CFIB for future activities. This was brought about because of the direct actions of the CFIB against Bill C-257 (Anti-Scab). We need to get the message out to CFIB members that their federation is attacking their best customers – unionized workers and their purchasing power. The department is developing a multi-layered campaign to challenge the anti-worker policies of the CFIB.

The campaign aims to:

- I. engage members of CFIB in communities across the country, on the importance of unionized workers to the viability of their business
- II. put upward pressure on the leadership of CFIB on key issues
- III. and build the capacity of labour council activists engaged in this campaign

Phase I of this campaign (targeting one city) will take place this Spring, while Phase II involving one city in each region of the country) will be carried out in the Fall of 2008.

Capacity Building

To date the department has built our lobbyist list to over 400 people, our campaign organizers list to over 200 and have trained over 100 new potential campaign organizers through our week long schools. It is this capacity, when fully realized, that helps give us success. Through the creation of list serves the CLC will be communicating with our activists on a continuous basis. This will ensure collaboration and unity on all of our current and future efforts, giving us strength to move forward. The department's database has also grown to include all Federal politicians and our parliamentary contacts to continue building and nurturing our relationship with the Hill. A database will also be created to keep in regular touch with the over 600 municipal politicians we have helped to elect in the last 3 years.