



**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2017**

1. **LOCATION:** Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph Street, Vancouver, BC

2. **CHAIRPERSON:** 1st Vice President Terry Engler

3. **ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

MSC that the minutes of the April 18, 2017 meeting be adopted.

4. **CREDENTIALS:** Nil

5. **GUEST SPEAKER:**

Shane Simpson, MLA Vancouver Hastings

Shane thanked the VDLC, affiliates, and the labour movement as a whole for their support during and leading up to the election. The labour movement stepped up across the province in a big way. The financial support is always important and appreciated, but the focus of various locals and labour councils on battle ground constituencies was immense and the boots on the ground made all the difference. The message received from voters is that the people want change. Currently the seats are: 43 Liberal, 41 NDP, and 3 Green – but that could all change in a week when the absentee ballots are counted and recounts are complete. There are 178,000 absentee votes to be counted, up from 58,000 in the last election. Absentee ballots aren't just those voters that are out of the country, but those that vote outside their constituency, or that vote in their electoral office prior to advance polls. There are about 5 seats that could be affected – 3 Liberal and 2 NDP. History has shown that absentee ballots can make a big difference. Depending on the outcome of the final count it could dramatically change the look of parliament. Preliminary talks are already in the works with the Green Party.

Greens have given some indication of what they want – first, party status. It takes 4 seats to attain party status, Greens currently hold 3, but both the Liberals and the NDP will give them party status. They should have it, they have an important role to play in this kind of legislature and they should have resources that would give them a better capacity to do that job. Greens want the end of corporate and union donations, which the NDP has already supported. The biggest item that Greens will want is proportional representation, which the NDP is in support of. The Green's want to put a system in place via legislation, the NDP want a referendum: if there is going to be a change in how the government is elected, it shouldn't be the politicians making the change, it should be the people. The referendum would be a 50% +1 and they would campaign for it. That is what is on the table at this point.

There have been discussions between John Horgan and Andrew Weaver, mostly around where there is commonality and building a relationship at leadership level. The NDP position will not change: they want to make life more affordable, to improve services, and figure out how to create family supporting jobs.

Of the NDP 41 MLA's elected: 26 are returning MLAs and 14 first time MLAs. This is a younger, more diverse caucus. Caucus meets May 25 in Victoria, the writ returns May 31 and MLAs will be sworn in the first week of June.

What is actually going to happen is unknown until all the votes are counted May 24 and final seat numbers are in.

The NDP are proud of the platform they ran on and of the campaign they ran. But a reality that needs to be faced is that we may well be doing this again in 18 to 24 months. This type of government is hard to maintain. If, or when, we get to that, we can put an end to the Liberals once and for all.

Discussion Q & A

- What happens with the NDP platform of 114,000 affordable suites in current legislature situation? Over 10 years the NDP pledges to create 114,000 affordable suites with expected Federal money and municipal lands. The Greens are also in support of this and co-op suites. If the federal government is not willing to reinvigorate the coop program, the province is prepared to pursue it themselves.
- Healthcare? There are 20 models for emergent care and family centres in BC. Full teams of practioners with extended hours to create relief for emergency rooms. Models like the Reach Clinic and others work. Another focus will be residential care for seniors; it costs patients 3x as much to stay in hospital and it's not desirable care.
- What happens to proportional representation if there is another election in 18 to 24 months? It is unlikely that proportional representation will be achieved by then. It will likely be 2018 before a referendum can be held, then elections by-law will take minimum 1 year to structure and implement. It will likely be no earlier than 2020 before a proportional representation system can be in place. Even if government decided against a referendum, it would need a full consultation process because of the various models possible and the differing opinions. The implementation of a proportional representation system could result in 4 to 5 parties in the legislature. How does that get structured? This could very well make a majority government a rare thing, but the NDP is in a position to lead a progressive coalition.
- Sustainability policy – SiteC project? The Site C project is not justified which is why the Liberals did not send it to BC Utilities Commission for assessment; the NDP will. Depending on contracts, there may be “pay outs” required. This should not be a political decision, but rather one based on what experts say. The NDP supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions 94 recommendations and UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights, meaning actually listening to first nations’ communities. On the question of sustainability, Power BC retrofitting public buildings in BC would create jobs. Tell BC Hydro they will be supported on energy conservation and renewable resources.
- The Lower Mainland and Islands voted clearly on their support for NDP and Green, but what can be done in northern communities to bring them onside? The province is divided. You can't win with rhetoric. The view that “the NDP says no to everything” is entrenched. Despite the fact that under the Liberals, 40,000 forest workers are out of work and there are more mines closed than open, voters in Northern communities continue to vote for the Liberals. It will take a few years of and NDP/Green government to demonstrate the difference.
- The new Green MLAs are very aligned with the NDP. If Greens support the Liberals their voters will not be happy. There will also be a need to commit to the NDP on key issues. There is definitely more common ground with the NDP than with the Liberals.
- What led to the strong outcome in Richmond Queensborough? That strong outcome happened in several ridings. There were a few things at play: the issue of affordability was ignored by the Liberals; the fact that having a job does not mean one is able to make a decent living; Uber; the tolls on bridges; and housing. As long as Christy Clark is leader the Liberals are at a disadvantage.
- Concept of a balanced budget, with debt increase – How is it possible? The operating budget of government is \$46 billion per year; it was largely balanced thanks to the erosion of services, rampant housing speculation (\$800 million in purchase taxes); job creation (condominium and housing development = 70% of all jobs created). Housing and real estate propped up the

government. Debt is about infrastructure. If you're building things, it is considered investment, but not allowed to be measured that way – assets aren't valued. There is a \$100 billion unspecified debt at BC Hydro because Run of the River private power projects forced Hydro to buy surplus power at double cost.

- How can social assistance and disability benefits be increased with a minority government? There will be an immediate increase of \$100. Poverty reduction plan will include earnings exemptions and rent assistance. This is common ground with the Greens. Generally agree to increase, there has been no welfare increase in 10 years, a single person receives \$600 per month.

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Joey Hartman reported on VDLC activities since the May 2017 meeting.

Political Action

The May 9 provincial election night ended as a cliff-hanger. To declare a majority a party needs 44 out of 87 elected seats. The numbers as of May 10 were:

- Liberals – 43
- NDP – 41
- Green – 3

If these numbers don't change after the count of absentee ballots and recounts, it could mean the first minority government in BC in 65 years.

It was a very busy month with the provincial election in full swing after the writ dropped April 11 leading up to Election Day. Delegate Akeena Legall spent a month in her full time assignment representing the VDLC in the Vancouver-Langara NDP campaign with candidate James Chang.

In addition, a number of executive members and delegates were regular volunteers in a number of constituencies, and the office distributed information about all of the labour canvasses, including the VDLC led one for George Heyman on Saturday, May 6. VDLC delegate Michelle Livaja ran as an NDP in West Vancouver Sea-to-Sky.

CLC Convention

The VDLC did not send any delegates to the CLC convention because of the provincial election. The convention passed a resolution that the VDLC had supported to add labour council representation to the CLC's Canada Council. The CLC will cover the costs of travel and accommodation, but not wage loss. Sister DJ Pohl, president of the Fraser Valley Labour Council was elected by a vote of CLC delegates with labour council credentials to represent the Pacific Region.

Westray Law

The April Pizza Educational with Tom Sandborn was a presentation on his book about the Westray Law and the USW campaign to have this provision in the criminal code actually used to charge and prosecute employers who are criminally responsible for a worker's death, injury or illness.

It was noted that several municipalities had adopted motions in support of the campaign, but that Vancouver had not yet. Joey Hartman followed up the next day, and Vancouver city council approved the motion on May 2.

May Day

The annual march and rally took place on Monday, May 1st. The ILWU and BCFMWU participated by marching up from the Maritime Labour Centre and joining together at Grandview Park.

Labour Day 2017

The VDLC will have a booth and activities as part of the Labour Day event being organized by the New Westminster and District Labour Council. It will be in the afternoon at Holland Park in Surrey, across from the Skytrain. A volunteer committee will coordinate the VDLC participation.

April 28, 2017 Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured on the Job

Joey Hartman addressed the WCB's April 28th event and spoke about the Westray Law and need to apply this provision in the Criminal Code. News came the day before that the federal government has committed to working with the CLC and others to bring this about. Sister Hartman also took the opportunity to note that the WCB was established in BC100 years ago as a no-fault insurance scheme for employers and removed workers' right to sue their bosses for workplace death, injury, or illness.

Helena Gutteridge Plaque Unveiling April 21

A bronze plaque commemorating the life and activism of Helena Gutteridge who served on the Trades and Labour Congress (now VDLC) in the 1930s and was the first woman elected to Vancouver City Council.

United Way Labour Appreciation Dinner

The VDLC executive decided to award the 2017 Syd Thompson Community Service Award to David Fairey. The dinner will be held November 30.

Protein for People

Catherine McCambridge has agreed to coordinate the VDLC's Protein for People community forum at the school again – tentatively set for 3:00 to 6:00 pm on Thursday, September 21.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Correspondence list circulated at meeting
MSC to accept the correspondence as circulated.
8. **EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:** Nil
9. **REPORT OF UNIONS: (in order reported)**
 - a) CUPW – Vancouver Local – Reported by Nathan Fralick
The Federal Government is in their final steps of a review of Canada Post. Everyone is invited to take a look at www.postalbanking.ca to get informed on some CUPW's ideas for postal banking. From the website, click on "Contact Your MP" to get in touch with local MPs to show support for postal banking.
 - b) Unifor Local 111 – Reported by Robynn Bunch
For the provincial election, Unifor Local 111 was working in a number of campaigns. Most of the campaigns being worked on were successful, or very close. Morgane Oger was a great candidate and could have used some more boots on the ground – the riding is still awaiting the rest of the results. Local 111 continues promoting for more transit and buses.
 - c) ILWU Local 400 – Reported by Jason Woods
Brother Woods thanked the Labour Council for support of their work on cabotage. Local President Terry Engler has been in Ottawa twice in the past few weeks in meetings on cabotage and is due to go back to testify on Temporary Foreign Workers and Labour Market Impact Assessment.
 - d) BC FORUM – Reported by Russ St. Eloi
The following resolutions were passed to go to the FORUM AGM, June 21, 2017:
 - Age of eligibility for Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security

- Development of National Dementia Strategy Plan
- Development of National Housing Strategy
- Opposition to Bill C27, Act to Amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act
- Promotion of National Public Drug Plan

The following reports were made but not submitted for the minutes

- a) CUPE Local 391 – Reported by Gary Jarvis
- b) UFCW Local 1518 – Reported by Abby Leung

MSC to adopt the reports of unions.

10. REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

- a) Women's – Reported by Fruma Sloan

The Women's Committee donated \$600 to CCPA BC and \$1000 to the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre from the proceeds of the 2017 IWD Dinner. The committee has decided to no longer hold their dinner at a non-union hall and that their living wage gratuity provided to servers and staff is not enough. The committee is working on the 2018 event and will have a theme of "Women on the Waterfront". Committee members from ILWU Local 500 are working on the content and they hope to hold the event at the Maritime Labour Centre.

The Women's Committee will be offering the Public Speaking for Women again in October/November.

The committee will be meeting Wednesday, July 19 at 6:00 pm at the VDLC office, all women welcome.

- b) Education – Reported by Joey Hartman

There will be a public speaking and media training course open to everyone offered in the spring of 2018. An idea was presented of possible starting a "Toast Masters" style club, that affords participants the opportunity to practice speaking and preparing "speeches" on labour themes. If anyone knows how to organize something around the Toast Masters model please talk to Joey Hartman.

MSC to adopt the reports of committees.

OTHER REPORTS:

- a) CLC – Reported by Ron Stipp

Watching the election from the CLC Convention in Toronto was very exciting. Again, thank you to the VDLC and affiliates for all the work.

The CLC Convention unanimously passed a resolution to have 4 labour council representatives on the CLC Executive, one from each region. The election for representatives was held on the Thursday of the convention: it needed to be held immediately, otherwise it would have been 3 years until an election could have been held. Highlights of the convention definitely include Angela Davis; being in a room with her and hearing her story was incredible. There were a number of great speakers including Rachel Notley, Cindy Blackstock, Candy Palmater, and Mary Walsh. Hassan Yussuff was acclaimed as CLC President, Marie Clarke-Walker was elected as CLC Secretary Treasurer, and Donald Lafleur and Larry Rousseau were elected as Executive Vice Presidents.

Canada has never ratified ILO Convention 98, collective bargaining and the right to form a union. After the CLC Convention, the Federal Minister was in attendance, Canada has signed onto ILO Declaration 98.

Bill C4, which talks about Bills C377 and 525, is up for debate June 16 and 17. The amendment will be defeated and sent back to the Senate.

- b) **BC FORUM** – Reported by Agnes Jackman
FORUM held their AGM and their President presented her activities since their last AGM, her list was 3 pages long demonstrating how active we can all be in our retirement. Seniors are a huge resource, delegates were encouraged to remind their locals that BC FORUM is a great way to stay active in the labour movement after retirement. A number of resolutions passed will make their way to the National FORUM Convention in Dartmouth in October.

October 1 is the International Day of Older Persons. FORUM is organizing around that and are encouraging affiliates to get involved.

MSC to receive the other reports.

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Nil

12. NOMINATION TO VDLC EXECUTIVE:

There is 1 opening for Executive Member-at-Large. Nominations were presided over by CLC Representative Ron Stipp.

The following nomination was accepted:

Nominee Name	Union Local
Bal Sandhu	HEU PHSA Local

Bal Sandhu was acclaimed as member-at-large of the VDLC Executive and sworn in.

13. NEW BUSINESS: Nil

14. TABLE TALK:

Delegates were asked to help lend support to CUPE Local 1816 currently in dispute with Pacific Blue Cross. While they are not currently on strike, they are asking for public pressure to help them achieve a fair deal. Information circulars were available for delegates and guests to send email messages to Pacific Blue Cross.

15. NOTICE OF MOTION: Nil

16. GOOD AND WELFARE:

- 50/50 Proceeds to benefit Qmunity in recognition of International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.
- CoDevelopment Canada Annual Gala Dinner, June 17 – anyone interested in tickets could see Agnes Jackman after the meeting.
- People’s Voice banquet, June 17.

MSC to allow Susan Stout to address the meeting.

- Left Coast Labour Chorus concert with the Gram Partisans and the Re:Sisters – June 10

17. MEETING ADJOURNED: *MSC to adjourn at 9:00 pm.*

18. NEXT MEETING: [TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2017](#), 7:30 pm,
Maritime Labour Centre.

Pizza Educational
Tuesday, June 20, 2017
6:00 pm

Reconciliation and 150+
National Aboriginal Day & Canada Day

Lillian Howard is of Nuu-chah-nulth ancestry and is a member of the Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee for the City of Vancouver. This committee developed the concept of 150+ to recognize that First Nations resided in what is now Canada for thousands of years prior to confederation.

On June 21, we recognize National Aboriginal Day and Canada Day just over a week later. Lillian will discuss the significance of June 21 and 150+ in the context of Canada Day celebrations and the calls for action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

[For lists of happenings please see our website events page – www.vdlc.ca/events/.](http://www.vdlc.ca/events/)