

BC FEDERATION OF LABOUR CONVENTION
Report from Kal Thendal

Please show in writing how your attendance assisted our local &/or Dist/Region:

I was very honoured to be considered as a candidate to attend the Union Convention in November 2016.

I think that attendance by an appointed person from our particular office here in Nelson was very beneficial, working in a smaller office the general consensus was that we felt definitely under represented compared to a much busier and more dynamic offices. Often feeling not recognized, or even sure of what is going on in the executive/bargaining as a whole. We rarely got any type of visitation or attention as an office as a whole and relied heavily on our representative here and although she did very well in relaying information to us, we still feel that we are often not acknowledged and recognized.

For me, personally, I was very interested in learning more about the way that the Union worked, it was an excellent opportunity to network and get exposure to what affects the membership, what are the current concerns, the successes and if selected, I would be more than happy to report all of my experiences back to our local membership here in Nelson.

I think that attendance at the convention was educational in the respect of my reporting back my experiences and other relevant information and how it was beneficial to our local and encouraging individuals to get more involved in the process.

I think that the conference constituted far more than just a forum for delegates, it provided an exciting place for a whole host of people to get together and to discuss the party's policies and priorities, there were lots of different events that enabled me to network and exchange the best practice experiences and I felt it influenced some policy thinking by my being able to vote my conscience on the resolutions

I also self-identified as a racially visible member of the team. Moving into a smaller community and a smaller office dynamic I felt fulfilled in the respect that I needed an outside interest that I could engage in and felt that I am doing something for my wellbeing and personal development I often feel that there is more that I can do for the Union and this was an excellent way to get me more interested and motivated and involved. In my last office I was part of the Health and Safety committee but there is much less to get involved in at this office.

For the duration of the convention I emailed my colleagues a day to day synopsis of what went on, I also snapped many pictures of the event and also gave a "run down" of the guest speaker (my favourite was Cindy Blackstock) and I also touched upon the not so interesting speakers.

It was definitely a well-timed convention as everybody in the office was interested in the developments in the bargaining, especially with the new Government that was voted in and

everybody was interested in what they would negotiate, especially with regards to the threatened overhaul of the current accumulating sick time that Harper conservatives were threatening to cancel.

It was absolutely phenomenal and much appreciated how the actual collective agreement turned out, we were all anticipating the worst. This really did renew our faith in our Union and collectively the mood was that our dues that we pay are worth every penny, this was after the last big concession with our severance pay that was cancelled when we were set to retire, generally everyone was very upset when that had taken effect.

So with a renewed sense of purpose and interest I usually always read info from the PSAC website and I distribute it to all in the office and also other little tidbits that I read in all of the national papers, in this age of social media it's amazing how news can shape the public perception.

In closing I thoroughly enjoyed my time, I was exhausted at the end of each day it really did take a lot out of me, I think it sparked renewed interest for my colleagues as well and illustrated that each voice is important and valid.

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