

**CUPE Ontario Women's Conference  
Toronto Sheraton - Mar. 4-7, 2015**

I would like to thank the membership for allowing me to attend the 2015 CUPE Women's Conference at the Sheraton Hotel in Toronto.

It was a very well-attended event which was estimated for 100 participants however, approximately 140 ultimately attended. Each day began with a "smudge" ceremony held by Sister Joanne Webb. The conference began Wednesday evening with several speakers (Fred Hahn as well as greetings from the Toronto CUPE District Council).

Thursday got down to business covering the issues that matter such as Equal Pay, discussions about the minimum wage and non-unionized women as well as Audrey Huntley - the Co-Founder of "No More Silence". She spoke to the missing and murdered indigenous women with some personal stories which brought great emotion to the room. Workshops in the late morning such as Pay Equity, Minimum Wage or No More Silence/Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women. I attended the workshop on Minimum Wage issues. It was attended by approximately 25 women. In the afternoon, topics like CLC Domestic Violence Survey results were given as well as a 45-minute movie/discussion of "Rosies of the North". A great short movie covering women who stepped up to do "men's jobs" during World War II and how when the war was over, women were ultimately sent home to raise babies and look after the household. A few women in particular gave their point of view in the movie who had experienced working at the factory creating the "Hurricane" airplanes.

Friday's session covered a panel covering childcare, precarious work within the public sector, school board bargaining and school closures as well as our own Guelph & District Labour Council's Janice Folk-Dawson touching on pensions. The afternoon session mostly covered politics and women in politics.

Saturday morning covered the election of the CUPE Ontario Women's Committee (5 representatives) and the adjournment to a March and Rally for International Women's Day.

A great few days with new points of view on various issues as well as a renewed ambition to endorse and promote sisters in Unions and politics.

Yours in solidarity,  
Marg Lemoine

March 7, 2015