

Report on PSAC National Triennial Convention 2015 to Vancouver Area Council

I want to thank this Council for allowing me to participate in the political process of our union and having the confidence in me to represent them at the PSAC National Triennial Convention. It was a quite different experience to be on the floor voting and making decisions on the future direction of our union than sitting in the gallery as an observer. I am very proud of the work that we did as a union and looking forward to what we can accomplish with the direction provided by the floor.

We accomplished a lot in the week we were in Quebec City, in fact we got through all of the priority resolutions from the General Committee, the Constitution Committee (one remained tabled) and the Finance Committee, as well as 4 of the 10 priorities from the Collective Bargaining Committee and an emergency resolution to fund up to \$5 million dollars to a campaign against the undermining of the Collective Bargaining process as represented in Bill C-59. In total we got through 31 resolutions and passed many that were identified as priorities to the BC Region, but also defeated CS-071, which would have seen our ability to raise funds for this committee through dues completely cut off.

Some of the highlights were:

Concerning Area Councils – CS-070 was carried, which refers to allowing delegates to Area Councils to be selected rather than only elected, CS-071 was defeated, and I think that a lot of area council representatives got up and spoke eloquently to this and that the fees or dues are voluntary and that it allows us to expand our scope and be more publicly visible. CS-072, which refers to the rules surrounding delegate entitlement for Area Councils was defeated.

While it was divided and may not have gone forward exactly as intended, the formation and constitutional recognition of Regional Health and Safety Committees was carried (CS-050). We can always try for funding at the next Convention.

As well, GEN-145, which establishes regional Racially Visible Conferences was carried. A big step forward.

Unanimously passing CS-17 – adding gender expression to the Constitution, as well as unanimously passing GEN-016 to lobby the government to add gender expression to the Canadian Human Rights act. Additionally, supporting the need to create safe and positive spaces by passing unanimously GEN-017, Gender Neutral Washrooms.

Also an important step forward for acknowledging and supporting our membership's full participation was the passing of GEN-159, Event Accommodation, which addresses issues faced by our members with disabilities and the needs which may not have been accommodated in the past because of a lack of participation in the selection of event facilities.

CS-003A – the committee's recommendation of non-concurrence was not only defeated, but was overturned and carried as concurrence, the new age for Youth participation and recognition is 35. The debate on this well thought out and convincing. I think in the long-run it offers people under 35 the opportunity to get involved and carry through on a mandate to completion. It reflects the changing demographic of our Union.

The Policy Paper on Water that was adopted at the BC Regional Triennial Convention was carried unanimously and now becomes a national Policy.

Also carried unanimously was GEN-052, which broadens the campaign to establish a national enquiry into murdered and missing aboriginal women.

I think that we were helped in getting all of this work done by the limited number of speakers, rather than having a large number of speakers we had only 3 very high quality speakers in Hassan Yussuff, Alex Himelfarb and Béatrice Vaugrante. Caucus meetings, while there were many, were well scheduled to allow as many people as possible to attend and exchange information on their priorities. The rallies (April 28th – National Day of Mourning, Solidarity Rally against the Budget and May Day) were well organized, well attended and positive spaces. As well, while not everyone may have gotten to speak on the resolutions they wanted to, there was respectful limit put on debate by delegates calling the question, allowing the business of the union to get done.

All of the work done and debate was progressive and positive. While there is a small dues increase, I think that the causes that this dues increase supports are important and necessary. The resolutions that were carried on the floor represented leaps forward for our union in carrying on the work that we do to lead the way in Human Rights and Workers' rights. I look forward to seeing these resolutions come to fruition over the next three years.

Again, thanks for the opportunity to represent this council.

In Solidarity,

Jennifer Horsley