

BC Federation of Labour Convention Report – James Brierley

I was recently fortunate enough to have the opportunity to attend the BC Federation of Labour Convention from November 28 - December 2, 2016. In order to be able to attend this, I applied for and was privileged to receive funding from PSAC BC Region as well as my Component regionally. I am grateful for this opportunity as this was my first time in attendance to BC Federation of Labour and was very excited to see our labour movement on a grand scale.

I was a first-time delegate at the convention and found the opportunity very humbling to be able to add my voice to the issues facing our labour movement and vote on issues we are fighting for across many types of employment that cover all spectrums. Coming from a very union focused family who valued the opportunities that membership provided to them, I was proud to continue to carry the torch of activism to the BC Federation and witness the fights first hand.

It was very interesting hearing other delegates' perspectives on issues ranging from soft wood lumber exports which was very interesting to me as my father spent 36 years in the forestry industry and I marched on our provincial legislature with him on the issue numerous times. It was also amazing to hear delegates speak with such passion on issues ranging from the pipelines and the environmental and economic issues surrounding this, to marijuana legalization and how to distribute this substance in the most appropriate manner when legal changes come down. I was happy to see the launch of a campaign for the upcoming provincial election and felt that it was great to see John Horgan and be a part of the start of the movement. One could gather that we are supporting a progressive party with many delegates at convention running for seats in their respective ridings. It was a pleasure to see the progressive voices and hope we carry it to Victoria.

CEIU had multiple resolutions reach the floor and from our caucus, we spoke on issues ranging from transgender issues to matters facing young workers and activism around the world. As a young worker in attendance at my first convention I was fortunate to be able to reach the microphone to be a first-time delegate and first-time speaker on a matter facing young workers. It was an experience I won't soon forget as there was over 1100 delegates in attendance that day, by far my largest audience to date. But more importantly the issues I was able to speak on were listened to, respected and I was a peer among labour movement champions to take our movement forward. A great moment. From my local there were 2 other young workers and it was a great feeling to be standing addressing the delegation with them.

Overall, the 2016 BC Federation of Labour left an indelible mark on me that I will use in my activism going forward. It was a great convention and a fantastic experience to be a part of. I can only hope to again be in attendance in the future.

In Solidarity,

James Brierley