

## **PSAC Timeline: Our History!**

### **1889**

The Railway Mail Clerks hold their first convention in Toronto. Other public service workers begin forming employee associations and unions after this. Many employee associations are based along public service departmental lines.

### **1908**

As a result of pressures from government workers, the Civil Service Act is passed. This legislation put some brakes on overt patronage and institutes staffing by merit. It does not include the right to collective bargaining.

### **1909**

Delegates from twenty-three of the departmental associations, with a total membership of 5,223, form the Civil Service Federation (CSF) an umbrella association for government workers. It accepts members from all government departments and has a central executive with an advisory council for each department.

### **1920**

The Amalgamated Civil Servants of Canada (ACSC) is formed. The ACSC, CSF, the Civil Service Association of Ottawa and several other staff associations demand the formation of a joint council of staff associations, through which they can jointly present issues of common concern to the Government/Employer.

### **1944**

The Government/Employer creates the National Joint Council (NJC). Both parties, government/employer and staff associations, send an equal number of representatives.

The staff associations make important gains through the NJC, such as shift differentials and the Public Service Group Surgical Medical Insurance Plan.

### **1954**

The Public Service Superannuation Act is passed creating a pension plan for federal public service workers. Of the six positions that currently exist for worker representatives, two are held by the PSAC.

### **1958**

The Civil Service Association of Ottawa and the ACSC merge to form the Civil Service Association of Canada (CSAC). The CSAC accepts members from all departments and its constitution also provides for the membership of Locals and Regional Councils which cut across departmental lines. The CSAC is presided over by a National Council, with regional executive members.

### **1963**

In response to widespread pressure, leaders of all three political parties endorse collective bargaining rights for Federal public service workers. The newly elected minority Liberal Government appoints the Heeney Committee on Collective Bargaining to follow through.

### **1966**

The Public Service Staff Relations Act is tabled. Although it allows collective bargaining for the first time, staffing, classification and pension are excluded and there are other significant limitations.

Delegates from sixteen staff associations form the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) in November, representing almost 40 occupational groups. The PSAC is presided over on a day-to-day basis by a five person Executive Committee. It also has a National Board of Directors that meets quarterly and is made up of the presidents of each Component union, the regional directors and the Executive Committee.

Original Component unions included the Agriculture Component, Canadian Employment and Immigration Union, Customs Excise Union Douanes Accise, National Component, National Health and Welfare Union, Union of Canadian Transportation Employees, Union of National Defence Employees, Union of Taxation Employees, Union of Veterans' Affairs Employees.

A number of staff associations decided not to join the new union. Rather they decided to form their own organizations. These included:

- The Letter Carriers Union of Canada
- The Canadian Union of Postal Workers
- The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada

### **1967**

The Public Service Staff Relations Act is proclaimed and comes into force.

### **1970**

The Public Service Disability Plan is introduced through the NJC. The plan is extended to seasonal employees in the early 1970s and to part-time employees in 1982.

The Union of Northern Workers (UNW) receives its charter for Component union status in the PSAC. In 1974, legislation in the Northwest Territories recognized the UNW as the representative for all eligible employees working in the Public Service of the Northwest Territories.

### **1971**

Provisions for the payment of double time for overtime on days of rest are negotiated. A year later, provisions to implement a compressed work week of less than five days are negotiated.

**1972**

The Environment Component receives its charter for Component union status in the PSAC.

**1973**

Maternity leave for 11 weeks before and 26 weeks after the birth of a child are negotiated for the Administrative Support and Foreign Service categories. It isn't until the 1986 round of negotiations with Treasury Board that all women in the PSAC received leave and a 93% allowance equal to 93 per cent of their salary for 17 weeks.

**1976**

Aileen Manion is elected as a PSAC Vice-President and Eleanor Ryan is elected as the National Director for Ontario. These are the first two women on the PSAC National Board of Directors

**1978**

NJC directives, such as commuting assistance, travel, relocation, health and safety, foreign service, isolated posts, are deemed to be part of the collective agreement and subject to the NJC grievance process up to and including adjudication.

Natural Resources Union (formerly UEMRE) receives its charter for Component union status.

**1980**

Clerical workers go on strike. Few expect the numbers or the strong feeling evident on the picket line. This strike becomes a turning point in the history of the PSAC.

The first pay equity settlement is negotiated for the Library Science (LS) group under section 11 of the Canadian Human Rights Act. The PSAC builds on this early equal pay for work of equal value victory to initiate other similar complaints on behalf of our members.

**1980s**

Work Force Adjustment policies are won and improved to partially counteract government downsizing and reduction of public services.

The Financial Administration group become the first public service group to reduce their weekly hours of work to 36.25.

**1983**

Pay equity case begins at Canada Post. It is still going on in 2005.  
PSAC organizes workers on Parliament Hill.

**1985**

The first PSAC National Women's Conference is held. The conferences receive constitutional recognition with the right to submit a report to the PSAC Triennial Convention and to have their recommendations voted upon.

**1986**

The PSAC succeeds in having federal public service workers covered under the health and safety provision of the Canada Labour Code, as opposed to employer policy.

The first Master Agreement is negotiated covering benefits and working conditions common to all Alliance members employed by Treasury Board.

**1988**

Federal government adopts the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) for its employees, following pressure from the union.

**1990**

Treasury Board makes partial payment to clerical, secretarial and educational members as a result of Joint Union Management Study on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value, but, due to Treasury Board stalling, it won't be until the next century that members get the full amount owing to them!

The Yukon Employees' Union (YEU) receives its charter for Component union status in the PSAC.

**1991**

Federal Court of Appeal strikes down provisions of the Public Service Employment Act that restricts political rights of Alliance members.

From 1991 through 2002, approximately 30 airports are recertified after they are privatized by the government.

**1993**

The first Access Conference, for members with disabilities, is held. Another first in the Canadian labour movement and an important step in our human rights work.

**1994**

Delegates at the PSAC Triennial Convention agree to regionalize the structure of the union. One of the five Ottawa-based national officer positions is eliminated immediately in order to create the new full-time, Regional Vice-President for Quebec. In addition, the Constitution is amended to create six Regional Vice-President positions and reduce to two the National Officers, effective in 1997.

**1995**

Casino Regina is organized by PSAC.

**1996**

The first Unity Conference is held for Aboriginal and racially visible members. Over 1,000 teaching assistants at University of Western Ontario are organized.

**1997**

1994 Constitutional change affirmed at the PSAC Triennial Convention and the addition of full-time Regional Executive Vice-Presidents for the: Atlantic, National Capital Region, Ontario (excluding the National Capital Region), Prairies, British Columbia and the North. There are now only two full-time National positions, the National President and the National Executive Vice-President. The part-time position of Regional Vice-President, for Countries Outside Canada is left in place. The same constitutional changes also allow for the creation of PSAC Regional Councils in areas under the authority of a Regional Executive Vice-President. Red Bank First Nations Council staff organized.

**1998**

Weenbayko Health Ahtuskaywin, Fort Qu'Appelle Indian Hospital, Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nations Council staff organized.

**1999**

The Government Services Union (GSU) is created through the merger of two Component unions, the Union of Public Works Employees and the Supply and Services Union.

The Nunavut Employees Union receives its charter as a Component union, upon the birth of the Nunavut Territory. Previously, members had belonged to the Union of Northern Workers.

**2003**

The first Pride Conference is held for Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgender members.

Delegates at the PSAC Triennial Convention mandate the negotiation of a Social Justice Fund in every agreement. All PSAC members in good standing are now eligible to run for national office, whether s/he is attending the Convention or not.