

CLC CONVENTION REPORT - K. Chopik

Two representatives of AUCE attended the CLC Convention in Winnipeg in May. Our goals were to lobby for AUCE's entry into the CLC and investigate the processes and potential of a lobbying effort. This report will deal with the various alternatives for continued lobbying, and also evaluate AUCE's position should we ever be affiliated to the CLC.

Over 600 resolutions were submitted to the executive of the CLC for consideration at convention. The resolutions were segregated according to topic, i.e. health and safety organization, constitutional amendments, and turned over to aggregate committees comprised of representatives of various unions. The committee's function was twofold: they combined those resolutions which cover essentially similar motions, and they recommended concurrence or non-concurrence to the convention body. The delegates to the convention do not vote on the resolution, but rather to agree or disagree with the committee's recommendation. This means that resolutions cannot be amended from the floor. If the committee's recommendation is one of concurrence, meaning they suggest that the convention pass the resolution, the wording of the resolution can only be changed by a motion of referral. If the majority of delegates are in favour of referring the motion back to the committee for review, it is withdrawn. Theoretically the amended motion will be presented to convention at a later time; however, since the convention deals with less than two-thirds of the resolutions originally submitted referred motions do not return for consideration.

Also, the CLC is not bound by the resolutions passed at convention. While statements of policy, i.e. condemning wage controls, stand on their own, resolutions entailing financing or action must be dealt with within the budgetary and manpower constraints of the CLC. Thus a resolution calling for a committee to examine an issue may not be implemented.

This procedure directly affects our attempt to affiliate to the CLC. There were two resolutions submitted to the convention which would have allowed non-affiliates into the CLC. The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees submitted resolution 26, which came under The Committee on General Resolutions:

WHEREAS the purpose of the Canadian Labour Congress should be to represent all workers in Canada; and

WHEREAS representation should logically involve active participation of workers in the CLC; and

WHEREAS some worker groups and certified unions are presently excluded from membership in and participation in the CLC;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that membership in the CLC be open to any Canadian union.

Delegates from the Alberta Fed said the resolution was submitted in an attempt for the nurses in Alberta to join the CLC. The resolution did not make it to the floor.

The second resolution, also in the general category, was submitted by the B. C. Fed. Originally it read:



BE IT RESOLVED that the CLC undertake a comprehensive affirmative action program to affiliate to the CLC, the B. C. Federation of Labour and local labour councils all public sector unions located in the Province of B. C.

The Committee, in a supplementary report, amended the resolution to read:

BE IT RESOLVED that the CLC undertake a comprehensive affirmative action program to affiliate to the CLC, the B. C. Federation of Labour and local labour councils all public sector unions located in the Province of B. C., through the recognized affiliate representing such unions.

This resolution was submitted specifically to deal with HEU. CUPE National has informally stated its position that non-affiliates such as HEU and AUCE should not be allowed to affiliate without going through an existing affiliate. Resolution 53 did not make it to the floor. If it had, and if the speakers had been able to convince the delegates to reaffirm its original intent (a major feat), it would have been referred to the committee and buried. An attempt to convince other major unions to support an open affiliation policy is masochistic - while CUPE is the one union with the jurisdiction which theoretically deals with most unorganized workers, all major unions are protected by the CLC policy. Any attempt at affiliation is destined to be vetoed beyond the local level.

The UFAWU were expelled from the CLC in 1953 (then the TLC). The B. C. Federation of Labour called on the CLC to readmit UFAWU every convention after 1956. Over forty local unions and labour councils submitted resolutions favouring direct entry of the UFAWU to the 1970 convention in Edmonton. In 1972, after nineteen years of lobbying, the UFAWU was formally readmitted to the CLC. It is immediately apparent that AUCE has neither the time nor energy to lobby for possible entry in the the CLC in 2004.

It is possible that CLC policy on affiliation may change in the future, or that an umbrella organization of cross-provincial non-affiliates may lobby collectively for entry. These are the only two possible avenues for AUCE to affiliate intact to the CLC that have any hope for success.

