**How short are we today?**

Nursing home workers

By BRIAN BEATON

What do most workers do when arriving at work each morning? What is “normal” discussion in offices and workplaces? Different workers attending a rally on March 15 in Fredericton to support New Brunswick’s nursing home workers, raised the concept of “short” over and over in discussions.

Addressing the shortage of workers in the nursing homes is a primary concern. One worker from Saint John attending the Fredericton rally commented that the first question they hear as they arrive for work at their nursing home is: “How short are we today?”

Improving working conditions and wages are the main demands by the workers in these homes. The union’s objectives, as described by a CUPE union executive member, are to make the positions more attractive so others want to fill vacant existing positions and to reward existing workers for doing the difficult work required of them.

After 28 months without a contract and consistently worsening work conditions, a near unanimous strike mandate was given by union members to the CLPE contract negotiators on March 7, a week before the rally. Union members hoped the strike mandate would prompt positive movement by the government and management to change the narrative in the nursing homes for doing the difficult work required of them.

One worker at the rally told the story of his parent who is living in a nursing home. His family member told him to get out there and protest the existing working and living conditions that workers and clients are experiencing in the homes. An immediate need is for more workers to fill the “shorts” in staffing. To attract more workers into this critical service, wages must increase so young people and family wage earners are able to take on this challenging work.

Other frontline workers at the protest spoke about management and the government needing to change priorities so the workers and the residents become their primary concern. Every union member involved in these work actions is determined to see justice served for all the workers and the people living in New Brunswick nursing homes.

They hope management and the government will join them in creating a just and healthy living environment for New Brunswick elders.

Workers want to change the narrative in the nursing homes — no matter if they entered as a young family from Sydney to exhaustion by an unjust system, and talking about being “short,” they want to be sharing stories with their fellow workers and the residents about their histories, activities and futures in New Brunswick.

Brian Beaton is the NB Media Co-op calendar coordinator.

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**Fredericton vigil for Christchurch: “All people are connected in one body. If one part gets hurt all the other parts will feel the pain”**

By GÜLÇAĞIŞMAN

Around midnight on Friday, March 15, the day of the massacre in Christchurch, New Zealand, No One is Illegal Fredericton sent out a call for solidarity. In response, more than one hundred people gathered the next evening for a vigil in front of Fredericton City Hall. As they greeted each other, many were visibly emotional, with their sorrow reflected in the signs they held: “Hello Brother,” “Say NO to Extremists,” and “Standing with Christchurch.”

No One Is Illegal Fredericton welcomed everyone, inviting the attendees to share their thoughts and feelings. Many Muslim and non-Muslim members of our community came up, one after the other, speaking of their grief, their longing for peace, and the power of love. Members of the Fredericton Islamic Association expressed their dream of unity, longing for peace, and conservationists wants the Canadian government to protect the Nashwaak’s fish-bearing brooks for sending letters through the Conservation Council’s website during the public comment period.

The federal government has done a disservice to the public by failing to conduct a rigorous scientific assessment of alternative technologies for managing the mine’s waste, according to Peter Toner, President of the Nashwaak Watershed Association.

“Feds told to take Nashwaak’s fish-bearing brooks off the list for Sisson’s mine waste”

By TRACY GLYNN

Feds told to take Nashwaak’s fish-bearing brooks off the list for Sisson’s mine waste

Fredericton – A coalition of Indigenous leaders, scientists and conservationists joined forces on Feb. 27 to protest the Trudeau government’s move to allow Northcodll’s Sisson mine project to use two fish-bearing brooks as dumping grounds for its toxic waste.

The public had until March 18 to comment on the federal government proposal to list parts of Bird Brook from this type of destruction as we have seen in the Mount Polley disaster. No amount of money will ever be enough to pay for the destruction of our watershed,” said Earl Brewer, a local businessman, philanthropist and native of Greenhill, a community near the proposed Sisson mine site.

Ron Tremblay, Wolastoq Grand Council Chief, and Wolastoq Grandmother Ramona Nicholas showed the continued on page 2

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A growing coalition of Indigenous leaders, scientists and conservationists wants the Canadian government to protect Nashwaak’s fish-bearing brooks from mine waste at a media conference on Feb. 27, 2019 in Fredericton.

Photo by Matthew Hayes.
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