Focus
Key points arising from the CEP National Executive Board Meeting

June 10-12, 2008

A more "activist" convention

The National Executive Board has agreed to some changes in convention proceedings in an effort to ensure that delegates have more opportunity to become engaged in the business of convention. Less time will be allotted to guest speakers, more time for discussion and debate, and a special session on mobilizing will be held near the end of convention. At the mobilizing session, delegates will review convention decisions stemming from resolutions and policy papers, and discuss what actions they can take to help make them a reality.

The NEB is well aware that the further we get away from collective bargaining issues, the more difficult it is to mobilize members. In that vein, the goal of these sessions is to get members and Local executives more interested in political bargaining. Examples include the push for pharmacare and pressuring Petro-Canada to respect pattern bargaining. What cannot be achieved at the bargaining table may often be achievable in the political arena. The ability to engage our activists in this way takes on increasing importance with the dawn of a federal election.

Locals and staff have been informed about the timing of these sessions – Thursday, Oct. 30 from 9am to noon -- so that they do not make plans to leave the convention early.

"Strategic Visions" document

Convention will be presented with a general policy document. It contains several resolutions from the NEB, including calls for:

- Constitutional changes to strengthen group bargaining provisions policies and resources for a national campaign to respond to the manufacturing job loss crisis.
- Adoption of the recommendations of the Organizing Task Force, including a constitutional amendment to shift the % of revenues into the organizing fund from 7 to 8%.
- Political action resolutions on forestry, energy, media, foreign ownership and NAFTA.
- A structural review to facilitate future mergers, and support growth and activism in our union.

Energy policy

CEP is on the cutting edge with its proposal that Canada's gas and oil resources be publicly owned. The proposal is part of NEB's proposed new Energy Policy, updated from the version adopted by convention six years ago. The policy calls for the use of our resources to create jobs in Canada and to provide energy security for Canadians. It says we are in favour of sustainable development in the oil sands, but that the socio-economic and environmental implications of current development should be considered before any new permits are granted.

Forestry campaign

With an eye to a possible fall election, CEP officers will take part in a national tour to mobilize members and communities in 10 selected constituencies affected by the forestry crisis. Aside from the benefits of meeting with affected workers and raising awareness about the crisis and the solutions to it, we want to ensure that the forest crisis will be a vote-determining issue. Our demands include a commitment to a $10 billion investment package for the forest industry and a National Forestry Summit. At least three events are planned in the Atlantic, three in Quebec, one in Ontario and three in the Western Region.

Petro-Canada lockout

The members of Local 175 in Montreal have been locked out for seven months and are more determined than ever to win this fight. Their ongoing militancy has paid off with solid media coverage and public support. The NEB pledged renewed financial aid to this important lockout, and praised these brothers and sisters who are on the front lines of the fight to protect pattern bargaining. Petro-Canada has been found guilty of the illegal use of scab labour and bad-faith bargaining.