

Canadian Labour Congress Convention 2017

"Together for a Fair Future"

#FairFuture

Toronto, ON May 7-12, 2017

Ali Heighton's Delegate Report

Thank you to the Executive Board and President Steve Hayes for giving me the opportunity to attend the 2017 CLC Convention as IBEW L37's Youth Delegate. It was a great learning experience for me as someone that is still relatively new to the labour movement. I had the chance to speak with fellow IBEW delegates as well members from other local unions across the country with the ~3,000 members of CLC affiliates.

SUNDAY

Sunday May 7th there was IBEW delegate meeting to go over some talking points before the convention officially started.

MONDAY – FAIRNESS for a #FairFuture

Monday marked the Opening Ceremonies of the Convention. Some highlights of this day were: Guest Speaker Mary Walsh (Canadian Actress/Comedian/Social Activist) who discussed the Launch of the CLC Mental Health Online Resource Centre, that any member affiliate of the CLC has access to: <http://canadianlabour.ca/labour-education/mental-health-work>

Monday also marked the first day of any convention that I have ever been to. It was really neat to see the process of passing a resolution which included debate for both sides, votes, etc.

There was also a Young Workers Forum that evening, where a panel of youth workers spoke about how they successfully organized their workplaces. Of particular interest to me was the situation with GoodLife trainers. Goodlife trainers are not paid for the work that they put into meal planning, exercise planning, research time, scheduling, etc. nor do they get paid any sick days. To sign the petition calling on GoodLife to deal fairly with their trainers, please visit www.workersunitedunion.ca/goodlife

TUESDAY – EQUITY for a #FairFuture

On Tuesday, there was a Tribute to the Westray accident that took place in a coal mine in Plymouth, NS and killed 26 workers. It marked the 25-year anniversary of the incident. This led to a greater presentation on incidents at work. One young widower and her father in law, Christian Bruneau, presented their story of losing their 25-year-old loved one just over one year ago due to safety violations at a work site. This solidified for me the work we are doing with the Code of Excellence and SPARQ. There was also a great discussion and panel on Human Rights and inclusion of all workers.

This day also marked the Young Workers Election Caucus, and the resulting elections.

WEDNESDAY – GREEN JOBS for a #FairFuture

It seemed the theme of Equity bled into most of Wednesday, with a larger focus on the case of missing and murdered Indigenous women, which I thought was extremely interesting. Later in the day, the focus switched to Green Jobs. A panel “Green Jobs for a #FairFuture” occurred, featuring IBEW’s own Matt Wayland. The focus was on the change the energy sector is going through, and how to maintain a well-trained unionized workforce through these changes. I thought this was a very relevant discussion for IBEW 37, in particular. Leading up to that panel presentation was Rachel Notley, the Premier of Alberta (NDP) who knows all too well the changes we are seeing regarding the changes in the energy sector.

THURSDAY – ORGANIZING for a #FairFuture

Thursday’s focus was on organizing and strengthening people’s access to unions and the public image of labour.

The CLC Executive Elections also took place on this day. Hassan Yussuff won a second mandate by acclamation. Marie Clarke Waler was elected as Secretary-Treasurer. Donald Lafleur was re-elected as Executive VP, and Larry Rousseau was also elected as Executive VP.

FRIDAY

Return to Fredericton.

The short and simple of my experience at the convention is that I thought it was a very interesting convention, and it opened my eyes to the spirit of the labour movement and everything it strives to achieve. It motivated me to want to get involved with some of the things the movement is pushing for. I had a great time, learning a lot, and enjoyed the experience. Thanks!