

Robert (Bert) Farwell
North Vancouver Island Coordinator's
Report on the
BC Federation of Labour Convention

I was fortunate to be selected by the BC/PSAC to attend this convention from November 24 to 28 2014. This was the second time to the BC Fed Convention so this time I was not so overwhelmed by the 1600 plus delegates on the floor for the first day.

So the first day was important as outgoing president Jim Sinclair took to the podium and gave a long fiery speech right after the opening ceremonies. He touched on many if not all hot topics that are affecting all unions these days. He voiced how much he loved this movement but hates it when we raid and fight each other as it takes our energy away from whom we should be fighting.

Then we got down to the real business of convention committee reports and resolutions. One of the first was narrowly passed by the delegates and caused heated debate over strategic voting on the STOP HARPER campaign.

The Canadian Labour Congress president Hassan Yussuff had a message for our anti-union governments and employers; that got a standing ovation his message was "We're not going to take this any more" (note I did clean that part up a bit) he swore that the CLC will stand in defiance of Bill C377 if it is passed by the Conservative Government. He also stated that if the Conservative Government wants to throw someone in jail they could start with him. All delegates stood and applauded for a long time. It was learnt well if you made it to the microphone and stated that you were a First time Delegate and a First time Speaker you got a round of applause.

The next couple days were filled with more resolutions heated discussions and voted on more resolutions even though as most of these resolutions are based on provincial issues they affect the PSAC members also. More resolutions were worked on some passed some did not some so close we had to do recounts. Not from the lack of trying the resolution to raise the age of youth in the union to 35 years from 30 was defeated. Well we can bring it up again.

We had guest speakers like Tom Muclair National leader of the NDP and John Horgan Provincial leader of the NDP and others help fill up the week's events leading up to Election Day. Even the Grey Cup came to town for the BC Fed Convention

The Fed's new campaign for the \$15.00 an hour minimum wage took hold for most of the morning and even though it was raining hard at lunch we all attended a protest outside the event center.

There was lots of talk about Jim Sinclair's achievement and fights he won and lost and campaigns he fought. Also awards he was given and how we are a better labour

movement because of his leadership. also a new scholarship in Jim's name at SFU for Labour Studies was presented.

Now it is time for BC to change the world of Labour by electing the First Women as the BC Federation of Labour President. A Great debate for by Irene Lanzinger defending her roll with Jim Sinclair and the vision they both can see for BC labour movement. She spoke about the fights she has had with Governments and Employers even her spending the night at the Kit's Coast Guard base even though we lost that one we still fight the fight.

Amber Hokins spoke of change and how he job with the CLC gave her the vision of the new path that the labour movement needs in her beliefs. Some of her ideas where interesting to hear. Her running mate Aaron Ekman at this time had no one running against him. Still they work as a team to try to win it all

Election day the delegates increased up to 2200 members and more that could not register in time the election starts doors tiled, voting finish and then the wait it was a long wait. Finally the results the winner by 57 votes Irene Lanzinger the room erupts in applause Irene Lanzinger thanks Amber for a great campaign she then thanked her supporters and stated that we will all work together to improve the labour movement in BC

Now it is time for the Election of the Secretary Treasurer. One delegated stood up on the floor and announced he will run for this position. He had a disadvantage, as not many of the 2200 delegates knew who he was and lost to Aaron Ekman

PSAC also got a couple members on the BC Federation of Labour Sister Jennifer Chieh HO and Brother Paul Croes congrats to all.