

**CUPE ALBERTA
2016 CONVENTION
Edmonton, Alberta**

DAY 2
March 17, 2016



**OUR
FUTURE
TOGETHER**



ROBERTS OUTLINES CUPE'S VISION FOR ALBERTA ECONOMY

CUPE Alberta President Marle Roberts used her convention report to outline her prescriptions for Alberta's ailing economy.

Roberts called on the Notley NDP government to continue efforts to diversify Alberta's economy from its reliance on oil and gas.

"The price of oil goes up and down. It's a boom and bust industry. And during the busts, Alberta has few other industries to soften the blow," said Roberts.

Roberts pointed to many opportunities for new industry in Alberta including "development of renewable energy resources like wind and solar and the development of value added industries that turn oil products into gasoline, plastics, and other products ready for the market."

Roberts blasted opposition Conservative and Wildrose politicians for calling for cuts to public services and the wages of people who provide them.

"The Opposition would have you believe that at a time when people are losing their jobs, the government should freeze wages and lay off public sector workers," said Roberts. "At this time, we need public services now more than ever. Taking thousands of public servants out of employment will make a bad situation much, much worse."

Roberts indicated that with an NDP government, labour has a more respectful role in the corridors of power, and indicated that while bargaining was going to be hard as long as oil prices were low, "we are bargaining with a government that respects contracts."

COMING UP TODAY

9:00 am - Don Iveson

10:30 am - Charles Fleury

6:00 pm - Banquet

"The NDP government is listening to what CUPE has to say, and respecting our opinions."

Roberts pointed to a number of long standing CUPE issues that have been addressed since the NDP came to power, including the cancellation of a hospital lab privatization project, an increase to the minimum wage, a freeze on tuition rates, fairer taxes for middle income earners, and better funding for health care and education.

However, Roberts said, there was more for CUPE to accomplish, including winning more control over pension plans and better conditions in Alberta's seniors care homes.

"Alberta seniors care is still a mess after many years of mismanagement," said Roberts. "There is a desperate need for more public long term care spaces. Seniors are taking up expensive beds in hospitals because of the lack of space. Among the facilities we do have, there needs to be more staff, better paid staff, and better funded facilities."



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HANCOCK LAUNCHES CUPE 'YEAR OF HEALTH & SAFETY'

CUPE National President Mark Hancock used his first speech to CUPE Alberta to launch the 'Year of Health and safety' saying "CUPE will never accept workplace violence as 'just part of the job.'"

"CUPE is renewing our commitment to achieving safer workplaces - for our members and for all workers, in Canada and around the globe.

Hancock remembered the lives of CUPE members and other workers killed on the job in the last year, and spoke about the death of four workers in 2009 who fell off a scaffolding outside a Toronto apartment building because they were not properly secured. Because of a bill passed in 2004, the project manager was sentenced to three and a half years in jail.

It's not okay for families to lose their loved ones just because they went to work.

"It took 11 years, but with this sentence there is finally a clear message to the bosses," said Hancock, "You kill a worker, you will be held responsible. You will go to jail. Full stop."

The CUPE President saluted the Alberta government for passing legislation protecting farm workers under health and safety rules.

"This move wasn't without controversy. But it was the right thing to do, and I thank Premier Rachel Notley and her NDP government for showing the leadership and courage to take a stand for the health and safety of all workers."

Hancock went further with his praise for the Notley government, saying last year's Alberta election 'has shown the rest of the country what was possible.'

"The task ahead for the Premier Notley and her government is quite frankly daunting," said Hancock. "Four decades of Conservative rule cannot be fixed overnight."

Hancock also had words for Alberta's opposition parties. "The right-wing is working itself into a frenzy calling for wage freezes, privatization of public services, and the cutting of thousands of public sector jobs," said Hancock. "They argue that Alberta can shrink its way into more prosperous times. They are wrong."

"We know better. We know that freezing wages and cutting public services isn't the right answer in a challenging economy."

"We must help Premier Notley protect and strengthen our public services, to help all Albertans get through this economic downturn. We must help her and her government diversify the economy so it is not so vulnerable to the boom and crashes of the oil and gas industry."



REMEMBERING A FALLEN LEADER

CUPE President Mark Hancock took time from in his address to convention to pay tribute to CUPE NS President Mike McNeil, who passed away suddenly this month, only weeks after being selected to the position.

"Mike was a dedicated union activist for most of his life," said Hancock. "Mike was passionate about union education and as a facilitator he touched the lives of thousands of CUPE members in Nova Scotia."

"On behalf of all CUPE members, Brother Charles and I have conveyed our deepest sympathies to Mike's wife, Darlene, their three children, all of his family and friends."

