



Union News
A Union of Taxation Employees Publication

www.ute-sei.org

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To Serve You Better ???



THE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

SI VOUS PRÉFÉREZ AVOIR CE COMMUNIQUÉ EN FRANÇAIS, VEUILLEZ VOUS
ADRESSER À VOTRE PRÉSIDENT- E DE SECTION LOCALE

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Over the years our government has moved to a concept of ***“doing more with less.”***

(1) More and more duties have been added to our positions yet we remain at the same classification level.
(2) Permanent staffing has been often replaced by term hiring allowing for the ease of terminations.
(3) The centralization of work has resulted in fewer workers being required. (4) Technology and the Expenditure Review Initiatives. (5) And nowThe 2005 Budget Impact. What does all this mean to the membership? In the next 2 – 4 years (Using the employer's figures)

Approximately 400 permanent jobs lost and 1200 to 1300 term jobs lost.

Revenue Canada has never experienced job losses of this magnitude. The first impact is the closing of the Cash and Client Services' counters. This makes no sense to your union and it makes no sense to the Canadian public. An organization whose mandate is to collect money and whose motto is:

“MORE WAYS TO SERVE YOU”,

Why would THEY STOP THE PUBLIC FROM BRINGING IN MONEY??

Why would they make it difficult for the public to enter and receive the answers they need to comply with the very Income Tax Act we are enforcing? If these services were not being used it would be one thing, but those of you who work in these areas, can attest to the fact that you are working diligently with the Canadian public. Seniors, new immigrants, people with language barriers, people with disabilities, and low-income earners are the majority of the public we serve. They will be as affected as our impacted members. There is a large population of the Tax Preparer Group that relies heavily on our services as well.

On April 1st UTE and PSAC launched a comprehensive focused campaign to save the jobs and services. We need the help of the entire membership; including Client Services' employees, the public and the politicians, to keep these services readily available.

The public's reaction to our literature distribution announcing the closures was very supportive. The planned closures also came as a shock to them as neither the CRA nor the Government had made this information available in any public forum.

What can you do?

- Wear the button ***“You'll miss us when we're gone! 2006”***, (available from your local Executive)
- Call or visit your MP, speak with your Managers,
- Tell your neighbours, friends and family of the closures and enlist their support,
- Write letters to the editors of local papers
- Help your local executive to distribute literature to the public.

These are but a few of things that you can do to help.

Why should you help?

Your help works and it has just been proven.

Due to all of our efforts

The Commissioner has just cancelled the closing of cash.

We have much more work to do to save our Client Services.

Betty Bannon, National President, UTE

SERVICE NOT PROFIT

In the Code of Ethics, the ethic of **RESPONSIBILITY** has been eroded in our society's value system. The old fashioned "Sense of Honour" is regarded as bizarre. The modern world of "**POLITICAL SPIN**" is devoted precisely to not taking responsibility for anything that goes wrong.

In the 1980's Political Ottawa fell prey to something called *Intellectual Faddism*. It resulted in the Public Service incorporating, almost willy-nilly, something called "The New Public Management" (the introducing of private sector values into Public Service Performance). The private sector has one universally accepted performance standard - profit or loss. Everything can be measured against this benchmark.

The public service has no universally accepted standard because the politic of it is an art or a craft. Importing private sector norms into a system that has varying bottom lines has done good government a disservice.

The Public Service is not about producing widgets.
It is about promoting the public interest in a democracy.
It is about promoting the true values of our society and nation.

Reintroducing traditional values may be possible if: accountability became the real priority, rather than one that only commands lip service.

Government and Parliament must return to its original function of truly examining expenditures, rather than the sham that the public accounting process is today.

The promotion of the public's interest, and the return of quality public service are about true responsibility, respect, integrity and professionalism, NOT ABOUT WIDGETS.

Barry Melanson, Local President 00017

YOUR UNION NEEDS YOUR ASSISTANCE

Over the last several months UTE has been engaged in a campaign to preserve the jobs of and the services provided by our members employed at the Cash and Client Services counters. To date, a number of your Union activists have been: diligently distributing literature to the membership and the public, meeting with Members of Parliament, speaking with news media, writing letters to the editors of local newspapers and undertaking other such activities in an effort to educate all stakeholders and to influence public opinion.

Now, your Union needs you!

We ask that you continue to wear the buttons, "**You'll miss us when we're gone ! 2006**"

If you haven't received one, please ask your Steward or Local Executive member for one. Educate yourself on the issues by speaking with your local union representative. Discuss the issue with your family, friends, neighbours, peer groups and community organizations to educate the public about this unnecessary and ill-conceived cut-back in services. Call or write your Member of Parliament to protest these cutbacks.

Your union and your colleagues in these affected areas need your help and we ask that you do whatever you can to advance this campaign. **Yesterday** it was our members working in Cash, **today** it is still Client Services that need your help. Who knows what initiative will be introduced **tomorrow** that may affect your employment security. If we do not assist on behalf of others today, who will be there to assist when our time comes! Remember,

"an injustice to one is an injustice to all".

Shane O'Brien Labour Relations Officer

PSAC AND UTE ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO FIGHT THE CUTS

The Liberal government's expenditure review program, which will cut \$11 billion from existing government programs, is now taking its toll on workers at the Canada Revenue Agency. The objective of the review program is to re-allocate funding to what is referred to as higher-priority spending. It's ironic that while the government is promising Canadians better access to federal services, the CRA is closing its Cash and Client Service counters.

Obviously, providing service at these counters to some of the most vulnerable in our society – seniors, new Canadians and those with lower incomes – does not rank as a high priority with this government. Nor do core services and programs such as health protection, borders and food inspection, which already suffer from lack of funding, and which are also being subjected to expenditure review.

The PSAC is clearly opposed to any government measures, such as the last federal budget and the ongoing expenditure review, that will compromise the quality of service to Canadians. The union is also firmly opposed to any measure that will put a greater burden on our members. If the Martin government truly wants to ensure quality public services, they need to make the necessary investment in both programs and human resources.

UTE has taken the lead in fighting back against the Agency's proposed cuts in service. I applaud the work of your leadership and your members in developing plans of action to convince the Agency and the government that this is the wrong way to go. The response of the public and Members of Parliament to the message from UTE members has been significant. Their response clearly shows why CRA and the Liberal government have not been forthcoming in advising Canadians about their plans to close the Cash and Client Service counters.

PSAC is committed to working with UTE throughout this campaign with both financial and human resources. Together, we will expose the quiet destruction of federal public services and protect our members and service to the public.

June 06, 2005

Nycole Turmel, PSAC National President

(Note this article was written prior to the Commissioner's announcement not to close the cash counters)

While attending Labour College last year, I learned Union Activists make history every day.

We may not always see it, and we may not always feel it, but we actually do.

Well June 17th today, is one of those days that we can see it.

Our "**You'll miss us when we're gone! 2006**" campaign has truly made a difference. It makes me proud to be a part of history.

Well done, Brothers and Sisters. Our battle is not yet over, but let's take this time to celebrate.

This is what solidarity is all about.....

Ian Daykin, Edmonton Local President

ON LINE PETITION

Go to the UTE web page and sign the following petition:

"We the undersigned urge the Minister of National Revenue to maintain the current access level of the Client Service counters across Canada."

Solicit the support of your family and friends to sign this petition. The more voices heard, the greater the impact...

www.ute-sei.org



Here Today – Gone Tomorrow!!

W O R K F O R C E A D J U S T M E N T

Look beside you. Is the same co-worker that has always been there, still there? Or is the desk empty?

The CRA is proceeding with several major initiatives that not only may affect the person next to you but could also affect you.

UTE's campaign against the Client Service Cash and Counter cutbacks is up and running as we try and educate not only the public, but politicians, special interest groups and our members.

The CRA is in the midst of, or has already completed the following initiatives that could or have affected your job: (1) closing of "ALL" cash and counter service (2) net file – e-file – tele-file (3) bar coding of both individual and corporate tax returns (4) Compensation Service regionalization (5) regionalization of Individual Enquiries functions, such as telephone enquiries (6) centralization of Business Window functions (7) contracting out of Finance and Administration workload.

Your Union is aware of all of these and more and we are working to ensure your job security is a priority. Your Collective Agreement ensures you have job security rights and they are found in the Work Force Adjustment Appendix. You should familiarize yourself with this part of your contract and don't be afraid to ask questions. You can ask your Local Union Representative, your human resource contact (if you still have one) or your manager.

As your Executive Council Member responsible for job security, I want to assure you that we are diligently working at keeping you employed.

We initiated a National Joint Work Force Adjustment Committee with the employer. The first meeting was held May 18, 2005.

National committees of this nature are important but local and regional committees are even more vital to ensure your future. You should talk to your local and regional UTE representatives and ask if they are part of a Joint WFA Committee. If they say they are not, ask them why not? If they say because local or regional management won't agree, then ask your manager why the employer is so reluctant.

Many of the CRA's initiatives make no sense to your Union, others involving technological changes are inevitable. We need you to ask the important questions. We need you to go to your Member of Parliament and ask them why the Government is doing these things. We need you to write letters to the editor of your local newspaper about the service cuts to the public. We need you to talk to your family, your friends, and your neighbors and tell them that these service cuts are a disservice.

Union leaders can lead, but the membership is the strength. We now have the intensity and the determination to show the CRA and the Government that their plan is a disservice to the Canadian public.

You cannot put this off. Your future is at stake, and your future is now.

Nick Stein Chair UTE National Work Force Adjustment Committee.

YOU CAN COUNT ME IN

Why should I support the campaign being launched by the Budget Impact Committee of my union?

Although budget cuts often lead sooner or later to job losses, a normal human reaction on the part of someone caught up in their daily lives is to think that their name will not come up and they will not be affected.

Governments like Multi National Corporations are trying to do more with less and the result is always deterioration in services to the public, to clients or to workers. These budget cuts are not going to reduce our taxes or raise our salaries.

The loss of one's job is a grievous event. The impact ripples through the household, the workplace and the community. Families fall prey to the economic demons of day to day life. The workplace is impacted as the survivors fear further job losses, maybe their own. Stress builds as morale and wellness erode. We are all vulnerable to this evil that is beyond our individual control.

In solidarity we can fight this evil. Our union has organized and instituted a campaign to counteract proposed job cuts. The Budget Impact Campaign is alive and well. Our efforts to date have successfully stopped the proposed cuts at the Cash Counter. Much more remains to be accomplished.

- I will wear the button; "***You'll miss us when we're gone! 2006.***"
- I will help handout pamphlets and brochures.
- I will educate my family, my friends and my neighbours about the proposed job cuts and the terrible consequences.
- I will sign the online petition.
- I will support my Union.

By supporting our Union's Campaign, we support our fellow Sisters and Brothers.

CAN WE COUNT ON YOU ?

Denis Lalancette, 2nd National VP UTE



LETTERS TO EDITORS

MAY 24, 2005 THE KINGSTON WHIG-STANDARD

As the local president of the Union of Taxation Employees, I want to make Kingston residents aware of upcoming changes to the level of service they receive from their local Canada Revenue Agency office. People aren't always cognizant of changes that take place over a long period of time. I've worked as an employee in the client services section for close to 20 years. When I was first hired, we provided counter and phone service locally to Kingston-and-area clients. We knew our clients and their needs. A few years ago, we lost our phone service to a call centre. Service, as anyone will tell you who has ever tried to call our toll-free number, has never been the same. We also, in the past, had available to the public the full array of forms, pamphlets and guides. We now carry next to none and expect citizens to download forms from their computers or to phone and wait days for delivery. The number of staff who work in client services has steadily declined over the years, and when people retire they're not replaced. Therefore, staff knowledge and expertise is in gradual but steady decline. It's been proposed that our cash counter be closed as of April 2006 and that our enquiry counter be available only by appointment. The Canada Revenue Agency is dictating to the public the level of service it's going to provide. This is a public service. It's the public that pays for this service with hard-earned tax dollars. The public should dictate the level of service, not the Canada Revenue Agency. These cuts particularly hurt the most vulnerable in our society, especially seniors, low-income earners, new Canadians and small business owners. If you don't agree with the cuts in service, please contact your member of Parliament. It isn't too late to reverse this trend.

David Berofe President Union of Taxation Employees Local 00011

Service needed by clients JUN 02, 2005 THE KINGSTON WHIG-STANDARD PAGE: 4

We're writing to thank David Berofe for his letter "Service cuts affect public" (May 24). He's making the public aware of a proposal to eliminate the Canada Revenue Agency cash desk in Kingston and decreased accessibility to Canada Revenue Agency information personnel. Although we don't officially represent the industry, I believe we speak on behalf of many local tax practitioners in saying what a loss it will be if this happens. If the cash desk closes in April 2006, there will be no place for us to deliver the hundreds of thousands of dollars we and the other tax companies collect annually for the Canada Revenue Agency for no fee. Instead, our clients will have to either mail the money or pay through their banks, both of which have associated costs. This may seem like a small thing, but for many of our clients it would be the removal of a service they've come to rely on. The move to have information available by appointment only is absurd. At present, the Canada Revenue Agency office is the one place we can get consistent information on the status of client files. The toll-free number isn't sufficient. Furthermore, it's rarely accessible during tax season, when it's most vitally needed. What's also vitally needed is continuation of the excellent personal assistance we receive from our local, dedicated, service-oriented Canada Revenue Agency staff on behalf of our clients. We're sending a copy of Berofe's letter and a copy of ours to our local MP, Peter Milliken, to try to stop this government-driven death march of service - ironically by the very agency that makes money for the Government of Canada.

Julia Clark Janet Leduc, Kingston



LETTERS TO EDITORS

Editor's Note: This is a response to Doug Gaetz's letter to the editor on service cuts to the public.

To Whom It May Concern,

I cannot believe that in days like these, when ordinary Canadians like myself are taxed to the hilt, that you would have the unmitigated gall to suggest that a government agency should not find ways to serve the public more efficiently and therefore less expensively.

The CRA has invested in internet technology that makes it easy for every Canadian, wherever they may be located, to access CRA services and make payments. For those who choose not to access these services online, either at home or at one of the many public internet access sites, the walk-in centres are still available, but RIGHTFULLY in lesser numbers.

Thank you for your suggestion to contact my Member of Parliament. I will do so, but to thank them and applaud the forward-thinking initiative of CRA which is intended to save taxpayer money.

Peter Moorhouse
Halifax

Mr. Moorhouse,

Thank you for taking the time to reply to my letter. I want to assure you that I have nothing against technology and the advancement of it. However, I do not agree that technology should mean that we no longer require human contact. This is what the agency is suggesting.

You mention that people can still walk into CRA and have face to face contact, well in April 2006 you will not be able to make a payment at ANY CRA office, the following year, you will NOT be able to walk into ANY CRA office for assistance unless you have had made a prior appointment.

I do not expect people not to use the technology that is available but we do, unfortunately, have people in our society who do not know how to read or write or how to use computers and in a lot of cases do not speak our language very well. It is these people that I have concern for.

I did not say, as you suggested, that I do not want to use technology, I am just saying that the services should be there for ALL PEOPLE and let them choose the service they are most comfortable with.

Thank you for your comments.

Doug Gaetz, President,
UTE HFX Loc 80003