

André Picotte, Translator  
Translation Bureau – Linguistic Services, PSPC Services  
International Affairs Division and member of the Secret Team  
Candidate for the position of TR Vice-President of the  
Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE)  
Telephone: 873-455-4587  
Email: [a.picotte@outlook.com](mailto:a.picotte@outlook.com)

I have been a Vice-President of CAPE since 2009. I also sit on the Finance Committee (which is responsible, among other things, for preparing the budget), the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, the Employment and Benefits Defence Committee and the Communications Committee. From 2005 to 2009, I served as TR Director on CAPE's National Executive Committee (NEC).

I represent French-language translators in the National Capital Region on the Translation Bureau Local (Local 900) Executive Committee. From 1994 to 2003, I also held the same position on the Executive Council of the TR Group of the former Canadian Union of Professional and Technical Employees (CUPTÉ). Since 1994, I have participated in a number of union-management consultation meetings with the Translation Bureau's management team, as well as with the management of our home department, Public Services and Supply Canada (PSSC), particularly with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences on employees. I also participated in 15 union bargaining teams negotiating the TR group collective agreement, and the Financial Incentives Plan (FIP), an idea that I came up with and proposed. In addition, I have been a union steward for 31 years.

The main issue currently facing TRs is interpreter health and safety. Since the start of the COVID pandemic, the Parliament and Parliamentary Committees have conducted part of their proceedings online. However, its audiovisual system does not adequately protect interpreters' hearing systems and consequently claims victims among them. Affected interpreters must then take sick leave, be reassigned to different tasks or even take early retirement. We must consequently put pressure on the TB, the Treasury Board and the Parliament to replace the current audiovisual system and reduce interpreters' online working hours.

At the end of the COVID-19 crisis, the employer called back federal public service employees to the office for two or three days a week. It was a decision solely based on political considerations and in spite of the fact that federal public service employees on telework performed their tasks as effectively as in the office. CAPE must accordingly defend federal public service employees' right to opt for telework on a full-time or part-time basis if they so wish. Conversely, we must prevent the employer from imposing full-time telework. It is an option that must remain strictly voluntary. We must also put pressure on the employer to ensure the safety of the working environment for TRs on site.

In spite of the exemption that allows TRs to work from home on a full-time basis, some TRs need to attend the office more often than others to translate confidential documents due to the type of texts in their division (for example, International Affairs Division). We need to put pressure on the TB to take measures so that it is not always the same TRs who need to come to work in the office.

Another issue facing the Translation Bureau is the chronic shortage of staff and, as a result, periodic excessive workloads and impossibility to ensure translation quality as required. This stems from the Translation Bureau's status as an SOA and the optionality of its services, which prevents it from hiring enough employees for fear of over-staffing. CAPE must continue to put pressure on the government to convince it of the need for the Translation Bureau to regain its former status as a government service with responsibility for all translation activities in the federal public administration. In this respect, we should not hesitate to use our good relations with Parliament, including the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, to set out our position on this issue.

The situation relating to Phoenix has considerably improved, but the system continues to claim victims. We must continue to help our members navigate through any issues they may have with the system.

In the public arena, our union must of course participate in debates on social issues, but only those that directly affect our members, such as pay equity. To this end, we have been building relationships with print and broadcast journalists, as well as with parliamentarians, in order to communicate CAPE's messaging more effectively; this has increased our union's visibility and allowed us to defend our point of view on these various issues. We also use social media to convey our messaging. We must avoid getting involved in causes that do not concern our members or that only indirectly concern them. As for TRs, we must use our media relations and social media to convince public opinion of our position on the status of the Bureau.

Lastly, we must continue to ensure that CAPE's services to our members meet their needs, particularly relating to the timeliness of service delivery.