

CEP reaches \$104 million pay equity settlement at Bell

The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada and Bell Canada have reached a tentative settlement of their 14 year-old dispute over pay equity for 4,765 telephone operators.

CEP President Brian Payne, in a statement released today, said the \$104 million settlement “will bring closure to one of the longest fought struggles in the labour movement.”

CEP filed its claim for pay equity on behalf of the largely female operators, dining service and house services workers in 1992 with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The case was referred to a Tribunal but has been the subject of extensive legal challenges, including a challenge to the Supreme Court, over the years.

At the urging of the Commission, the parties agreed to mediation late last year. The proposed settlement, covering the years 1993 to 1999, was reached in mediation. Current and former employees affected by its terms will vote on acceptance or rejection at a series of meetings during May and June across Ontario and Quebec. Results are expected in mid-June.

“This is a very good settlement made possible by the strength and determination of CEP members over many years. We think it serves justice and provides fair monetary compensation to our past and present members at Bell Canada,” Mr. Payne added.

The settlement provides compensation in three specific categories: settlement money; payment for pain and suffering (tax free); and adjustments to pensions.

For instance, an operator currently working at Bell Canada and who worked the full period covered by the settlement will receive \$16,500 in settlement payment; \$6,000 in pain and suffering (tax free); and a maximum of additional pensionable earning of \$13,530.

The minimum payment will be \$1,000 to those employed for less than one full year but more than six months.

The 150,000 member CEP is Canada’s largest union of telephone workers.