

Changes to EI create insecurity for workers

Salmon farming



(continued from page 1) ...program was preventing the Spring Black Hole – when seasonal agricultural, fishing and tourism sectors wind down and workers are forced to turn to EI.

The letter does not address the impact that these so-called “minor changes” will have on many unemployed workers, especially those living in rural Canada and working in seasonal industries.

Finally, of course, there is no mention of the anguish and insecurity that these changes have already created for thousands of workers and their families.

Jean-Claude Basque is with the Common Front for Social Justice.

About 100 people rally against Harper's cuts to the Employment Insurance program over the noon hour in Fredericton on March 7, 2013. Photo by Tracy Glynn.

In Brief...

- The **National Day of Mourning**, April 28th, is a day to remember workers who lost their lives or were injured on the job. According to the NB Federation of Labour, 11 people died as a result of workplace injuries in New Brunswick and 12,400 were injured on the job in 2012. District Labour Councils organized ceremonies across the province on the Day of Mourning.
- School library workers are calling on the government to properly resource **school libraries**. “The funding allocated to school libraries is inadequate. The base funding formula for school libraries allocates one full-time employee (at 36.25 hours/week) for every 1,000 students per school district. This means that in small schools, if they have a library, it’s only part-time staff – many are not staffed at all,” says Sandy Harding, President of CUPE Local 2745, the Education Support Staff. “We all know that literacy is a huge problem in this province. More than half of New Brunswick adults (56% of the English-speaking population and 66% of the French-speaking population) don’t have a suitable literacy level to best engage with their communities. The first step to counter our literacy problem is to make books available to the children in their own school. Students should have unlimited access to the school libraries during school hours. Books of all genres should be available. The focus on literacy begins with making sure the book collections are up-to-date, in good repair and available for all who may need them.”
- St. Thomas University Student Union President John Hoben was removed from a committee tasked with giving feedback on the budget to the university's president. STU’s administration says Hoben was removed from the committee for violating a confidentiality agreement when he shared information with the provincial government and the university's board of governors on plans to defy a suggested **\$150 tuition cap** put into place by the Alward government in the last provincial budget. Hoben was not supposed to do this before a town hall meeting with students and staff. The university wants to increase tuition to \$1,100, a 22% increase, for the fall 2014. Further tuition increases are planned after 2014. Hoben is quoted in The *Daily Gleaner* on April 12th, saying, "The decision made at this committee impact the lives of more

than 2,300 people. These tuition increases are going to mean more debt and more time before they can start their lives. To now make these decisions without consulting students is unconscionable." A final decision on tuition will be made by the university's board of governors in May.

- The Fredericton launch of the exhibition, **A Child's View from Gaza**, was delayed because of pressure from supporters of the state of Israel put on the Charlotte Street Arts Centre. The Arts Centre decided to go ahead with the exhibit. The Child's View from Gaza exhibit, which launched in Fredericton on April 26th, has been shown all over North America, with venues in art galleries, museums and libraries, including the Aberdeen Cultural Centre in Moncton and the United Church in Riverview. The exhibit consists of drawings by children in Gaza, most of which depict their experience of Israel's Operation Cast Lead, the military assault of December 2008-January 2009 that killed some 1,400 Palestinians, over 300 of them children. A flyer circulated by Fredericton Palestine Solidarity states: “Exhibits like this one, which portray the lives and perspectives of Palestinians, make it more difficult to justify continuing the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza because they threaten the dominant narrative that all Palestinians are terrorists.”
- Two **Just Us! Coffee Roasters Co-op** workers are saying that they were fired in late March for trying to unionize. Just Us! specializes in fair trade organic coffee, with the tagline “People and the planet before profits.” Over 100 people rallied in support of the workers outside the Just Us! Halifax Spring Garden Road location on April 14th. Organizers provided free fair-trade coffee to supporters and encouraged donations for the café’s current workers. Shay Enxuga, one of the dismissed workers, was quoted in a *Halifax Media Co-op* story (April 17) at a rally in support of the workers in Halifax: “All we’re asking is for our jobs back and for Just Us! to recognize our right to form a union... All we’re asking is for Just Us! to live up to its mandate and its social justice values.”
- Anglo American, joint owners of the giant **Cerrejón open-pit coal mine** in Colombia with BHP Billiton and Xstrata, was accused at its annual shareholders meeting on April 19th of jeopardizing the health of 13,000 people who work and live close to the mine that provides coal for the NB Power plant in Belledune, New Brunswick as well as at power stations in Europe. The largest mine in Latin America plans to increase production by 25 per cent in the next three years. The mine has been plagued with labour disputes and complaints of paltry compensation for displaced communities and pollution. The mining operation was shut down by a strike for 32 days earlier this year. Most of the mine-affected peoples are indigenous Wayuu or people of African descent, who fled slavery and established communities along Colombia’s northeast coast.

(continued from page 1) ...

Fundy Baykeeper Matthew Abbott is part of a broad coalition in the Maritimes, including ASF, standing staunchly behind the Clean up Salmon Farming campaign, which in addition to billboards includes full-page ads in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald*. A website completes the multi-level strategy.

“Ocean-based salmon farming has been a concern for a long time,” Abbott says. “For a while there was a hope it would take pressure off the wild stock, but that hasn’t occurred.” Instead there has been a growing concern over the effect farmed fish have on wild ones, including inter-breeding and disease transfer.

In 2010, Abbott convened a meeting of core members of what would become the Atlantic Coalition for Aquaculture Reform. Traditional fishing interests, lobster fishermen and community groups concerned about fin-fish aquaculture were all there. The coalition now includes groups from the three Maritime Provinces and ASF.

“The original vision for aquaculture in New Brunswick was for small-scale farms run by families,” says Abbott. “The industry has grown such that it is now dominated by one multinational corporation with feedlot-scale operations in the ocean.” This has prompted the change in attitudes, he says, and led people to start articulating their concerns in public. Adding to the urgency, federal and provincial levels of government have been seemingly looking the other way and ignoring criticism of permitting processes, all the while doling out compensation to corporations when diseased fish have to be destroyed.

Earlier this year the Standing Committee Report on Closed Containment Aquaculture said that it is technically possible to raise Atlantic salmon in closed-containment systems, albeit at a higher cost. This eats into profits, and then Fisheries and Oceans Minister Gail Shea sided with industry in rebuffing suggestions that closed containment should be pursued to allay environmental concerns. Opponents view this as government support for the status quo.

New Brunswick may not see a clean up salmon farming campaign soon, as there are few if any new fish farm permits to be issued. “We have reached the point where New Brunswick is saturated with fish farms,” Abbott says. “Passamaquoddy Bay and the Western Isles, in the outer Bay of Fundy, have the densest concentrations of salmon farms of anywhere in the world.”

For its part, industry remains convinced ocean-based activity is the best way forward. Cooke Aquaculture, New Brunswick’s largest producer, states on its website that the company is committed to the long-term social, economic and environmental sustainability of the communities where it operates, including Maine, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, PEI, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Meanwhile, the Atlantic Salmon Federation and its coalition partners defend their belief that closed, land-based containment is not only inevitable, but necessary to make fish farming sustainable, and they are determined to demonstrate this through action and not just words. In fact, diners at an ASF dinner recently splurged not on farmed salmon, but on Arctic charr raised in land-based containers in Nova Scotia’s Millbrook First Nation, near Truro. It was reportedly delicious, even more so because of its land-locked origins.

got a story to tell?
email info@nbmediacoop.org!

CORRECTION: Cheryl Norrad, the author of “Let’s get really frank about philanthropy and homelessness” was not credited in the last edition of *The Brief*. The NB Media Co-op apologizes for this omission.

nbmediacoop.org

Community Calendar

For details and updated event listings, visit nbmediacoop.org. To list your event, email: community@nbmediacoop.org.

NB Media Co-op Story Meetings. Join us at our monthly story meetings in Fredericton where we discuss politics and current events and decide what to put in this paper every month. To find out the meeting time and venue, email info@nbmediacoop.org.

Multicultural Association of Fredericton's Dance & Delicacies. Fri, May 10, 7:30 to 11:30pm. UNB Student Union Building (21 Pacey Dr.). A fundraiser for MCAF Newcomer Scholarship Fund to assist newcomers to Canada with their post-secondary education. Featuring music by Vinyl2Bits, international hors d’oeuvres and desserts, silent auction and a cash bar. Tickets available at MCAF office (123 York St.): \$40 each, \$75 for 2 or a table for 8 can be reserved for \$300. Contact MCAF at 506 454-8292.

A Child’s View from Gaza. Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, Fredericton Palestine Solidarity, Jews for a Just Peace Fredericton and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers Fredericton/Oromocto are delighted to announce the riveting exhibition, A Child's View from Gaza, on display at the Charlotte Street Arts Centre’s Penny Gallery from April 26 - May 26. Contact: info@frederictonpeace.org.

Join the NB Media Co-op today!

The NB Media Co-op relies on the financial support of its members to fund high-quality, independent journalism by and for New Brunswickers. Membership dues and donations fund much needed investigative journalism, website expenses, as well as the design, printing and distribution of *The Brief*.

Simply complete the following membership form and mail it to **NB Media Co-op, 180 St. John St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 4A9**.

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City/Town Province Postal Code

Phone: _____ Email: _____

☐ Annual membership fee: \$30.00 ☐ Other: _____

Please pay by cheque or money order, payable to NB Media Co-op. Contact us at info@nbmediacoop.org for further information.

Thank you! Your financial contribution helps keep this vibrant alternative news source alive!