

ONE YEAR AFTER THE 2021 STRIKE

On October 29, 2021, CUPE workers in New Brunswick stood up for respect, fairness, and collective bargaining because it was the right thing to do.

Members' commitment to solidarity to embark on this colossal collective action was second to none. These front-line workers had prepared themselves to take on a hostile and disingenuous government that was lying to the public, lying to the workers, and raking in record surpluses on the backs of ordinary residents.



A year ago, close to 22 000 CUPE members in NB reached the tipping point and began a province-wide general strike.

We were being undervalued, under-resourced, and over-managed. After decades of de-investment in public services, front-line staff was burning out at a high rate, with illnesses and injuries increasing. Making a decent living to care for our families was a major issue. Workers could not afford to back down.

After a 16-day struggle, strikers achieved wage increases not seen in decades. Through collective action, workers broke the wage mandate and bargained forward.



Since the success of the strike, certain things have gotten worse. The provincial government has accumulated multi million-dollar surpluses by under-servicing the population. Corporations are still given free rein to make outrageous profits. They are allowed to operate massive tax-avoidance schemes while the working-class struggles with skyrocketing inflation.

On the bright side, more and more people recognize the threat of privatization and corporate price gouging to our democracy. People know workers' wages did not cause inflation, and are more than ever willing to join a union to improve their working conditions.

To mark this day where we celebrate a historic labour victory, CUPE NB wishes to make a few statements:

- To all of you, our members: You are truly amazing and brave.
- To the public who supported us while on strike: Thank you for standing on the side of fairness and recognizing who the real villains were.
- To the small businesses that had the workers' back: Know the workers have your back and support local businesses.
- To the current sitting government: Stop interfering with collective bargaining and tying up the courts. Collective bargaining is a right under Section 2(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

It's time this government put people first. It's time they stopped wasting millions of tax dollars fighting workers struggling to make a decent living.

Our Premier claims he wants solutions to address the recruitment and retention crisis. To this request, we give him the same answer we gave him on October 29, 2021: invest in our public services, pay workers fair wages and you will see real change.

In Solidarity,

The CUPE NB Executive

