

**NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues**  
**October 4 & 5, 2004 – Ottawa, Ontario**

**MINUTES**

**In attendance:**

<b>NUPGE</b>	James Clancy Marie Bean Brenda Hildahl
<b>BCGEU</b>	Wendi Lawrence
<b>SGEU</b>	Linda Anweiler
<b>MGEU</b>	Kelly-Ann Ivory
<b>OPSEU</b>	Helen Riehl
<b>OLBEU</b>	Shelly Gingerich
<b>BGPWU</b>	Marg Ducie
<b>PEIUPSE</b>	Eileen LeClair
<b>NBPEA</b>	Lydia Jaillet
<b>NSGEU</b>	Martha Brown
<b>NAPE</b>	Sheila Beaton



**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:19 a.m. by Chair Marie Bean. Sister Bean welcomed the committee members and introductions were made around the table. Sister Bean welcomed Shelly Gingerich who is the new committee member from OLBEU/NUPGE replacing Sister Teresa Davey. Sister Bean also extended congratulations to Sister Jaillet who has been elected Second Vice-President of NBPEA/NUPGE. Sister Lawrence advised that she will be retiring as of January 2005.

Chair Bean read a quote from feminist Angela Miles regarding Herstory month.

A copy of *Inspiring Women: A Celebration of Herstory* signed by President James Clancy was given to each of the sisters as a gift for Herstory month in October.

Chair Bean advised the committee that an announcement has been made by the Federal Government confirming the establishment of a permanent Parliamentary Committee on the Status of Women.

Sister Bean advised that she will continue to chair the committee in a transitional role – and until a replacement has been found. She will also continue to attend the CLC Women's Committee meetings, the next one being in mid-January.

Sister Bean also expressed a solid thank you to Sister Hildahl for her work and contribution to the success of the Women's Committee. She has been instrumental in pulling together information for this meeting and extra work on the website.

### **1. Adoption of Agenda**

No amendments or additions were presented to the distributed agenda. As agreed at the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, a list of generic items was forwarded to committee members so that all members would be prepared to discuss those items. Also contained under this binder tab was a list of committee contact information, with any changes noted and forwarded to the National Union. A revised list will be sent out along with the meeting minutes. A copy of the current Women's page on the NUPGE website was also contained in the binders.

### **2. Adoption of Minutes – June 24, 2004**

The minutes of the June 24 meeting were reviewed. Sister Brown identified that Sister Beals' name is misspelled on page 5 of the minutes. Sister Bean advised that the correction will be made to the minutes (and also to the website).

### **3. Mandate / Terms of Reference for Committee**

The Committee was directed to Tab 3 of the meeting binder containing the mandate of the Committee. Sister Lawrence requested to have the mandate included in every meeting binder. Sister Bean advised that the mandate will be included from now on under Tab 1 of the meeting binder.

Chair Bean requested that the committee members send in their respective Component Women's Committee Terms of Reference to Sister Hildahl so that the National Union has them on file.

### **4. Component Reports**

As was agreed at the March and June 2004 meetings of the Committee, Sister Bean stressed the importance of submitting written reports at least two weeks prior to each committee meeting. This enables the National Union to forward the reports to the committee members for review. The verbal reporting at the meeting need only briefly cover the highlights. This allows the committee additional time to work on other issues and further the committee mandate.

Sister Ivory will be liaising with committee members in this regard.

## **NBPEA**

*Sister Lydia Jaillet reported:*

### **General Information:**

Summertime is always slower with all the vacations and key players being away. Most of the activities have centred around the Annual General Meeting preparations and those around actions to be taken in the event that either the nurses or CUPE 1452 (Hospital Workers) are legislated back to work. The “Lord” government is already threatening it even before the strike votes have been counted. Unfortunately both groups are not likely to go out together.

NBPEA is launching a new campaign – “NBPEA – Proud to be Public Sector Workers”. The goal is to solidify the membership around a common issue, and a non-contentious one.

We have also added two IT staff that are developing NBPEA’s data bank which will provide us with the ability to do our own surveys, the general office computer maintenance, and changes to and updates to our website.

Motions coming to the floor of the Annual General Meeting are the name change NBUPPE (New Brunswick Union of Public Private Employees), and the one for a full-time President.

### **Negotiations:**

Presently there is only one bargaining unit in negotiations; the Resource Officers, who have completed their direct bargaining, are going to conciliation next week. Outstanding are the monetary issues and the government’s proposed clawbacks.

Three other groups will be going into bargaining late fall. Two of them are the Hospital groups, Para Med, SHCP groups as well as the Administrative group.

### **Women’s Committee:**

The committee has not met since my last report but is meeting September 3, 2004. Activities are centred around the Annual General Meeting with two fundraisers to support Healing Hands for Haiti and the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

The Annual General Meeting breakfast hosted by the Women’s Committee will have a family member of a victim of family violence speak to us about their ordeal and her experience with the Silent Witness Project.

The Women’s Committee will be launching their new brochure at the Annual General Meeting as well.

The proposed budget for 2005 has seen a reduction in Women’s Committee meetings but there will be opportunities for the committee to meet in conjunction with other union events.

## **NSGEU**

*Sister Martha Brown reported:*

Following are some of the highlights of NSGEU'S activities since our last meeting.

### **General Issues:**

#### Public Service Superannuation Pension Plan:

Discussions are presently ongoing in regards to joint trusteeship on the Public Service Pension Plan.

#### Classification Review Update:

CDHA - New rates of pay have been implemented. NSGEU and the employer are meeting on outstanding implementation issues. Two classifications (Biomedical Engineering Tech and Counsellor) remain in dispute.

Civil Service – still ongoing (after five years), a final report of implementation is hopefully expected soon.

### **Health Care:**

#### Local 42 Arbitration Hearing:

The Arbitration Board for Local 42 handed down its decision on August 18, 2004. The entire decision, along with a section on questions and answers, is now available off the NSGEU website at [www.nsg.eu.ns.ca](http://www.nsg.eu.ns.ca).

### **Highlights:**

An arbitration board awarded the health care workers in the Capital District Health Authority a maximum compounded wage increase of 15.96% over three years. The increase comprises a 2.9% economic increase in each of three years and a 2.1% catch-up increase in each year for those in job classifications that do not rank first in wages in Atlantic Canada. The board stated that the CDHA operates the leading medical facilities in Atlantic Canada and employees should be compensated accordingly.

Under the award the employer has the onus of showing that members are the highest paid in Atlantic Canada.

The award provides the largest wage increase that many members of that bargaining unit have seen since 1990.

Complete text of the arbitration award can be found on our website.

#### Joint Press Conference Leading Into First Ministers' Meeting on Health:

NSGEU and other healthcare stakeholders took part in a media conference to show a united front of support for the province as Premier Hamm prepared to participate in the

First Ministers' Meeting on Health Care. NSGEU supports the province's call for stable and increased funding, a national Pharmacare program, and publicly funded and delivered health care in Nova Scotia.

Children's Aid – Child Welfare Workers:

In the event that the government decides to bring all child welfare employees together under the proposed public service, as described in a report prepared by Deloitte & Touche, our Civil Service Union Negotiating Council has unanimously agreed that NSGEU would recognize:

- the service of child welfare agency employees for the purpose of service related rights and benefits under the Civil Service Collective Agreement, and
- would further recognize the continuous service of these employees for the purpose of seniority under the Agreement as well.

Metro Food Bank Society:

Following a presentation to our Board of Directors by Dianne Swinnemar – (Executive Director of the Metro Food Bank Society) on the services of the Food Bank, NSGEU approved a \$ 40,000.00 donation in support of their community efforts.

Staffing:

Debbie Ryan, Employee Relations Officer, has provided notice that she will retire effective November 30, 2004. Norman Hebert, Coordinator of Education and Organizing will retire effective April 30, 2005.

NSGEU'S Website:

Be sure to check it out at [www.nsgeu.ns.ca](http://www.nsgeu.ns.ca).

**Bargaining Issues / Updates:**

Bargaining:

At the present time NSGEU is consumed with bargaining and negotiations with 43 bargaining tables open, with three more to open by the end of the year.

**Women's Issues:**

Silent Witness Project:

Our Chairperson of our committee has been in contact with interested persons to establish a "Silent Witness Program" in Nova Scotia. Meeting is planned in the very near future. Will keep you informed of our progress.

December 6 Day of Remembrance:

NSGEU Women's Committee will partnership with the Halifax Dartmouth and District Labour Council to commemorate this event.

**Future Plans:**

- 6<sup>th</sup> annual Women's Conference is tentatively scheduled for April 8 – 10, 2005.
- Next meeting of the committee scheduled for September 24 & 25, 2004.

## **PEIUPSE**

*Sister Eileen LeClair reported:*

Our committee has been active over the summer with the Silent Witness Project. In late June we met to finalize plans to begin this project here on PEI. We contacted Leslie Monaghan, coordinator from Fredericton NB who agreed to travel to PEI to do a presentation for us at UPSE office. We also contacted various women's organizations from across the province with an invitation to attend. The response was wonderful. The presentation was very powerful and made quite an impact on everyone. We now have the contacts and commitment we need to begin.

Five years ago, Kimberly Ann Bryne was murdered by her spouse as she left work. Kimberly Ann worked at a Nursing Home as an LPN and was an UPSE member. After speaking to her family and explaining the Project, they agreed to have our first silhouette dedicated to her. We are in the process of designing it now and will make the first presentation at our November Annual Convention. We are very excited about this Project and intend to eventually erect silhouettes for five other women who have also been murdered by their spouses.

We are having a very busy summer at UPSE with the campaign for election of our full-time President by mail-in ballot. Ballots are to be mailed out on August 24 and counted on September 14. We have one woman and two men running for the position. The election promises to be an interesting one.

Our Civil Service members have been in negotiations for the past three months, having met a total of seven times with three additional meetings set for this week. They have been without a contract since December 2003. Some movement has been made; however, a signed collective agreement will not be forthcoming any time soon.

UPSE has been successful in organizing our Early Childhood Educators, some 170, the first to be unionized on PEI. It will be some time, however, before they have their first collective agreement. We have also organized a privately-owned nursing home with 120 members and The Fixed Link Employees with 30 members. This brings UPSE's total membership to just over 5,000. President Sandy MacKay is credited for doing a great job.

## **BCGEU**

*Sister Wendi Lawrence reported:*

The summer has come and gone in a flash, and our eye, more than ever, is on the prize – winning back the province of B.C. in our provincial election next May 17. Congratulations and kudos to all who worked so hard on the federal election. Although not as successful as we'd hoped, the NDP made a renewed comeback here in B.C. electing three more MP's, one of those being a woman. It's with deep disappointment, however, that our own Catherine Bell, who came so close that she was even declared

elected by the media, lost by just over 400 votes. We are so very proud of her and I know politics hasn't seen the last of this strong, courageous sister.

### **Women's Resource Centres:**

The B.C. Women's Resource Centres are struggling to keep afloat since the Liberal government cut their funding as of April 1. Many have already closed, and others are struggling to stay open a few days a week. We waged a valiant campaign that got much attention, including an inspiring statement from Nelly Furtado at a press conference preceding her July 22 Vancouver concert, where she also pledged a percentage of her concert take to support the centres. We continue the fight and NDP provincial leader Carole James has promised to reinstate funding when elected, so that's our mission now.

### **Women's Conferences:**

Both the BCGEU and the B.C. Federation of Labour are holding women's conferences this fall with women in political action being the key theme of both. We are committed to making women's votes count, and have put the present government on notice.

### **Ninotchka Rosca:**

Ninotchka will be in Vancouver promoting her new book, and we're extremely fortunate to be able to have a meeting with her and our committee members from the Women's, Equity and Human Rights, and International Solidarity committees on Sept 17. She truly made an impact on us all at our NUPGE convention, and we've made a commitment to stay connected.

As this will likely be my last NUPGE Women's Advisory Committee meeting, I want to thank you all so much for making it such a memorable and powerful experience. We took convention by storm, as planned, and the work that we've done together has been most rewarding. I know the Women and International Solidarity Conference will be a huge success, because you will make it so. The world of women's rights is in good hands, and THE SISTERHOOD ROCKS !!!!!

### **SGEU**

*Sister Linda Anweiler reported:*

In SGEU Sectors the following has taken place since the last NUPGE Women's Committee meeting:

### **Community Service Sector:**

Continues to carry on with their campaign "We're Worth More" and hold rallies to make the public aware of the wage disparity between themselves and other sectors.

### **Public Service Sector:**

During budget cuts in April, there were 333 employees laid off, of which 188 were women or 56% were women's jobs. Bargaining continued over the summer but it appears that there is a stand off and job action will be looked into in the near future. There has been a second strike vote taken, this time from individual worksites to see which one would be willing to go out as a worksite on a rotational strike.

### **Health Sector:**

Saskatchewan Cancer has gathered proposals and ratified at their meeting. They are presently at bargaining with some of the proposals dealing with such items as flex-time, earned days off (5/4), five family leave days instead of three/year and the ability to work part-time for a year and revert back to full-time. There has been a cutback also with Saskatchewan Cancer; they have now lost the Patient Education and also Dietitian Programs which is a great loss to patients and the province. They have also replaced an RN with a technician.

### **Adult Education Sector:**

Contract has been ratified and introduction of Class Plan in place.

### **Retail Regulatory Sector:**

Class Plan: accepted by 85.2% of membership on August 30. There will only be 4% of members red circled with no pay increment.

Pay Equity: a lot of women affected and received pay increases from \$1.20/hour to \$10.00/hour. Proposals have been brought forth for Bargaining which will begin in October. One of the Proposals is Child Care where the employer is responsible for paying for child care for an employee when they are required to leave their town or city overnight for mandatory training.

### **Crowns Sector:**

In April, budget cuts resulted in 77 people laid off, of which 50 were women or 65% were women's jobs. The concern with this Sector is when SPMC is moving into executive government and the closure of Echo Valley Centre which will take \$2.5 million out of the Fort Qu'Appelle economy. SPMC will now be joining the PSGE sector in October of this year.

### **Prairie School for Union Women June 12-17, 2005:**

Due to closure of the Echo Valley Conference Centre in Fort Qu'Appelle it has now been moved to the University of Regina. This is felt to be a great loss as the serene surrounding, ghost tours, excellent meal, will all be greatly missed by moving it to an urban centre.

### **SGEU/NUPGE Women's Conference "A Woman's Place is in her Union" November 18 & 19, 2004:**

### SGEU Women's Committee:

On May 10, 2004 we held a meeting. We reviewed the Sector reports as well as the Provincial Council report. We began planning our Women's Conference for November 18 & 19, 2004. Our theme will be "A Woman's Place is in Her Union" to be held in Saskatoon. We brainstormed about several strategies about the conference. It was decided to come up with a conference that would centre around an Action Plan for SGEU women. The action plan will deal with organizing women, as well as balancing women's issues and union participation. Our International Women's Day poster was reviewed and we finalized for Rosie the Riveter with the theme "A Woman's Place is in Her Union". We viewed samples and discussed the purchase of Union jackets for women for our conference.

On September 7 & 8, 2004 our last meeting was held. We reviewed the Sector reports as well Provincial Council report. It was learned that the SGEU Staff of 481 have now signed a contract which was successful from 2001 to June 2005.

From the Resolutions of the Women's Committee to SGEU Convention we were asked to develop a brochure outlining the right of women applying for CPP benefits to include their child-raising years for benefit calculations. This is now being completed and will be out for publication in the near future. We finished developing the Women's Conference where the committee will be facilitating the conference.

We will begin on the evening of the November 18 with a supper. Each participant will get a Tool Kit with the tools they will need for the conference and to educate them in their future. We will then have guest speakers as well as the committee will each give a brief presentation regarding their various duties, and being involved in the union as elected representatives. We will also have the SGEU/NUPGE Vice President do a presentation and a woman MLA who has been very active within unions prior to her election. We will do a presentation of a video called "Story of Saskatchewan Working Women".

On November 19 we will begin having the women divide into three Renovation Teams where they will decide on one of three groups: 1) Steward, 2) Bargaining Committee Member, or 3) Elected Officer. They will begin by discussing what their work place is like now, problems, barriers, dissatisfaction and what kind of place they would like to see. There will be problem identification, skits, and listing of analysis from each group. We will continue with our renovations with "Imagining Our Dream House" and have participants list what needs to be completed, and the tools they will need to complete the renovations. We will complete the day with "Renovating Our Union" to develop action plans for both the individual women to take back to their workplaces, locals, and also the SGEU Women's Committee.

We reviewed Tool Kits for the conference as well as t-shirts and jackets to order. We developed our 2005 Budget to be presented to Provincial Council for approval in December. Our next meeting will be for December 7 in Regina.

This has been a brief overview of what has been happening within SGEU and our Women's Committee.

## **MGEU**

*Sister Kelly-Ann Ivory reported:*

Over the summer the MGEU's Women's Committee did not meet and by the time of this meeting the Committee will have met on October 1, 2004. The Committee has been busy completing the Women's convention report and recommendations for the MGEU's bi-annual convention October 22 & 23, 2004.

The Committee will review a proposal if we will work in conjunction with Cancer Care of Manitoba in regards to a screening project they are launching for Women regarding the cervical cancer screening. This awareness program is involving 17 clinics in the province. More information will be made available at our meeting.

### **Summary of events from MGEU/NUPGE:**

- Over the summer two very significant arbitrations – one for the professional technical component and the corrections component – were completed and the outcomes of these are pending.
- The Facility support components now called Health Care Support Services component had an extremely successful pre-bargaining media campaign – bus shelter advertisements and various short television commercials increasing public awareness of other supports that provide care besides nurses. The second part of the campaign was an internal campaign specific to each of the work locations. Small posters and letters were distributed to the residents and their families. This component is in the early stages of their bargaining process.
- In the fall the MGEU will be doing more advertising promoting the value of public sector services and who our members are.
- The MGEU continues to expand and develop a comprehensive succession plan. Recently we have added more staff representatives and expanded our mentoring programs and training programs.
- The MGEU continues to organize Child Care Locals with over 70 worksites now certified with the MGEU. We continue to attempt to have government agree to a central bargaining table but this has not been very successful but we continue to pursue this.
- The MGEU youth group is considering hosting a youth conference possibly in the spring.
- MGEU Convention is scheduled for October 22 & 23, 2004 and there appears to be no change in the leadership positions. At our convention we will be having special delegates – shall be inviting equity and youth members to our convention. Along with our newly certified child care locals.

## **NAPE**

*Sister Sheila Beaton reported:*

This has been a difficult year for labour relations in our province. Currently in this province we have a right-wing government that does not understand government is not a business. It is intent on stripping its workers' contracts, stripping public services and passing along the cost of public services to the user. This government has no regard for the terrible toll this approach has on the provincial economy and on the quality of life enjoyed by ordinary people, particularly in rural parts of the province. This government's action is already having an impact on our province population. It has been announced that Newfoundland and Labrador population is on the decline and those people in rural area, if they are not leaving the province, are moving to more urban areas.

NAPE believes that it is the job of the public sector unions like NAPE to make sure public services survive and to ensure provincial government jobs are there for our children and that those jobs still provide a decent living.

### **Home Care:**

On September 23, 2004, sixty-three NAPE members, home care workers and associated support staff employed by the Corner Brook Branch of the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), have voted to accept a new contract after spending 56 days on the picket line. The new contract, which expires March 31, 2005, provides a 50¢/hour wage increase and three days' paid sick leave. The workers, who had been engaged in a legal strike since August 2, 2004, had been without a contract since February 28, 2003.

NAPE is proud of our members with VON, who showed tremendous courage on the picket line. This settlement should help NAPE in our efforts to negotiate first contracts for other home care workers. On July 20, 2004 NAPE was certified as bargaining agent for more than 300 home care workers employed by Compassion Home Care Inc. NAPE now represents home care workers with 17 agencies in the province.

Home support workers allow the elderly and people with disabilities to remain in their homes instead of forcing them to occupy beds in hospitals and nursing homes. Their efforts also allow people to be discharged from hospital earlier. Their work provides enormous savings for this province's health care system and has an immensely positive impact on their clients' quality of life. Yet the 6,000 home care workers in this province continue to be the lowest paid people employed in health care. They often work under difficult circumstances and receive few benefits.

### **Job Cutbacks:**

NAPE has been informed that some 131 of its public sector members received layoff notices today, with another eight layoffs to come. The layoffs are distributed as follows:

- Department of Education (11)
- Department of Environment and Conservation (10)
- Department of Finance (4)
- Department of Government Services (20)
- Department of Health and Community Services (2)
- Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment (25)
- Department of Justice (29)
- Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (7)
- Department of Transportation and Works (23)

NAPE was also advised that Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment offices will close in 20 communities across Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition to the 20 employees at these offices who received their layoff notices today, 68 employees will be transferred.

This government is eliminating jobs despite its enormous savings during the recent strike by our public sector members. Many of these cuts will immediately have a negative impact on public services, particularly in rural areas. Anyone with a little common sense will know that closing Human Resources, Labour and Employment offices will hurt that department's clients, and eliminating highway jobs has serious implications for public safety. But the harm caused by these cuts in rural areas is two-fold. Not only do people lose services, steady jobs disappear, jobs that support local businesses. This government has already done many hurtful things. We have yet to see it do anything that will improve employment or services for rural people.

These layoffs come on the heels of those at College of the North Atlantic. On May 4 the college informed NAPE it would be laying off employees in response to a \$2 million funding cut announced in the recent provincial budget. NAPE has since learned that 17 faculty members and 18 support staff will be laid off, while two management vacancies will go unfilled.

Some programs will no longer be offered at as many campuses. Thus students who may have been within commuting distance before may now have to move to access those programs, increasing the cost of education substantially. The college's president has publicly stated that cuts to government funding will cause increasing centralization of programs.

The people of this province are just starting to see the first bitter fruits of the recent provincial budget. Services cuts and job losses will hit rural areas particularly hard. NAPE suspects it is this government's plan to put financial pressure on the College of the North Atlantic in order to create opportunities for private schools to increase their presence in this province. We have a respected supplier of high quality, affordable post-secondary education on the one hand, and a sorry history of failed private schools on the other.

### **More Job Cuts Expected:**

On September 10, 2004, government announced its intention to merge the administration of five hospital boards, five health and community services boards, three nursing home boards, and the Newfoundland Cancer Treatment and Research Centre into four regional integrated health authorities (RIHAs). Government has yet to provide any explanation for how it decided four RIHAs would be appropriate.

According to the Minister of Health and Community Services, it will be some time before government will know how many jobs will be lost, though it seems reasonable to assume such an announcement will be made on or before January 1, 2005, when the transfer of power to the four new boards takes place. It will also be some time before government will tell the public in which communities other than Corner Brook, Grand Falls-Windsor, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and St. John's there will be some form of administrative presence.

The minister would not speculate on the savings likely to result from this downsizing, except to say that she expects there will be no savings in the current fiscal year because of the cost of severance and redundancy packages.

Once again it is discouraging to see jobs disappearing from this province, with most of the job loss likely to take place in rural areas. Once again this government has created a time of great uncertainty and anxiety for its employees as they wait to see whether or not they will lose their jobs. Concerns were expressed that front-line workers employed in health and community services, such as social workers, would be lost in the four big boards. Front-line workers in health and community services are already in crisis. They don't need to get lost in the shuffle of reorganization.

### **Pay Equity:**

On May 12, 2004, NAPE appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada to present its appeal of a December 6, 2002 decision by the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal. The Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal's decision was related to NAPE's long-standing dispute about implementation of pay equity by the provincial government.

At the heart of the matter is the failure of the provincial government to honour pay equity adjustments owed to NAPE members covered by the Hospital Support Staff, Waterford Hospital, Laboratory and X-Ray, Victorian Order of Nurses (St. John's), Central Laundry, and Group Homes collective agreements for the period April 1, 1998 to April 1, 1991. The provincial government also unilaterally reduced the amount of the pay equity adjustments it did pay from April 1, 1991, onwards. It is the provincial government's position that the Public Sector Restraint Act of 1991 empowered it to take these actions. NAPE's senior legal counsel, Sheila Greene, presented for the union. Greene's primary argument was that a provincial government should not be allowed to use fiscal difficulties to justify a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Canadian Labour Congress, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, the British Columbia

health unions, the Canadian Association for Community Living, the Canada Hearing Society, and the Council for Canadians with Disabilities had been granted intervener status, and they made shorter presentations to the Supreme Court of Canada. The provincial government presented its case. The attorney generals of four other provinces had requested status, and three of them also made brief presentations to the Supreme Court of Canada.

At arbitration, NAPE had argued that government's action discriminated against women, contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. NAPE won the arbitration, and the Board ordered government to pay the NAPE members affected in excess of \$80 million. This decision was then appealed to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland by the provincial government. The Supreme Court of Newfoundland issued a decision that favored the provincial government, which was in turn appealed by NAPE to the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal in 1998.

On December 6, 2002, the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal delivered its decision. The Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal found the arbitration board had the right to find the provincial government's actions discriminatory; however, the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal also found it acceptable for the provincial government to violate the equality rights as the violation was justified by fiscal necessity. On June 5, 2003, the Supreme Court of Canada granted NAPE leave to appeal the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal's decision.

Says Greene, "It may take the seven justices who heard the case upwards of a year to deliver the Court's decision."

### **Morale of Public Employees:**

On July 20, 2004 NAPE responded to a news release issued by the provincial opposition labour critic, Percy Barrett, which says the province is still suffering some after effects of the recent public sector strike and the provincial government's use of the legislature to impose concessions on its employees. In his news release, Barrett alleges he has heard of work slowdowns, refusals to take co-op students, refusals to perform overtime, and increased use of sick leave.

NAPE's president, Leo Puddister, stated that, "The Williams' government provoked and prolonged a 28-day strike that caused great hardship to 16,000 of our members, some 4,000 CUPE members, and the public. During the strike, government maligned its employees on the sick leave issue. After our members had already returned to work, that same government used its legislative powers to impose needless concessions, just to prove it could. While NAPE has no way of knowing what is going on in the workplace, we know morale is terrible. We know many of our members are still suffering financially from the strike and that the two-year wage freeze gives them little to look forward to. Financial hardship creates stress, and stress is a major source of illness. Certainly after having their employer imply they abuse their sick leave, it would come as no surprise if our members' use of sick leave has increased. People who prior to the strike would drag themselves into work no matter how sick they felt are probably choosing to stay home to

recover. I don't think our members are ever going to forget how their employer has abused them."

Recent layoffs and government's refusal to fill vacancies have created some unmanageable workloads. For example, there are four vacancies at the Motor Vehicle Registration office in Mount Pearl. The remaining staff can't hope to meet the public's expectations on a long-term basis. NAPE wrote the minister responsible on this issue and has yet to hear back from her. These kinds of situations are really stressful and do nothing to help workplace morale.

### **Plans of the Committee:**

Funds are limited for this year's budget, but the Women's Committee plans to create partnerships within the communities to begin building the foundation for the Silent Witness Program.

Our next meeting will take place at the Federation of Labour Conference where our discussion will be centred around developing creative ideas that are cost effective in getting services to our sisters.

### **OPSEU**

*Sister Helen Riehl reported:*

### **OLBEU**

*Sister Shelly Gingerich reported:*

### **Staff Negotiations:**

OLBEU staff has been without a contract since the end of March. Negotiations with the employer have apparently been frustrating. The MOL has appointed a mediator and there has been no board report submitted by the MOL.

The employer (the Union) has demanded a number of concessions during the face to face meetings; these have not been received kindly by the administration staff of OLBEU. The staff will be in a legal strike position as of September 26, 2004.

### **OLBEU / LCBO Negotiations:**

The OLBEU is currently canvassing the membership for proposals for the upcoming round of Negotiations. The current collective agreement expires March 31, 2006. The membership will have the opportunity to list their demands for the upcoming negotiations.

## **OLBEU Elections:**

The OLBEU is currently holding elections for the position of President and Board of Directors. There are three candidates for the position of President and there will be elections for Directors in Eastern, Western, and Central Regions.

## **BGPWU**

*Sister Marg Ducie reported:*

The Board of BGPWU is investigating a possible merger with another union. Discussions begin September 2004. All issues are on hold until the decision is made regarding merger.

## **5. National Union Report**

President James Clancy welcomed the sisters and wished all a happy Herstory month.

President Clancy stated that the National Union convention focused around four key issues that are under attack by corporations: Globalization, Freedom of Association, Pensions and the Value of Public Services. He noted that countries all over the world are seeing, over the last twenty years, an attack on labour's right of collective bargaining. There has been a rise in part-time work and contingent work. Unemployment percentages have increased all over the world. This all indicates a shift to corporations having control.

### **The Value of Public Services:**

The National Union's focus from July through September 2004 has been on Medicare. Staff were at the Niagara-on-the-Lake meeting in July and the First Ministers' Accord in September. In September President Clancy spoke at two labour conferences in the U.S. Industrial unions in the U.S. got their union growth through their ability to get health coverage. Now corporations in the U.S. are saying they cannot afford health care or pensions. He noted that Canada needs to hold onto what it has.

The results of the First Ministers' Accord were positive in that Federal funding is back up to 25% plus an escalator clause, the government has made a commitment to reduce wait times and is working to set up joint replacement, sight reduction and imaging centres. There is now access to two weeks home care for mental health and palliative care. The National Union will continue to campaign the government for a national strategy on human resources, training and education, Pharmacare – catastrophic drug care (also looking at collective purchasing) – and Aboriginal health. Canada has the lowest rate of infant mortality and highest life expectancy expect in the Aboriginal population.

The three areas of work are the need to keep the elimination of for-profit delivery front and centre, long-term facility care and accountability – the fact that the federal government has not ensured that there are enough strings attached to the money the provinces will receive for health care.

### **Equalization Payments:**

President Clancy stated that the Canadian constitution ensures that regardless of where you live, you get a minimum amount of public services. He noted that Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the four Atlantic provinces were the ones hurt when the formula for equalization payments was changed. He advised that if we are going to fight for public services, we have to be able to afford them. There is a need to force the federal government to come up with a new formula that is sustainable for 15 to 20 years.

### **Freedom of Association:**

The legislative rights of unions to collective bargaining and the ability to organize have been eroded. President Clancy stressed that we have to make the public aware of the connection that a loss of labour rights equals a loss of democracy. The National Union will unfold a three to four year campaign in the spring of 2005 on the Freedom of Association. The first phase will be in the spring of 2005 at the CLC convention to get unions on side and then the second phase will be to get the information out to the public.

### **Pensions:**

Brother Clancy advised that there is currently \$60 billion in public sector plans. The National Union will work to gain support to ensure plans are not invested in corporations that are anti-union and to educate members about the power associated with the amount of money that is contained in the plans.

### **Globalization:**

President Clancy spoke to the committee regarding the dangers of globalization. He stated that the Women's International Conference in 2006 will be a tool to help educate women about these dangers. He stressed the need to get all people around the world educated to the dangers of globalization.

Sister Lawrence thanked President Clancy and the National Union for the work that has been done on Medicare and HIV/AIDS. She noted that it gives the labour movement credibility.

## **6. Building Sisterhood Around the World**

Chair Bean asked the committee to review the work template contained in Tab 5 for the Building Sisterhood Around the World Conference. She noted that the Asia/Pacific region has been deleted. Committee members then chose the region they are going to work on as follows:

Mid-East:	Sisters Riehl, Beaton, Ivory
Central/South America:	Sisters Lawrence, Anweiler, LeClair
Africa:	Sisters Brown, Jaillet, Ducie, Gingerich

The committee broke into groups to discuss a work plan for their specific region. The committee then reconvened to discuss any issues or concerns. Sister Bean advised that a new work chart will be produced to include clarity on issues. Members committed to having a selection of three women from each region by the next committee meeting. A possible tentative date of October 2006 for the conference was discussed.

***Sister Bean adjourned day one of the meeting at 4:30 p.m.***

***Meeting reconvened at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 5, 2004.***

## **7. Whole Loaf**

Chair Bean directed the committee to Tab 6 of the meeting binder which contained the new Slice #24 for inclusion in the National Union publication *We Want the Whole Loaf*. The committee reviewed the slice on International Solidarity and noted that there is no “quotable quote” which has been included on the previous slices. Several quotes were suggested and a suitable quote was found. The National Union will add it to the International Slice and distribute it at the next meeting.

## **8. Domestic Violence (Silent Witness Project)**

This is a standing agenda item. The committee debated changing the name of this agenda item to be more inclusive in identifying all types of violence against women. Discussion took place to clarify that each component is responsible to work in their region / province towards the possible establishment of a ‘chapter / branch’ of the Silent Witness Project – and in the sharing of initiatives and projects that their components are involved with. Sister Jaillet will obtain permissions from the New Brunswick Silent Witness Project contacts to provide their names and contact information to the committee.

Discussion ensued about adding a new Women's webpage on the National Union website on the issue of violence against women. The page could include information on the Silent Witness Project, Take Back the Night, December 6 events, etc.

Sister Bean advised that the Canadian Labour Congress has developed a postcard for December 6<sup>th</sup> with the theme "more can be done to end violence against women". The National Union is currently obtaining details regarding costs.

## **9. Breast Cancer**

The committee reviewed the newly created Breast Cancer webpage on the National Union website. It was decided that the page should be changed to 'Health Concerns for Women' and it will now contain information on ovarian / cervical / breast cancer and heart disease. The committee will forward information and news stories on these issues to Sister Hildahl for inclusion on the webpage and distribution at the next committee meeting. Sister Ivory provided a 'glossary of terms' which Sister Hildahl will include on the page.

## **10. Women's World March 2005**

Chair Bean advised that she has spoken with Penni Richmond, Director of the CLC Women's Directorate about the Women's World March 2005. Sister Richmond advised that the Canadian Women's Committee does not have the resources to meet – and in fact, a lot of women's organizations have been killed by the Liberal strategy.

Sister Richmond, on behalf of the CLC, is trying to get a better handle as to what activities will be happening in Canada and/or North America. She suspects that there will not be a big demonstration such as the one in New York. Sister Richmond advised that perhaps there will be a march in Quebec City the week of May 1– 5, 2005 and CLC affiliates will be asked to be part of that march. A quilt for the occasion is being developed in pieces and will likely be part of the ceremonies. Activities in other parts of the world – such as Africa, India, etc. – are happening but unfortunately not too much in North America. She advised that there may be plans locally, but there is minimal national coordination.

Chair Bean informed the committee that she will keep them posted of any new information she receives.

## **11. Leadership Development #2**

Chair Bean advised that the International Sisterhood Conference is a continuation of the Leadership Development training.

## **12. Other Business**

Chair Bean requested that the committee review the request for information from MGEU/NUPGE regarding statistical data on women – which would be of value to all committee members. The committee discussed the request and clarified the wording of the questions. Sister Bean advised that the revised request form will be e-mailed to the committee after the meeting, with the responses being returned to the National Office for subsequent distribution to all members.

Sister Bean asked the committee to review the information contained in the binder regarding Employment Insurance Compassionate Leave. Included in the information is a list containing the mailing and e-mail addresses of all Federal MP's. Sister Bean requested the committee write or e-mail their concerns to their MP about the exclusion of siblings in this legislation. Sister Ducie raised the possibility of this issue being the subject of #7 in the Collective Bargaining for Women series. Discussion included consideration for grandparents and the need for provincial standards to match federal standards.

The tentative date for the next meeting is March 7 & 8, 2005. As the item of the International Sisterhood Conference will take a greater portion of time on the agenda, it was decided that day one of the meeting would be discussion on the Conference, with other agenda items to commence afterward.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Bean extended a warm thank you to Sister Lawrence for her energies, commitment, hard work and commitment to the Women's Committee – as she is retiring in January 2005 and will not be at our next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Minutes: B. Hildahl