



## CEP Atlantic Communications Council Membership Bulletin January 16, 2006

The Executive Board of CEPACC would like to wish you and your family a Happy New Year. 2005 proved to be a very challenging year of changes and adjustment for both Rank & File and Executive Board members. We don't believe that 2006 is going to be an easy year dealing with the issues that are bound to occur at Aliant. All indications are that we are in for another tough year of contracting out and workplace changes, not to mention all the other problems that arise each and every day. However, we will take them as they come and work with you to resolve each and every one. We will issue a bulletin in the very near future to keep you informed of the changes that have already occurred.

But today, we want to talk to you about another important issue, one that affects us all. As you know, January 23, 2006 is Election Day in Canada and there are many issues being discussed in this election campaign that are important to working Canadians like us. Some of these topics, while we probably didn't give much thought to them before, suddenly became very important when we were on strike in 2004. Now is the time to address them for the future. The Council isn't endorsing any particular political party but we are asking you to think about these issues when deciding whom you will support. Find out where the candidates stand on these topics that are important to us as working Canadians and union members. We have a choice and we should all make an informed one. We want MP's who will support our priorities and bring them forward. One vote at a time, we can make a difference.

In solidarity,  
CEPACC Executive Board

For more information, check out the CLC website at [www.betterchoice.ca](http://www.betterchoice.ca)

**•Anti-Scab Legislation:** If there had been anti-scab legislation in place in 2004, our strike would have been a very different one. A much more effective one! It certainly would not have lasted 5 long months and we probably would have had better results. Aliant brought in scabs from affiliated companies and reportedly from other sources as well. It was extremely frustrating for all members that there was very little we could do to stop it. The use of scabs breeds anger on picket lines that can easily lead to violence and can leave a lingering animosity that can infect a workplace for years. Ask your candidates where they stand on the very important issue of Anti-Scab Legislation!

**•Pay Equity:** This will become an important issue to members who are in female dominated jobs at Aliant. The collective agreement requires a Pay Equity committee to be established which has a mandate to determine many factors, one of which is to perform an audit of wages to determine if an inequity exists. In Canada, on average, a woman earns 72.5 cents for every dollar a man earns. Women of colour, women with disabilities and aboriginal workers face wage gaps that are even larger. There is a federal pay equity law, but it is badly flawed and has failed to get results for women. There needs to be people elected to Ottawa who will fight for a new pay equity law that is fairer to women and other equity seeking groups. When you vote, be sure to choose a party and a candidate that supports women's right to equal pay for work of equal value.

**•Retirement Security:** In the last several weeks, 'Jay's Messages' about cutbacks to benefits, particularly pensions has many of us concerned about where it is all leading for the next collective agreement. Canada needs legislation whereby pension law improves the security of workplace pensions. A serious approach to retirement security would protect existing pensions, expand access to decent pensions and improve the living conditions of today's seniors. Seniors contribute to Canadian society as caregivers, mentors and taxpayers and that should be recognized.

**•Protecting Jobs:** Unfortunately, Atlantic Canadians know only too well the importance of protecting jobs. We watch while jobs are siphoned off into other parts of the country or the world while our young people must leave their homes and families to find work elsewhere. We need well paid, rewarding jobs for people in safe workplaces and it must be the central goal of any national economic policy. The Canadian government has helped create a global economic order where corporate interests trump workers' right and the public interest. In Canada, unemployment insurance, social assistance, minimum wages and labour rights have all been undercut in the name of competitiveness with the U.S. Choose a party with real plans to promote and provide better training opportunities for working people. Labour has much to contribute when it comes to building a new system of learning that puts workers first.

**•Public Health Care...**is everyone's issue. We are at a crossroads when it comes to Medicare in Canada. The next federal government can decide to support Canada's public health care system with bold renewed determination or it can take the conservative way out and allow Medicare to be destroyed through the establishment of a two-tiered health care system across the country. Privatization diminishes accountability to the public for the expenditure of public funds. The same is true of public-private partnerships to operate hospitals and the contracting-out of a wide range of services currently provided within the public health care system. The idea of private care, gains support among the wealthy who want to purchase private insurance that will allow them to get to the front of the line for health care. The effect is to create longer lineups in the public system. Neither waiting lists nor staffing shortages will be cured by for-profit care. We need a federal government that will commit itself to work with provinces to ensure timely access to necessary care. We need a government to act to halt and reverse the establishment of private for-profit clinics, private hospitals and public-private partnerships in health care. Our cherished health care system needs progressive reforms so all Canadians can have access to health care when they need it. This is a fundamental right of ALL Canadians, not only the ones who have the capacity to pay for it.

**Resource for information:**  
[www.betterchoice.ca](http://www.betterchoice.ca)

