



**Report
of the
2008 PSAC Prairie Region
Convention
Winnipeg, Manitoba
June 13-15, 2008**

Friday, June 13th a.m. session

Prior to starting the Convention, Robyn Benson, REVP Prairies, apologized to the National Health Union for not having the right name on the tent card. She explained that they had been done prior to the name change.

Introductions

Robyn called Tracy Theriault, Host Committee Chairperson, who introduced the other Host Committee members:

- Marilyn Lamoureux, UTE
- Vimbai Dune, Agriculture Union
- Matt Tijani, Agriculture Union
- Elaine Montour, UTE
- Debbie Stern, Agriculture Union
- Dawn MacAulay, Agriculture Union
- Darlene McClure, Agriculture Union

Following the introduction, Sister Jackie Oswald sang the O Canada and Solidarity Forever with the delegation.

As the elder Charlie Nelson was sick, Deanna Kimball, REVP Assistant, gave Aboriginal greetings to the delegation and sang an aboriginal song.

Then Sister Darlene Dziejewit, President of the Manitoba Federation of Labour, was introduced to the delegates. She has held this position since September 2005, and has been a long-time member of the MFL Executive Council. Prior to becoming President, Darlene worked for 27 years as a union representative for UFCW Local 832, 17 of which she spent as a full-time negotiator. Darlene was also a founding member of the UFCW Women's Network where she served as the international chairperson from 1999 until 2004. She has served in a leadership capacity with both the provincial and federal New Democratic Party.

Darlene is a member of the Canadian Labour Congress Executive Council. She chairs the Labour Caucus of Manitoba's Labour Management Review Committee. She is currently the chairperson of the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission.

Sister Dziejewit then addressed the delegation.

Sister Benson thanked her and presented her with a gift as a small token of her appreciation.

Then, Robyn introduced Brother Larry Pelzer, President of the Winnipeg Labour Council. Brother Pelzer has been active in the Manitoba labour movement for the past 30 years.

He has been, and continues to be, a very active retired member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1505. He has been on the Winnipeg Labour Council Executive for the past 20 years, was elected President on November 16, 2004, and reelected on November 17, 2007.

Brother Pelzer addressed the delegates and Robyn then thanked him and presented him with a gift as a token of appreciation.

Following the two presentations, Sister Benson officially called the 4th Prairie Region Triennial Convention to order.

She welcomed everyone to her home town. She informed the delegates, observers, guests and staff that at lunch time, there would be a rally to show Vic Toews, Treasury Board President, what we think of his offer at the negotiating table. She also asked individuals to fill out the No Zones postcards that Brother Gordon will be delivering to Mr. Toews. Saturday and Sunday are days of political action. The Oxford room has been set up with computers/petitions/post cards, and Robyn invited everyone to go there throughout the Convention to let their MPs know how they feel.

Just to get to know each other a little, she asked people to raise their hands if they were first-time delegates; if they had attended all four Prairie Regional Conventions; if they were 30 years old or younger. This group was incredibly diversified and included strong unionists.

Sister Benson then went over some administrative and procedural issues to help have a successful Convention.

Any delegate wishing to speak is asked to go to one of the four microphones on the floor. Roving mikes for members who require accommodation are also available. Delegates wanting to use the roving mikes should indicate it to the staff.

When recognized by the Chair, delegates need to provide their delegate number and name. This is important because the Convention is recorded, and the information is required to draft the Convention minutes.

Delegates who require accommodation are asked to self-identify. This is particularly important when the doors are tiled.

Tiling Guidelines

The Tiling Guidelines are included in Convention binders and clearly indicate how members who self-identified as having a disability would be accommodated when the doors are tiled.

All delegates/observers/guests/staff were reminded that they must at all times wear their name tag in order to participate in the Convention. They would also be required to display their name tag when entering the plenary room at all times. Delegates were asked to write their name on the ballot book that they have received at the time of registration, as this ballot book is used for elections and might be used for voting on resolutions. They should also have received their voting cards which will be used for voting on resolutions.

Should delegates have any announcements to make, they should give them to Sister Pat Davis, who will be announcing them prior to each break.

Robyn mentioned that any administration issues that needed to be addressed, for example if there is a problem with the temperature of the room, should be raised with the staff. She thanked everyone in advance for their cooperation.

Minute of Silence

Robyn explained that in our country and in this union, Convention delegates normally stand for a minute of silence to remember our Brothers and Sisters who have passed away.

But not everybody does it the same way. In Spain, for example, delegates stand and applaud. They applaud the contributions of our Sisters and Brothers who have passed away, and they applaud to celebrate our efforts to continue their struggles.

She liked the idea, because in addition to remembering them, it celebrates and honours the work that they have done. So, she asked all Sisters and Brothers in the room to stand up and join her for a minute of applause.

PSAC Policies

PSAC Scent-Free Statement

As people are aware, some individuals have multiple-chemical sensitivities. She asked for everyone's cooperation in creating a "scent-free" learning event, by avoiding the use of scented items, including scented soaps, shampoos, hair care products, deodorants, lotions and shaving products during the union event. The policy was included in participants' binder.

PSAC Smoke-Free Statement

PSAC Policy 39 on smoke-free environment was included in the participants' binder.

PSAC Statement on Harassment

Sister Benson invited Brother Daniel Curotte and Sister Canan Karamanoglou to read the harassment statement, which was included in the binder provided to participants.

She then informed the delegation that O'Neil Carlier and Lisa Garnier would be the Harassment Coordinators during this Convention. Any concerns relating to harassment should be directed to either one of them.

Prairie Region Council

Sister Benson then introduced the members of the Prairie Region Council, and thanked them for their leadership, commitment and their hard work on behalf of all PSAC members in the Prairies.

Manitoba

- Sister Dale Buck
- Brother Gerry Pendulak
- Sister Barb Hall
- Brother Shawn Bergeron

Southern Saskatchewan

- Brother Calvin Veeder
- Brother Satinder Bains

Northern Saskatchewan

- Sister Carol Casey
- Sister Marianne Hladun

Southern Alberta

- Sister Gwen Jackson
- Brother David Pearson

Northern Alberta

- Sister Jo Chelick
- Sister Mary Veilleux, who was unable to attend the Convention as she was in the hospital. She sent her greetings for a successful Convention. A card was circulated to send her our best wishes.

Youth Representative

- Brother Rahil Ahmad

Regional Women's Committee Representative

- Sister Canan Karamanoglou

GLBT Representative

- Brother Timothy Hunt

Persons With Disabilities Representative

- Brother Derek Christensen

Aboriginal Representative

- Brother Daniel Curotte

Racially Visible Representative

- Sister Niru Channan

Directly Chartered Local Representative

- Sister Frances Mohr

Introduction of Special Guests

Robyn then acknowledged members of the NBoD and Component Executives who were in attendance, and welcomed them to Winnipeg.

- Brother John Gordon, PSAC National President;
- Sister Patty Ducharme, PSAC National Executive Vice-President
- Brother John MacLennan, National President, Union of National Defence Employees;
- Sister Mary Chamberlain, Executive Vice-President of the Union of National Defence Employees;
- Brother Mike Wing, National President, Union of Canadian Transportation Employees;
- Brother Daniel Kinsella, National President, National Component;
- Brother Yvan Thauvette, National President of Union of Veterans Affairs' Employees;
- Brother Tony Tilley, National President of National Health Union;
- Sister Claudia Thompson, National President of Natural Resources Union, a member of the Prairie Region and a delegate;
- Sister Janet Letwinka, National Executive Vice-President, Canada Employment and Immigration Union; a member of the Prairie Region and a delegate;
- Brother Mark Brunell, National President, Government Services Union, a member of the Prairie Region and a delegate;
- Sister Betty Bannon, National President of my Component, the Union of Taxation Employees; and
- Deb Jamieson, Canadian Labour Congress.

Staff

Sister Benson also mentioned that PSAC staff from the Prairie Region, staff from other regions and the National Office were also in attendance.

Regional Executive Vice-President Address

Robyn addressed the delegation (Appendix "A").

Appointments to Committees

Sister Benson advised that the Prairie Region Council had appointed the following Nominations Committee and the Credentials Committee.

Nominations Committee

- Brother John Gordon, Chairperson
- Brother Gerald Wiegiers
- Brother Meconnen Beyene
- Sister Bonnie Lo
- Sister Pat Davis, staff advisor

Credentials Committee

- Sister Pat Mason
- Brother Alex George
- Sister Carissa David
- Brother Tom Milne, staff advisor

Credentials Committee Report

m/s Alex George Carissa David

That the following report be adopted:

Delegates	238
Observers	29
Guests and life members	<u>11</u>
TOTAL	278

MOTION CARRIED.

Rules of Order and Tiling Guidelines

m/s Tanya Galenzoski Pat Mason

That the Rules of Order and the Tiling Guidelines be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED.

PSAC National President

Robyn then introduced John Gordon, who was elected National President on May 5, 2006 at the PSAC's 14th Triennial National Convention in Toronto. He had been the Union's National Executive Vice-President since 2000. Before his election, John was the National President of the former Union of Public Works Employees (UPWE) Component (now the Government Services Union) from 1982 to 1999. A PSAC activist since 1974 when he joined the federal public sector as a tradesperson with Public Works Canada, John held a variety of union positions in UPWE. She welcomed John who then addressed the Convention!

Robyn thanked John for his speech, and introduced Jim Silver, Chair of the Department of Politics at the University of Winnipeg. Jim has been teaching for the past 26 years at the University. He is the author of many publications, mostly on poverty and related matters, and the recently-released second edition of Errol Black and Jim Silver, *Building a Better World: An Introduction to Trade Unionism in Canada* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2008).

Robyn thanked Jim for his enlightening words and presented him with a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the Prairie Region members.

Ratification of Convention Committees

By-Laws Committee

m/s Jacqueline Chartrand Ed Janis

That we ratify the composition of the Convention By-Laws Committee as follows:

- Sister Barb Hall, Chair
- Sister Jo Chelick
- Brother David Pearson
- Brother Timothy Hunt
- Sister Mary Veilleux
- Sister Martine Mongeon
- Brother Del Duffield

MOTION CARRIED.

General Resolutions Committee

m/s Gwen Jackson Barb Hall

That we ratify the composition of the Convention General Committee as follows:

- Sister Marianne Hladun, Chair
- Brother Satinder Bains
- Sister Carol Casey
- Brother Rahil Ahmed
- Sister Melissa Brandt

MOTION CARRIED.

Finance/General Resolutions Committee

m/s Terry Dupuis Howard Willems

That we ratify the composition of the Convention Finance/General Resolutions Committee as follows:

- Sister Gwen Jackson, Co-Chair
- Brother Shawn Bergeron, Co-Chair
- Sister Dale Buck
- Sister Fran Mohr
- Brother Gerry Pendulak
- Sister Janet May
- Brother Kerry Williams

MOTION CARRIED.

Referral of Resolutions to Appropriate Committees

m/s Barb Hall Karen Gislason

That all resolutions be referred to the appropriate Convention Committees.

MOTION CARRIED.

Adoption of Agenda

m/s Rob Coffee Niru Channan

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED.

Adoption of the Prairie Region Council and Committee Reports

m/s Terry Dupuis Joanne Chelick

That the Prairie Region Council and Committee Reports be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED.

Announcements were then made, and Convention adjourned for lunch.

Friday, June 13th p.m. session

Credentials Committee Report

m/s Pat Mason Alex George

That the following report be adopted:

Delegates	263
Observers	32
Guests and life members	<u>14</u>
 TOTAL	 309

Robyn explained the process for debating the resolutions.

Further to the explanation, she asked the Convention By-Laws Committee to come to the front.

By-Laws Committee Report

Resolution 55

m/s Barb Hall David Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 55 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Prairie Region By-Law at Section 10, Sub-Section (3) be amended to afford Prairie Region Triennial Convention delegate status to the PSAC members, from the Prairies who are elected to the Equal Opportunities Committee as Equity Representatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this change takes effect immediately.

RATIONALE

As these members are afforded delegate status as per Section 19, Sub-Section (7)(a) of the PSAC Constitution to the PSAC Triennial Convention, the Committee felt that they should have delegate status to the Prairie Region Convention as well. It should be noted that these members have delegate status in other Regions based on their By-Laws indicating National Officers versus ours which reads Component National Officers at Section 10, Sub-Section (3).

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Resolution 56

m/s Barb Hall David Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 56 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Prairie Region By-Law Section 10, Sub-Section (3) be amended to afford Prairie Region Triennial Convention delegate status to the PSAC members from the Prairie Region who are elected to the National Aboriginal, Inuit, Métis (NAIM) Circle; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this change takes effect immediately.

RATIONALE

The NAIM Circle members are considered to be National Leaders. It should be noted that these members have delegate status in other Regions based on their By-Laws indicating National Officers versus ours which reads Component National Officers at Section 10, Sub-Section (3).

MOTION CARRIED.

The EOC and NAIM delegates joined the floor.

Credentials Committee Report

m/s Pat Mason Alex George

That the following report be adopted:

Delegates	267
Observers	28
Guests and life members	<u>14</u>
 TOTAL	 309

Resolution 63

m/s Barb Hall David Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 63 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Prairie Region Council be comprised of:

REVP	1
Alt REVP	1
1 Rep from Each AC	8
1 Geographic Rep (N&S)	6
1 RWC	1
1 DCL	1
1 Separate Employer	1
1 Rep for Each Equity Group	4
1 Youth	1
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Total	24

RATIONALE

The proposed structure would ensure that the Prairie Region Council be more inclusive with the addition of Area Councils and Separate Employer representatives. The increase in representatives will enhance the ability of the Prairie Region Council to represent all the needs and realities of the membership.

m/s Gary Esslinger Kerry Williams

That this resolution be divided to deal with Separate Employer separately.

MOTION CARRIED.

m/s Gina Martin Ivie Glen Johnston

That this resolution be referred back to the Committee with instructions for the By-Laws Committee to look at the possibility of having more than one representative.

MOTION CARRIED.

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the resolution, with the exception of the Separate Employer representative, which now reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Prairie Region Council be comprised of:

REVP	1
Alt REVP	1
1 Rep from Each AC	8
1 Geographic Rep (N&S)	6
1 RWC	1
1 DCL	1
1 Rep for Each Equity Group	4
1 Youth	1
	<hr/>
Total	23

m/s Gwen Jackson Terry Dupuis

That the previous question be now put.

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION CARRIED WITHOUT THE SEPARATE EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE.

Finance/General Resolutions Committee Report

Budget

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the three-year budget as proposed.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 48

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee’s recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 48 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC immediately establish a hardship committee to provide temporary assistance and funding to members suffering hardship due to prescription costs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT PSAC work with the employer to have members suffering hardship due to the delay in issuing the drug card, placed as a priority onto the new plan.

RATIONALE

The Committee agrees with the rationale as stated in the Whereas. Some members have suffered due to the prolonged implementation and delay of the implementation of the medical prescription card; and some members are required to lay out huge monetary amounts to receive the necessary drugs for themselves and families.

m/s Marianne Hadlun Michelle Coe

That this resolution be divided and that the two BE IT RESOLVEDs be dealt with separately.

MOTION CARRIED.

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in the first BE IT RESOLVED of Resolution 48 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC immediately establish a hardship committee to provide temporary assistance and funding to members suffering hardship due to prescription costs.

MOTION CARRIED.

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in the second BE IT RESOLVED of Resolution 48 which reads as follows:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT PSAC work with the employer to have members suffering hardship due to the delay in issuing the drug card, placed as a priority onto the new plan.

m/ Marie Kennedy

That this resolution be amended by including the elimination of the \$1 convenience fee.

Robyn ruled this amendment out of order as it changes the intent of the resolution.

SECOND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED CARRIED.

Resolution 31 (First Be it Resolved)

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 31 (First Be it Resolved) which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC Prairie Regional Convention becomes fully funded by PSAC, by decision of the PSAC Triennial National Convention.

RATIONALE

All PSAC Conventions should be fully funded and costs to attend for delegates should be paid by PSAC.

m/s Karen Gislason Marie Kennedy

That the previous question be now put.

MOTION CARRIED.

MAIN MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 47 (First Be It Resolved)

m/s Gwen Jackson Fran Mohr

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 47 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT in the PSAC Constitution under Section 24 titled Finances and Collection of Dues that Sub-Section (7) be removed.

Sub-Section (7)

"Notwithstanding Sub-Sections (1) and (5) of this Section, members who receive remuneration during a legal strike of their bargaining unit, shall be required to remit 25% of the remuneration they receive from the employer for each day worked during the legal strike to the PSAC. The monies received under this Sub-Section shall be set aside for a Hardship Fund. Such Fund shall be governed by Regulations adopted by the NBOD.

RATIONALE

The Committee agrees with the rationale as stated in the Whereas. The collection of remuneration of members under this Sub-Section has not been applied consistently and respectfully; and there has been no enforcement of this Sub-Section against members or the Components who have not complied. The very purpose of the funds collected has created in itself a hardship.

m/s Derek Christensen Glen Johnston

That the previous question be now put.

MOTION CARRIED.

A standing vote was requested by the Chair.

MAIN MOTION DEFEATED.

Resolution 42

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 42 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the PSAC schedule its training and education during the regular work week; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the PSAC reimburse its members for any incurred loss of salary during this training.

RATIONALE

The Committee agrees with the rationale as stated in the Whereas. Education and training is the most important aspect of keeping our Union strong and providing a venue for our Youth of tomorrow; and the PSAC has one of the best, if not the best, membership training programs in the trade union movement; and the majority of the PSAC training courses are provided during weekends.

m/s Alain Courcelles Ed Janis

That the previous question be now put.

MOTION CARRIED.

Barb Hall requested a standing vote:

Vote Results

Yes 123

No 109

MAIN MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 45

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 45 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the PSAC raise its training allowance to \$50.00 per training day for members that attend PSAC weekend training courses.

RATIONALE

The Committee agrees with the rationale as stated in the Whereas. Over the years, costs incurred by members from the metropolitan area who have participated in PSAC education courses have significantly increased.

MOTION CARRIED.

General Resolutions Committee Report

COMPOSITE RESOLUTION 1A

m/s Marianne Hladun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Composite Resolution 1A which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT all Alternate REVPs in each Region be accredited as full delegates to the PSAC Triennial Convention, with full voice and vote; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this would take effect upon adoption of this resolution at the PSAC Triennial Convention in 2009.

RATIONALE

The Committee recognizes that A/REVPs may be called upon at any time to step into a critical leadership role and therefore not only need to be aware of decisions made at the PSAC Triennial Convention but the debate surrounding the disposition of resolutions.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 15

m/s Marianne Hladun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 15 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the NBoD strike a committee to re-visit our Union's name and come up with recommendations for the 2012 PSAC Convention.

RATIONALE

The committee recognizes that this debate has been ongoing and the resolution would formalize the process for debate at PSAC Triennial Convention in 2012.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 10

m/s Marianne Hladun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 10 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC formally recognizes Youth (members under 30) as an equity-seeking group within the Public Service Alliance of Canada; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the PSAC would amend all of its national committee and Convention structures to reflect youth as an equity-seeking group; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the PSAC would establish a PSAC Youth Conference, once in each triennial period, commencing between 2010 and 2012, with the delegate entitlement set at utilizing the same formula as the PSAC Pride Conference.

RATIONALE

The Committee confirmed with the submitting body that the intent of "*reflect youth as an equity-seeking group*" would afford the group, the same entitlements as the other Equity Representatives currently elected at the Access, Pride, Racially Visible and Aboriginal Conferences.

The Committee acknowledges that there is no national forum for youth and that it is vital that we make a commitment to ensure that youth have equal access to participate and guide the affairs of our union.

m/s Howard Willems Barb Hall

That the resolution be divided to deal with the first two BE IT RESOLVEDs and the third BE IT RESOLVED separately.

m/s Marianne Hadlun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in the first two BE IT RESOLVEDs of Resolution 10 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC formally recognizes Youth (members under 30) as an equity-seeking group within the Public Service Alliance of Canada; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the PSAC would amend all of its national committee and convention structures to reflect youth as an equity-seeking group.

MOTION DEFEATED.

m/s Marianne Hadlun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in the third BE IT RESOLVED of Resolution 10 which reads as follows:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the PSAC would establish a PSAC Youth Conference, once in each triennial period, commencing between 2010 and 2012, with the delegate entitlement set at utilizing the same formula as the PSAC Pride Conference.

MOTION CARRIED.

Saturday, June 14th a.m. session

Credentials Committee Report

m/s Carissa David Pat Mason

That the following report be adopted:

Delegates	270
Observers	28
Guests and life members	<u>15</u>
 TOTAL	 313

A video on political action and various activities undertaken by the Prairie Region was presented to the delegation.

Point of Privilege – Irene Berube

As a member of UEW, I encourage delegates to read the one pager on the fish campaign to pressure the government to act. Please fill the post card and send it to Stephen Harper or do it through the web site.

General Resolutions Committee Report

Resolution 13

m/s Carol Casey Melissa Brandt

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 13 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT two national equity representatives for women's issues be elected at each National Women's Conference to sit on the PSAC Equal Opportunities Committee and that these representatives be accorded the same rights and responsibilities as the current 8 equity representatives that are elected at the Aboriginal, Racially Visible, Pride and Access Conferences.

RATIONALE

While the 8 equity representatives elected at Conferences have achieved gender parity, the current structure does not provide for a member to take a leadership role on women's issues. The PSAC EOC should include all groups recognized by the *Employment Equity Act*.

m/s Adriane Nowicki Terri Dupuis

That the previous question be now put.

MOTION CARRIED.

MAIN MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 12

m/s Marianne Hadlun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 12 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC offices support the delivery of clean water as a public service and eliminate the practice of purchasing bottled water; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT PSAC educate the membership on the issue of clean water remaining a public service by incorporating the issue into educationals and/or newsletters.

RATIONALE

The Committee agrees that we need to commit to a position and show our support for ensuring water remains in the public domain and that clean water should be accessible to everyone. In consultation with the submitting body, we were given permission to change the resolution to delete the word "offices".

m/s Wally Fandrich Lorne Roslinski

That the resolution be divided to deal with the two BE IT RESOLVEDs separately.

MOTION DEFEATED.

m/s Alain Courcelles Martine Mongeon

That the previous question be now put.

MOTION CARRIED.

MAIN MOTION CARRIED.

At this point, John Gordon provided information on the procedures for the elections that will be held in the afternoon.

Finance Committee Report

Resolution 46

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 46 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT all members in consultation and concurrence with their respective Components, have the right and the option as a Component, to provide to their respective Components, that portion of their dues that is currently being allocated to the PSAC Education Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the PSAC, upon notification from a Component to exercise this option, remit all of those members fees dedicated to education back to that Component.

RATIONALE

The Committee feels that it is necessary to have Convention as a whole debate the issue.

m/s Gerald Wiegiers Nick Markowsky

That this resolution be tabled as it is already in the Constitution.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 28

m/s

Shawn Bergeron

Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 28 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the budget of the Prairie Region Council be posted on the Prairie Region website.

RATIONALE

Technically, it is currently available by way of the posting of the Financial Statements with the Budget, Actual and Variance figures. However, the Committee feels that for clarity the actual budget from Convention should be posted on the website.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 29

m/s

Shawn Bergeron

Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 29 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the budget variance report of the Prairie Region Council be posted on the Prairie Region website quarterly.

RATIONALE

While the financial information is currently on the website, the intent of the resolution is that this information be updated or posted on a quarterly basis.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 39

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 39 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC lobby the CLC to staff a 2nd Regional Representative position in Saskatchewan.

RATIONALE

The Committee agrees with the rationale as stated in the Whereas. The Canadian Labour Congress Regional Representatives are a vital link to bring together the trade union movement in communities across this country.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 40

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 40 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC endorse a single affiliation fee that would entitle Locals to be affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress, their respective Federation of Labour and District Labour Council.

RATIONALE

The Committee agrees with the rationale stated in the Whereas. We should be participating in the various levels of the union movement.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 41

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 41 which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC undertake an environmental assessment of our union offices (Headquarters and Regional Offices) and develop a strategic plan for implementing environmentally-responsible protocols for operations of these offices such as, but not limited to, elimination of the use of disposable styrofoam and plastic products, purchasing of recycled paper products and use of recycling bins.

The following member wishes to be recorded against the Committee's recommendation:

Sister Dale Buck

RATIONALE

The Committee agrees with the rationale as stated in the Whereas. Unions play an important role in our communities and need to show leadership both to our membership and our communities; and issues of the environment are very important to our members and to the well-being of our communities.

m/s Michelle Browns Bonnie Lo

That the BE IT RESOLVED be divided so that the first part would read as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED that PSAC undertake an environmental assessment of our union offices (Headquarters and Regional Offices).

m/s Shawn Bergeron Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in the first part of the BE IT RESOLVED of Resolution 41.

MOTION DEFEATED.

m/s

Shawn Bergeron

Gwen Jackson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in the second part of the BE IT RESOLVED of Resolution 41, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC develop a strategic plan for implementing environmentally-responsible protocols for operations of these offices such as, but not limited to, elimination of the use of disposable styrofoam and plastic products, purchasing of recycled paper products and use of recycling bins.

MOTION CARRIED.

By-Laws Committee Report

Resolution 63

m/s

Barb Hall

Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** to add one representative for separate employers on the Prairie Region Council.

RATIONALE

The Committee fully supports the need for one separate employer representative on the Prairie Region Council to deal with specific issues of members who work for separate employers.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 52 (which covers Late Resolution 72)

m/s

Barb Hall

Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 52 (which covers Late Resolution 72), which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the By-Laws of the Prairie Region Council be amended to require that:

- a) all reports made by members of the Prairie Region Council to the Prairie Region Council and to the PSAC National Board of Directors shall be made in writing and shall be posted on the Prairie Region web site quarterly; and
- b) the expenses of individual members of the Prairie Region Council shall not be reimbursed until said member has provided the required written report(s).

RATIONALE

This is a measurable way of understanding and reviewing the activities of the Prairie Region Council. It is part of the accountability and transparency process that is necessary to an active and informed movement. Timely information for local leadership and membership to see, and reference is critical to the success of building a stronger movement. Those who are elected by the membership need to report back to the membership on a regular basis, as it is critical to the success of building a strong grassroots movement.

m/s Todd Panas Pat Todd

That the BE IT RESOLVED be divided and dealt with separately.

A standing vote was requested.

Vote Results

Yes	79
No	135

MOTION TO DIVIDE DEFEATED.

m/s Deb Sutton Petrina Runns

That the previous question be now put.

MOTION CARRIED.

MAIN MOTION DEFEATED.

Resolution 65 (which covers Resolution 66)

m/s Barb Hall Timothy Hunt

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 65 (which covers Resolution 66), and which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT delegates to the Prairie Region Convention are based on one delegate for every 100 members per Component in the Prairie Region; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that delegates to the Prairie Region Convention are based on one delegate for every 100 members per Directly Chartered Locals, in the Prairie Region.

RATIONALE

The Committee members recognize that representation at the PRC Convention is of prime importance. They also recognize that representation by population may be the only way to ensure full funding for the delegates.

Brother Dave Pearson was recorded as being opposed to the Committee's recommendation.

Barb Hall explained what would result from this resolution, should it be adopted.

Credentials Committee Report

m/s Alex George Carisa David

That the following report be adopted:

Delegates	270
Observers	28
Guests and life members	21
 TOTAL	 <u>319</u>

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 65 (Continued)

m/s Steven Van Opstal Sandy MacDonald

That the previous question be now put.

MOTION CARRIED.

MAIN MOTION DEFEATED.

Resolution 60

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 60, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Prairie Region By-Laws be amended to allow the REVP and Alternate REVP election to be conducted by either the Nomination Chair or a member or former member of the AEC.

Prairie Region By-Law Section 11, Sub-Section 2 (f) would read as follows:

By-Laws Committee Report

Resolution 59

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 59, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT in the following sections of the Prairie Region By-Laws replace the word "Unity" with the term Aboriginal Peoples and Racially Visible Persons:

Section 2

Sub-Section (5) (a), (b), (d)

Sub-Section (6)

Section 9

Sub-Section (1) (d)

Sub-Section (3) (b)

Section 10

Sub-Section (5)

Section 12

Sub-Section (5)

RATIONALE

This amendment would bring the Prairie Region By-Laws in line with the PSAC Constitution.

Point of Order – Brandt

Some Sub-Section numbers are incorrect and are not in accordance with the PSAC Constitution.

Point of Order well taken by the chair

Robyn informed the delegates that the By-Laws would be amended to reflect the PSAC Constitution.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 53 (which covers Late Resolution 73)

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 53 (which covers Late Resolution 73), and which reads as follows:

The PSAC – Prairie Region will:

Ensure that minutes of all Prairie Region Council meetings, budgets, etc. – including conference calls for committees be posted on the web site for all members to see within one month of the meeting.

RATIONALE

The committee acknowledged that the posting of all minutes is already the practice in the Prairie Region, to ensure transparency of the work being done by the Council.

m/s Michael Ell Shawn Bergeron

That this resolution be referred back to the Committee with instructions to remove the word "etc.".

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 54

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** on a) and c) of Resolution 54, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the By-Laws of the Prairie Regional Council be amended to require that:

- a) The budget of all Committees (Human Rights Committee, Area Council, Regional Women’s Committee, etc.) be published on the appropriate web site once the budget has been passed.
- b) Quarterly budget variance reports of all Committees previously referred to be posted on the appropriate web site; and
- c) The reports of each Chair shall be in writing and shall be published on the appropriate web site.

RATIONALE

The Committee felt that the posting of the budgets of all our various committees and Area Councils would provide the membership with the transparency that they require.

m/s Linda Goring Terry Dupuis

That this resolution be referred back to the Committee with instructions to remove the brackets in a) – *Human Rights Committee, Area Council, Regional Women’s Committee, etc.*

MOTION CARRIED.

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

The Committee agreed to remove those words, and therefore, recommends **CONCURRENCE** on a) and c) of Resolution 54, which now reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the By-Laws of the Prairie Regional Council be amended to require that:

- a) The budget of all Committees be published on the appropriate web site once the budget has been passed.
- b) The reports of each Chair shall be in writing and shall be published on the appropriate web site.

MOTION CARRIED AS AMENDED.

Results of the first ballot – Alternate REVP Position

Ballots cast	277
Spoiled ballots	37

Marianne Hladun 191
Bill Osborne 49

Marianne Hladun has been elected Alternate Regional Executive Vice-President for the Prairie Region.

m/s Don Pearson Sandy MacDonald

That the ballots be destroyed.

MOTION CARRIED.

John Gordon administered the oath of office to both Sisters Benson and Hladun.

Resolution 53 (which covers Late Resolution 73) - Continued

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

The Committee met and agreed to remove the word "etc.". Therefore, that the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 53 (which covers Late Resolution 73), which now reads as follows:

The PSAC – Prairie Region will:

Ensure that minutes of all Prairie Region Council meetings, budgets – including conference calls for committees be posted on the web site for all members to see within one month of the meeting.

MOTION CARRIED AS AMENDED.

Resolution 58

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 58, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the words "lives, works or is a member of a Local in the Prairie Region" be deleted from Section 10, Sub-Section (3).

RATIONALE

The Committee recognizes that the PSAC Constitution covers the delegate status for Regional Conventions in Section 19, Sub-Section (5) however this ensures that our By-Laws are compatible.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 61

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee’s recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 61, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Section 19 of the PSAC Constitution be amended to provide for the election of five delegates to the PSAC National Triennial Convention from each of the seven PSAC Regional Councils.

RATIONALE

The PSAC is made up of seven regions and all seven regions have their own Regional Council that represents and acts on behalf of their regional members. Therefore it is more than reasonable that each Regional Council be allowed to send Regional Council members to the PSAC National Triennial Convention as a delegate with full voice and vote to represent their regional members. This would enhance the spirit of regionalization the PSAC has enshrined.

m/s Carisa David Steven Van Opstal

That the previous question be now put.

MOTION CARRIED.

MAIN MOTION DEFEATED.

Resolution 67

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 67, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Section 6, Sub-Section (3), Sub-Section (4), Sub-Section (5) and Sub-Section (6) of the PSAC Prairie Region By-Laws be amended to remove the provision that Prairie Region Council Representatives submit financial reports of their budget.

RATIONALE

Prairie Region Council members do not have individual budgets, therefore, cannot submit financial reports on their budget. It should be noted that the REVP's office provides financial statements at each PRC meeting, and these are available to all members on the web site.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 68

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 68, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Section 6, Sub-Section (1), Sub-Section (2), Sub-Section (3), Sub-Section (4), Sub-Section (5) and Sub-Section (6) of the PSAC Prairie Region By-Laws be amended to add "promote affiliation to and participation in Federations of Labour and District Labour Councils" to the roles and responsibilities of all Prairie Region Council members.

RATIONALE

Federations of Labour and District Labour Councils provide support to affiliated Unions during labour disputes and coordinates cross-union campaigns on many issues including health and safety, political action and human rights; and the

PSAC Prairie Region would benefit from association with these organizations. The Committee felt that it is the responsibility of all of the Council members to promote the Federations of Labour and District Labour Councils.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 69

m/s Barb Hall Alex Pearson

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 69, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the PSAC Constitution be amended to allow Regions to amend their By-Laws to allow for the election a Second Alternate Regional Executive Vice-President if they so chose.

RATIONALE

The election of a second A/REVP at each PSAC Regional Convention would be proactive and would prevent the costly and laborious task of running an election for a Second A/REVP after a PSAC Regional Convention if the need should arise. This election would be in keeping with the election of the PSAC Alternate National Executive Vice-President at the PSAC National Triennial Convention.

m/s Deb Sutton Mike Vanson

That the previous question be now put.

MOTION CARRIED.

MAIN MOTION CARRIED.

General Resolutions Committee

Resolution 3

m/s Marianne Hladun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 3, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the PSAC work to reverse the pension pay out to children of members without a spouse so that the pay would be equivalent to the pay out of a spouse; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the PSAC initiate a plan of action to achieve the equivalency within the next six (6) months.

RATIONALE

The Committee understood the resolution to be requesting that a plan of action is to be undertaken within the next six months and as such agrees that the division of benefits to children of members is inequitable and needs to be addressed.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 9

m/s Marianne Hladun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 9, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the default dispute settlement route for all bargaining units that have the option of dispute settlement route be set as conciliation/strike route as compared to binding arbitration.

RATIONALE

The Committee recognizes that Regulation 15 currently contains a provision to change the dispute settlement route. Members still have their right before each round of bargaining to request a change through the current process outlined in Regulation 15.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 14

m/s Marianne Hladun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 14, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Convention sponsor a resolution to the PSAC Triennial National Convention that the term:

'Heterosexism' (the presumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to other forms of loving)

Be replaced with the following term:

'Heterosexism' (an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship or community).

RATIONALE

The Committee believes that this resolution clarifies and expands on the definition.

MOTION CARRIED.

Prairie Region Honours and Awards

Sister Benson explained to the delegates that the objective of the Prairie Region Honours and Awards Program is to recognize PSAC members, PSAC staff or outside allies for their commitment to the labour movement that benefits PSAC members in the Prairie Region. The award is called the "Prairie Voice Award".

She first presented a special award to Brian Molsberry who has provided exemplary service to PSAC members by showing initiative, leadership and dedication to the labour movement, and to particularly the members of the Prairie Region.

Brian thanked Robyn and the delegation.

General Resolutions Committee

Resolution 20

m/s Marianne Hladun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 20, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Local representatives receive from the Alliance a summary of the comments made by their members, on the ballots cast at a ratification vote; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of the summary of the applicable report be forwarded to the Local, at the same time this report is forwarded to the Alliance National Office.

RATIONALE

The Committee understood the resolution to be requesting that information be provided to Local Officers (Executives) in order to provide better representation to their members. The Committee agrees that by sharing this information, Local Executives will be able to target strategies in between bargaining rounds to strengthen their Locals.

MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution 21

m/s Marianne Hladun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 21, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC initiate an immediate membership awareness and political action campaign in order to force immediate implementation of the medical prescription cards.

RATIONALE

The Committee notes that there is a campaign currently in process. Members should refer to <http://petition.web.net/psac/node/8> for more information and to send a letter online to their MP.

Resolution 23

m/s Marianne Hladun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee's recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 23, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the National Joint Council meeting minutes be issued within 30 days of the date the meeting was held; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the PSAC immediately distribute the minutes to all of the Components upon receipt.

RATIONALE

The Committee acknowledges that minutes of the National Joint Council directly affect members and their workplaces. Members need to be in timely receipt of minutes.

Resolution 24

m/s Marianne Hladun Carol Casey

That the Convention adopt the Committee’s recommendation of **CONCURRENCE** in Resolution 24, which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Regional Executive Vice-President for the Prairie Region chair a minimum of one conference call per year for all Area Council Presidents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Prairie Region fund a face-to-face conference for Area Council Presidents (or respective alternates) and the REVP once during each three-year period between Regional Conventions.

RATIONALE

The Committee notes that this would become a resolution of record and that it is past practice. The budget that will be presented to convention delegates allows funding for implementation of this resolution.

MOTION CARRIED.

Saturday, June 15th a.m. session

Credentials Committee Report

m/s Pat Mason Carisa David

That the following report be adopted:

Delegates	283
Observers	27
Guests and life members	<u>21</u>
TOTAL	331

MOTION CARRIED.

Prairie Regional Convention Election Results

At this point, the following election results were provided to the Prairie Region delegation:

Separate Employers

Representative	Clint Wirth
Alternate	Jacques Legare

Directly Chartered Locals

Representative	Fran Mohr
Alternate	Petrina Runns

North AB

Representative	Mary Veilleux
Alternate	Jo Chelick

South AB

Representative	Heike McRae
Alternate	Bill Osborne

North SK

Representative	Nancy Johnson
Alternate	Rob Coffee

South SK

Representative	Rahil Ahmad
Alternate	Steve Van Opstal

Manitoba South & East

Representative	Gerry Pendulak
Alternate	Shawn Bergeron

Manitoba North & West

Representative	Glen Johnston
Alternate	Barb Kristjansson

RWC

Representative	Tanya Galenzoski
1 st Alternate	Nina Kiviluoma
2 nd Alternate	Vimbai Dune-Chitohwa

Racially Visible

Representative	Satinder Bains
1 st Alternate	Imy Bhatti
2 nd Alternate	Carisa David

Aboriginal

Representative	Daniel Curotte
1 st Alternate	Trista Ross
2 nd Alternate	Alisha Bigelow

Persons with Disabilities

Representative	Frank Lloyd
1 st Alternate	Gerry Pendulak
2 nd Alternate	Deborah Foster

Youth

Representative	Chad Kemery
1 st Alternate	Bonnie Lo
2 nd Alternate	Josh Belanger

GLBT

Representative	Timothy Hunt
1 st Alternate	Garth Caron
2 nd Alternate	Joel Klassen

Robyn administered the oath of office to all newly-elected or reelected representatives.

m/s Tanya Galenzoski Paulette Gaudet

That the ballots be destroyed.

MOTION CARRIED.

Prairie Voice Award

Robyn presented the other Prairie Voice Award to the following individuals for the exemplary service they have provided to PSAC members:

- Lanie Ferjan, UTE Local 50021
- Timothy Hunt, CEUDA Branch 30036

- Gwen Jackson, UTE Local 30024
- Janet Letwinka, CEIU Local 408111
- Jackie Oswald, USGE Local 40062
- Bonnie Suter, CEIU Local 30851
- Tracy Theriault, UTE Local 50031
- Gail Chafe, Administrative Assistant, PSAC Calgary Regional Office
- May Saunders, Administrative Assistant, PSAC Edmonton Regional Office

Robyn informed the delegation that the following members would receive their Prairie Voice Award at their next Annual General Meeting:

- Sharon Potyok, USGE Local 30168
- Mike Tennant, UCTE Local 30318

She then announced that \$2,382 had been raised for the Winnipeg Harvest.

Sister Benson thanked everyone for a great Convention. She particularly thanked Marianne Hladun and Carol Casey for compiling the video showing the activities of the Region on various issues. She encouraged members to continue to work in their workplaces, in their communities, and to continue to fight for the issues they believe in. She also encouraged members to mobilize and to fight in order to get a good collective agreement. She reminded members that defending quality public services is very important in our daily lives.

She also reminded members that a major rally is being organized on June 19th.

m/s Pat Mason Tanya Galenzoski

That the Convention be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED.

TIME: 1:45 P.M.

Address
to the
Prairie Region Convention
by
Robyn Benson
Regional Executive Vice-President, Prairies

Sisters and Brothers:

Welcome to all of you from the Plains to the Peaks. Together, we are the heart of the Union. And together, we make a difference.

A difference in the daily lives of our members, and of working people across Canada and beyond. A difference in the communities where we live and work. A difference in the fight for equality, equity, workers' rights and human rights. A difference in the political and economic landscape at the municipal, provincial and national levels.

PSAC is part of a movement that makes a difference for over 160,000 members and their families. As I've said some many times over the last eight years, the PSAC is not "them", it's us. All of us.

And we can all be proud of the work that we have done in Alberta, Saskatchewan and here in my home province of Manitoba.

This is the 4th Prairie Region Convention, and the 3rd that I have had the honour and privilege to open and chair.

It's an honour because it is an opportunity to consider where we have been, what we have done, and to help chart our future plans.

It's a privilege, because it is an opportunity to recognize the hard work of PSAC members and staff in this region. It's a privilege to acknowledge the work of local activists, committee members and Component Officers that give their time, energy and their heart to their Union, day in and day out. It's a privilege to acknowledge and thank the Prairie Region Council for their leadership over the past three years, and the work they have done on behalf of the members in this region. It's a privilege to thank the staff for their tireless work on behalf of all of us.

And it's an opportunity to acknowledge that it is each and everyone of you who make a difference when it comes to defending human rights, health and safety, collective bargaining, social justice and political action.

And it's an opportunity to thank each and everyone of you for being fearless in the face of challenges and for not giving up the fight.

Sisters and Brothers, the last three years have been a challenge for our Union, to say the least.

Three years during which many—too many—of our employers have used their power to intimidate the 20,000 plus member we represent from the plains to the peaks. Three years during which our employers tabled concessions at the bargaining table.

Three years during which governments have attacked the rights of working people, paid lip service to human rights and women's equality and undermined our employment security.

For the past three years, we have stood strong in the face of these attacks on our acquired rights, and I can proudly say that we have not signed one collective agreement that extracted concessions from our members.

That's a record that will be difficult to maintain in the face of the Harper government and a slowing economy.

But Sisters and Brothers, it's a record that we can and must maintain by saying NO to the 1.5% and 1.2% wage increases that Treasury Board has in mind for PSAC members across the public sector. There is not one delegate, observer or guest in the room who will accept the government's wage offer as anything but an insult, and we are all resolved to fight for a fair wage increase.

Harper and Toews can take that to the bank.

For the past three years, we have held the federal government to account whenever they have moved to cut jobs, eliminate or privatize public services, undermine women's equality and undermine the social and economic situation of our Aboriginal Peoples.

And as the PSAC Officer responsible for women's equality, I can proudly say that the PSAC has taken the lead and helped support organizations such as the:

- National Association of Women and the Law;
- Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women;

- Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada;
- Feminist Alliance for International Action

in the face of a government that has gone so far as to eliminate “equality” from the mandate of its own agency responsible for women.

Members in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have fought back and said no to the federal government’s privatization and anti-worker agenda.

And sooner or later, we will have an opportunity to take the fight to the ballot box and deny Harper a majority and hopefully even a minority government.

Despite the fact that the Harper government is falling in the polls as the economy, rising gas prices and the fear of an economic downturn dominate the political agenda, we have a huge responsibility on our shoulders.

We need to ensure that the 20,000 plus members in the Prairies understand the issues and why it’s important to elect labour-friendly candidates.

We need MPs who understand the importance of public service and who will protect and advance labour rights.

Across the Prairies, PSAC and PSAC leaders and activists at the local and regional levels are ready, willing and able to mobilize our membership and engage in the federal election.

We have a challenge ahead of us, but with your hard work, dedication and commitment, I know that we can prevail.

While elections are important, political action does not start when the writ is dropped, and it does not end on e-day.

Given who we are, where many of us work, and the issues that confront us, day in and day out, we have to be actively engaged on the political action front on a continual basis if we are to protect workers’ rights and defend quality public services. In the Prairie Region, I am proud to say that we do just that.

- Our Saskatoon Area Council took up the anti-TILMA cause, and they succeeded.
- We took on the building sell-off in Calgary and Edmonton.
- In Manitoba, we are at the centre of the fight to stop the government from legislating an end to the inward inspection and weighing of grain.

When right-wing governments come to power, the first thing they do is undermine workers' rights and public services. Harper did it and we fought back.

The Saskatchewan party is doing it, and we are fighting back as part of a concerted labour campaign against Bills 5 and 6.

What happens where we live and work is incredibly important.

Our quality of work and our economic security is at stake each and every time we negotiate. We are all diminished when governments cut services at the federal, provincial and municipal levels.

But our commitment, dedication and activism should not end at our provincial or national border.

As trade unionists, we are rightly appalled when confronted by the conditions that the overwhelming majority of people born in Sub-Saharan Africa have to endure for what are often incredibly short lives.

- When we hear about HIV AIDS and its truly devastating consequences;
- When the United Nations and others talk about famine in so many of the world's communities; and
- When we could the refugees from the many countries at war with themselves, I am reminded that we live in a global community and that we can, must and should act.

That's why I am proud of the Union movement in this country for the incredible work that it has done at the central labour body, affiliate and local levels.

Within the PSAC, we were a little late to the process, but when we entered the fray, we entered it in a focused and proactive way through the Social Justice Fund.

I want to acknowledge the work we have done in the Prairies on social justice, and your active participation in the Social Justice Fund.

When it comes to social justice abroad, Unions make a difference—but the biggest difference we can make is to lobby our government to live up to its international commitment to increase its foreign aid to 0.7% of Gross Domestic Product.

I said that Unions make a difference, and they do. But Sisters and Brothers, not everything the Union engages in turns to gold. We have suffered two setbacks on the legal front over the last little while at the hands of judges who simply don't get pay equity and the Public Sector Superannuation Plan.

Well, I don't get how a public corporation like Canada Post can get away with paying unequal pay for equal work, or how the government of Canada can get away with paying down the debt by expropriating 30 billion dollars of our pension surplus. But, we will continue to fight.

Before closing, I want to say that the PSAC is welcoming new members almost every day, and that we will continue to organize and bring new members into the PSAC. They are voting to join us because we have a solid track record at the bargaining table, we don't waiver when it comes to representing members at the workplace, and we are democratic, progressive and socially and politically engaged.

Delegates to this Convention have a lot of work to do that will help frame our Union in the Prairie Region for the next three years.

I would like to commend that thank the Council for working well together over the past three years. I don't think that it will come as a surprise to delegates that we are going to face significant challenges over the next three years.

It is clear that bargaining will continue to be a challenge this time around with a whole host of employers, and I fully believe the members and leaders in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba will lead the way.

Thank you, and have a great Convention!