

THE OTHER SIDE



A Quarterly Newsletter of CUPE Alberta

www.cupealberta.ab.ca

MARCH 2002

Public Health Care Works for Me!

In spite of government plans to privatize, increase user fees and de-list medical services, Albertans have a clear desire for affordable, public health care.

By Pam Beattie

On January 26, the government of Alberta announced its intention to implement the recommendations of the Premier's Advisory Council on Health, the Mazankowski Report. According to the Friends of Medicare, that signals danger ahead on the road to health care reform.

The Friends of Medicare, a broad-based coalition of individuals, service organizations, unions, churches and social justice groups that has been working to preserve public health care since 1979. Spokesperson Christine Burdett, says "The Mazankowski Report is all about shifting the burden of the cost of health care to individuals through higher user fees, eliminating some publicly insured services and privatizing delivery. It is simply a prescription for a multi-tiered health care system that would put money into the pockets of insurance company shareholders," says Burdett. However, that is just the opposite of what the people of Alberta want.

A recent poll conducted by Vector Research shows clearly that the Klein government is headed in the wrong direction. 67 per cent of Albertans do not want to see an increased reliance on the private sector for health care delivery. The same 67 per cent do not think that there should be an increase in user fees. 58 per cent of Albertans think that the public health care system should be expanded to include prescription drugs.

Last year thousands demonstrated in opposition to Bill 11. As a result, Bill 11 has not been implemented even though it was passed by the provincial legislature. While the Mazankowski Report goes a lot further than Bill 11, it can also be seen as treatment to revive the ailing legislation. The Mazankowski Report was released with a great deal of pomp and ceremony and the government is

spending millions of dollars on television advertising to tell us our health care system is too expensive. As Christine Burdett says, "The Klein government has deliberately staged this formal commission with two years of study in order to give credibility to its plan for privatization."

In the meantime, the federal government has its own commission looking into reform of the health care system. Headed by former Saskatchewan premier Roy Romanow, the Commission is travelling the country listening to groups and individuals with something to say about health care. Interestingly, the Vector Poll found that 62 per cent of Albertans think we should wait until Romanow reports before proceeding with major reform.

All of this is good news for CUPE activists. There is a two-year timeline for mounting opposition. More importantly, the public is on side.

CUPE Alberta has joined with the Friends of Medicare to oppose user fees and privatization in health care. Together we are planning a public campaign to be launched this spring. To begin work, the Friends of Medicare will host two teach-ins, one in Edmonton on April 6 and one in Calgary on April 13.

"Romanow's visit to Alberta provides us with a fabulous opportunity to rally in support of public health care sending a message to both the federal and provincial governments," says Burdett. The rallies will take place at the Romanow Commission hearings in Calgary on April 30 and Edmonton May 14. Watch your mail for more information and visit www.cupealberta.ab.ca and www.keepmedicarepublic.ca for facts and updates.



DANGER AHEAD

CUPE members across Alberta are mobilizing, we're speaking out and we're working together to protect public health care and to protect each other. There is lots that you can do too....

For more information
Visit our website www.cupealberta.ab.ca or
call Pam Beattie, CUPE Communications
(780) 484-7644

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The Other Side

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Sisters and Brothers,

You know the more things change, the more they stay the same. CUPE members all across this province, in every sector are under attack. Sound familiar? We have been on the front lines fighting for our jobs and for public services since the Klein government began its attack on public services a decade ago. And the last few months have been no different.

In January, the government released the Mazankowski Report on health care reform, followed by an announcement that they intend to implement the Mazankowski recommendations. The report is little more than a prescription for health care privatization. CUPE has prepared an analysis on the report, a leaflet has been distributed to all members and we have launched a letter-writing campaign on our website. At the same time, the Labour Board has released a discussion paper on bargaining units in health care aimed at streamlining bargaining certificates. We are working on a submission that will protect our members and our union.

While all of this is going on, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees continues to raid our members in health care, the past few months targeting hospital workers in the Edmonton area. We are fighting back and we are acting on requests from their members to come to CUPE. They want a union where the members are in charge, a union that takes on the issues. Like Local 38 in Calgary fighting the privatization of Enmax, and Local 37 in Calgary standing up for the health and safety with their refuse collectors campaign. And, CUPE locals all across the province stood up in support of the teachers in their ongoing battle with the provincial to increase public education funding. We sent an action kit to all CUPE locals in Alberta and we are proud to have the Alberta Teacher's Association President, Larry Booi, speak at this year's annual Division convention.

Yes, we are busy and there is a very good reason for that. CUPE members are the community. We are the people that ensure we live in vibrant, clean, healthy and safe communities. We ensure that the services that families rely on are there right where and when they need them. This year at convention we are highlighting the work that all CUPE members do in Alberta's communities with the theme "CUPE in Alberta's Communities". It's time to celebrate our work on the job and in our union that makes Alberta's communities great. To look at our victories in the past and to identify and plan our victories for the future.

*In solidarity,
Yvonne Fast*

We're Getting Wired

CUPE Alberta is planning an e-mail distribution. If you would like to receive this newsletter via e-mail, please send us your e-mail address. In addition, we will send updates, CUPE news releases and notice of upcoming events. Send your e-mail address to pbeattie@cupe.ca.

WHO REALLY BENEFITS FROM ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION?

By Peter Wiebe

Advocates of economic globalization such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) claim that removing barriers to corporate trade and financial investments are the best way to help the world's poor. They also claim that the millions of people who oppose and protest economic globalization are harming the interests of the poor. Are their claims true? Are global corporations and their bureaucracies really helping the poor?

All the evidence from the past 30 years shows the exact opposite is happening. The acceleration of inequalities and poverty is clearly visible everywhere on this planet. Some of this evidence even comes from the supporters of Globalization. A United Nations report stated that inequalities between the rich and the poor, among and within countries, are quickly expanding, and globalization and accompanying financial systems are the primary causes. And, the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) also reached this conclusion. In a report on the issue, The CIA states that globalization brings massive inequalities and the benefits do not reach the poor. The report goes on to say that globalization leads to protest and chaos.

The rules and policies of economic globalization, such as free trade, privatization and deregulation have destroyed the livelihoods of millions of people leaving them homeless, landless and hungry. Privatization and deregulation are depriving people of basic public services such as medical care, education, sanitation, and clean water. If the current negotiations on the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services are finalized, public services will be further demolished.

Advocates of globalization like to point out the short-term improvements that have been achieved in some developing countries. However, the achievements are the result of policies that fly in the face of globalization. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank push export based production, which only results in countries shipping away their food production while starving their people.

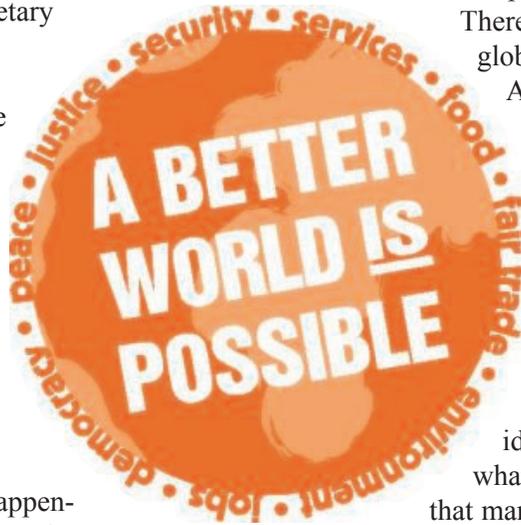
Countries such as Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore have done the opposite of what the World Bank and WTO prescribe. They do not cut their tariffs, permit foreign entry without controls or get rid of support for domestic businesses and local agriculture. Instead, they choose to include import substitutions and develop internal methods to meet basic needs rather than converting to a total export based production system.

There are not very many benefits from globalization enjoyed by most countries.

After three decades it is clear that the benefits are for the rich industrial countries and their corporations.

The false promises of prosperity are the reason that the poor nations joined together in opposition to the WTO at the 1999 Seattle summit.

Why then do these global institutions follow blindly their "failed" ideological model? Do they know what they are doing? The conclusion that many have reached is that they know exactly what they're doing and always have. They will work to remove all barriers to the flow of global capital and exploit the world's remaining natural resources, markets and people. To say that they are doing this to help the poor is pure sarcasm. The gap between rich and poor is growing ever wider.



A better world is possible.

Find out more more on page 6.

CUPE Local 30 Members Save Their Co-worker Thanks to First Aid Training

Two CUPE members who work in drainage maintenance for the City of Edmonton acted professionally and quickly and saved a life.

Their co-worker went down while working in a confined space pumpwell. Struck in the head with the end of a high pressure cleaning hose, the man went down in a heap.

The brothers administered standard first aid and were able to sustain their fallen comrade until help arrived.

CUPE Alberta



Executive Meetings HIGHLIGHTS: February 2-3, 2002

Your Division Executive met February 2nd-3rd in Calgary, Alberta. Organizing in the health care sector and ongoing difficulties with Alberta's provincial public sector union, AUPE, were hot topics.

A new organizing pamphlet has been published and distributed widely in health care workplaces across the province. The pamphlet speaks to the facts of CUPE in the health care system and of the benefits of CUPE for health care workers.

Another brochure was developed to raise awareness of the dangers of privatization in the health care system. With the launch of the Mazankowski Report on health care reform in Alberta, this timely leaflet pointedly shows the perils to Albertans.

In an alarming report regarding the Local Authorities Pension Plan, it seems that this government

is showing their true colours and is blocking the Memorandum of Understanding that the Coalition (Labour and Union Group) reached in the fall of 2001. The Coalition will gather once again to determine the best strategy to deal with this frustrating situation. An update will be provided to locals in the very near future.

The Equal Opportunities Committee is looking for youth and disability activists who would be interested in sitting on the committee.

All locals are reminded to submit or re-submit members names for provincial standing committees to recording secretary, Brother Richard Scarfe. Committees will be re-appointed at the first executive meeting after convention.

CUPE Alberta's next Solidarity Days will be held in Calgary on September 28 and 29, 2002.

Next meeting of the executive will take place prior to the start of convention in Calgary.

Committee Reports

Equal Opportunities Committee

Wage discrimination comes in all shapes and sizes. Sadly the wage gap between men and women's wage in Alberta is actually increasing! Pay equity sets minimum standards in the workplace - like job security and health and safety provisions do - but in this case the standards guide the way jobs are paid. Pay equity corrects the problem areas without lowering the wages of others and it is long past due in Alberta. This is an issue that, in one way or another, touches us all. The EO Committee is launching a public awareness campaign on Pay Equity at the Division Convention.

International Solidarity Committee

After a globalization workshop conducted by Brother Graham Deline from CUPE National, the IS Committee is busy working on an action plan for the G8 in Kananaskis in June. The action plan is aimed at raising awareness through education and the Committee is planning an evening forum for Convention. Committee members are producing background materials for all CUPE members on the G8 summit.

Occupational Health and Safety Committee

Planning for a health and safety conference next fall in Edmonton is well underway. Workshops will include workplace stress, violence in the workplace, and workload.

Political Action and Anti-Privatization Committee

The committee is continuing its work compiling a list of activists in Alberta to receive regular updates and news of action against privatization. The initiative will result in a contact in every local who will receive a "Member Alert" when privatization rears its ugly head. At the same time, the Committee is working on a series of letters to members of regional health boards and school board trustees across the province outlining CUPE's concerns with the Mazankowski Report and with education funding.

Anti-Racism Committee

The Anti-racism conference "Building Links through Education, Learning about Racism" was held January 18th-20th in Edmonton and was a huge success. Participants from all across Alberta left with a commitment to work to end racism. The committee plans to address convention on opening day in recognition of March 21st, International Day for the Elimination of Racism.

Division News

"CUPE in Alberta's Communities" the 52nd Annual CUPE Alberta Division Convention

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Thursday March 21 - Guest Speaker, Larry Booi
President of the Alberta Teachers Association.

Friday March 22 - Keynote Speech by Sister Judy Darcy,
CUPE National President.

Friday March 22 - Newly elected CUPE National
Secretary-Treasurer, Brother Claude Genereaux

March 21st-23rd CUPE members are gathering in Calgary for the 52nd annual Division Convention. This year, the theme is CUPE in Alberta's Communities as we mark the essential work of CUPE members in providing public services and taking action to defend and shape our communities. Debate promises to be lively and productive with resolutions from locals all across the province on a wide array of issues from political action to occupational health and safety to globalization, the environment and equality. And, with these range of issues we underline the activities of CUPE members in our communities.

As always, delegates will hear and be able to comment on the past year's work of their Division Committees and a synopsis of CUPE Alberta happenings will be included in the President's Report.

March 21st, convention opening day, is the International Day for the Elimination of Racism when delegates will pay particular attention to action aimed at ending racism on the job and in the community.

Also this year, elections will be held for General Vice President (North), Recording Secretary, Diversity Vice-President and Area Vice Presidents.

Education Day - March 20

This year, the Division starts off the convention with a bang offering the first ever "Education Day".

Workshops include:

Up With Women's Wages

How to Write a Newsletter

Communicators Workshop

Labour Relations in a Unionized Environment

CUPE member joins Council to help make Alberta's workplace safer

Sister Judy Barry, past president of Local 1099, St. Albert Protestant Board of Education, has been appointed to the six member Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Council representing workers on the provincial committee. Sister Barry also currently serves as scribe on the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

The six-member council is composed of employer and worker representatives. The council hears appeals of orders given by Occupational Health and Safety Officers and makes recommendations on matters pertaining to the health and safety in Alberta workplaces.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

March 20

Education Day Calgary

March 21-23

CUPE Alberta Convention Calgary

April 6

Medicare Teach-In Edmonton

April 13

Medicare Teach-In Calgary

April 28

National Day of Mourning

April 30

Romanow Commission Hearings Calgary

May 1

May Day

May 5-10

CUPE Weeklong School Red Deer

May 14

Romanow Commission Hearings Edmonton

May 11-12

CUPE Division Executive Edmonton

May 25-26

Alberta Education Employees Committee Edmonton

June 1-2

CUPE Alberta Standing Committees Edmonton

OLYMPIC UNIFORMS MADE IN BURMA - MAQUILA SOLIDARITY NETWORK

The Olympic flame hasn't burned as brightly this year as torch-bearers that carried the flame were outfitted in uniforms made in Burma. By purchasing from Burma the International Olympic Committee is supporting one of the world's most brutal military regimes.

Burma's military dictatorship is an illegal regime that cancelled the results of the country's 1990 elections, thereby regaining its hold on power. Even though Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and her party, the National League for Democracy, won 82% of parliamentary seats, she is still under house arrest and her party is prevented from taking office. Aung San Suu Kyi has called upon the international community to cut all ties with Burma and stop importing any products made in Burma because of the financial support it provides the dictatorship. Military-controlled companies wholly or partially own apparel factories in Burma. Profits from the apparel industry are channeled into the military coffers and are often used to buy weapons to further oppress Burmese people.

In 2000, the ILO issued an unprecedented resolution calling for all ILO members to review their relations with Burma to ensure that they are not contributing to the widespread system of forced labour in the country.

Join the Maquila Solidarity Network in urging the International Olympic Committee to stop buying Burmese products by writing to:

Jacques Rogge, President
International Olympic Committee
Château de Vidy, 1007
Lausanne, Switzerland

Wake up! Globalization Affects You!

By Josy Burrough

That was the clear message at the International Solidarity Committee's impromptu education session for all Division Standing Committee members at the joint committee meetings held in January.

Members from Occupational Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Anti-Privatization, Environment, Anti Racism and Newsletter Committees discussed how globalization affects us on the job and in our communities.

Transnationals corporations hold no respect for our environment. Occupational Health and Safety standards are lowered or eliminated impacting worker's health, families and communities. Globalization pits worker against worker and promotes discrimination and racism. Workers, particularly women and children, very often become the first to suffer the effects of globalization. Lower wages become the norm. Workers and citizens rights are suppressed. The corporate agenda is to quash opposition and particularly unions. Labour standards are lowered and governments lose control.

Committee members overwhelmingly agreed that education is the key to change. Some suggestions included a course at the weeklong school and introduction of workers as speakers from other countries that have already felt the impacts of globalization. Ultimately, all workers must make the globalization connection and understand its effects because it is coming to a community near you.

A Better World is Possible

The G8 Summit is a meeting of the most powerful economies of the world and takes place in Kananaskis, June 26-27. The agenda? Globalization. Activists are mobilizing in opposition, organizing a "**G6B Counter Conference**" June 21-25 at the University of Calgary. G6B refers to the six billion people excluded from the decisions made by powerful nations at the G8 summit. Find out more by visiting the website at g8.activist.ca or call (403) 274-9570.

The G8 is only one part of the globalization agenda. The World Trade Organization (WTO) is leading a long term plan to bring free trade in services through privatization. CUPE is a member of the Common Front on the WTO, involving over 50 organizations in Canada. The Common Front has produced a handbook entitled, "A Better World is Possible, Developing Common Security through Fair Trade". Find out more at wtoaction.org or call Anna Dashtgard at 416-53-cfwto (416-532-3986).

PANDEMIC!

By Josy Burrough

Have you heard the word? Know what it means? Maybe you have even read something about it.

What is Pandemic? Rogers Thesaurus uses like words such as plague, deadly disease and epidemic. Pandemic is the sudden, widespread outbreak of a new strain of a contagious influenza virus with a significantly high death rate.

Word has it that the world is waiting for the influenza pandemic, it could happen anytime the next few years. Because the influenza strain is new, no one is immune. Canada and many other nations across the world are preparing for the impact of an outbreak. And this will impact workers in most occupational sectors.

In Grande Prairie, municipal workers have been advised that should a pandemic occur and affect the city, work boundaries will be crossed. For example, equipment workers, specifically backhoe operators, will be required to assist with cemetery operations, even if that is not traditionally where they perform their jobs. Arena attendants may not be flooding ice surfaces, rather, they might find their work area transformed into a temporary morgue. It might mean cross training for many union members.

For example, who will do the job of workers in areas of water/wastewater treatment, road clearance or cleaning of schools etc. should these workers get sick? Local unions should discuss this serious issue and potential impact on their members with their employers.

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Sisters and Brothers

For CUPE members who provide the public services in our communities, the last ten years of cutbacks have meant enormous pressures for collective bargaining, staff reductions, workload, threats of contracting-out and privatization. All of this not only affects us as providers of services, but also affects our friends and neighbours in our communities

What would our lives be like without public education, universities and colleges, hospitals, long-term care, home support services, ambulances, libraries, recreational facilities, snow removal, clean streets and roads without potholes, garbage collection, clean water and sewer systems, women's shelters, detox centres and social service agencies? Would we really want to pay for all these services? Well, that's exactly what will happen if we don't stand up against privatization and cutbacks of public services in our communities.

As the provincial and federal governments download and consider further reductions, it becomes more and more difficult for the elected officials in our communities to ensure the delivery of services. More and more public private partnerships are being pushed on local governments, school boards and health regions. In fact, today public private partnerships are being considered for wastewater treatment in Jasper and recreation services in St. Albert. The City of Calgary is in the middle of a decision-making process over the privatization of Enmax, the city's public utility. It seems as though privatization is the way of the future as governments divorce themselves from public service delivery.

But there is something we can do. Pay attention to what is happening in your community. Contact your MLA, your MP, school board trustees and city councillors. Attend community forums, work with concerned individuals and form coalitions. We are union members AND we are members of the electorate. Our voices matter. By speaking out, we can make a difference.

*In solidarity,
Dianne Wytjies – Alberta Regional Director (780) 484-7644*

Around Alberta

In Calgary, Local 38 is taking on the privatization of Enmax - again. "There is power in ownership and we want to make sure that the power stays right here in Calgary," says Local 38 President, Peter Marsden.

Local 38 has launched the second phase of its campaign to save Enmax warning the people of Calgary the dangers in selling the public utility to the private sector.

"The City has mailed a package of material on the proposed sale to every household in the Calgary. We want to make sure that the public has access to all of the information so that they can make an informed decision," said Marsden.

"Enmax is more than an investment vehicle, it is an engine of our City's economy. 400 good paying jobs are at stake, to say nothing of public accountability, affordable electricity rates and future growth. All of this adds up to economic power and we are saying keep the power in Calgary," he added.

Last fall, Local 38's CUPE campaign made Enmax the number one issue in the municipal election and prompting the mayor to order further study before a final decision is made.



A Deal is a Deal

By Pam Beattie

Buried deep in the back of the Mazankowski Report is a menacing plan for the transition to private health care in Alberta. Put simply, Mazankowski includes a process to rip up the collective agreements of health care workers, take away protections under the Alberta Labour Code and align the policies of regional health boards in order to pave the way to privatization.

It's all right there on page 71 of the report. Mazankowski recommends the appointment of a Transition Commissioner who would be given the power to identify and address barriers to implementation including "legislation and regulations, labour codes and professional legislation, union agreements and conflicting policies." By adopting the Mazankowski report in its entirety, the Klein government has thrown down the gauntlet to the labour movement. Because behind the transition plan is the not so veiled threat that collective bargaining rights, freely negotiated agreements and hard fought for and won protections in the Alberta Labour Code are meaningless when they conflict with this government's agenda.

The government has been aggressive in its efforts to massage public opinion on the costs and sustainability of public health care. The wages and benefits of health care workers have been under attack for years in this province as the debate over health care costs has played itself out through funding cuts. With the same motive, the Mazankowski Report is no more than a plan to shift health care costs to individuals and hand delivery to the private sector. And make no mistake, it is also a plan about lowering wages.

The government knows there is much corporate money to be made by privatizing health care. But, standing in the way of privatization and/or contracting-out are successor rights and job security provisions. Standing in the way of corporate profits are the wages, benefits and hours of work of the people who deliver health care services.

If we need any further evidence of what lies ahead for health care workers, we need only look at what is happening next door in British Columbia. There, the Campbell government has passed legislation that allows the government to shut down hospitals within only sixty days notice. The legislation denies the rights of hospital workers to the notice provisions they have in their collective agreements. But the BC government has gone even further. The same legislation entitled "The Hospital Closure Enabling Act," prohibits unions from negotiating lay-off provisions, service issues, severance and contracting-out from this point forward.

At the same time the Alberta government is attacking public health care it is attacking the core values of organized labour. Nothing less than the foundation of collective bargaining, the legal significance of collective agreements, is at stake. We have a big fight ahead. And, as is the case in BC, it will take building strong community coalitions and the collective power of the entire labour movement to win. After all a deal is a deal.

CUPE Members Working to Raise Education Funding

The CUPE Alberta Education Employees Committee (AEEC) is busy raising money and planning a provincial campaign for education support workers. The recent strike by the Alberta Teacher's Association did a lot to raise public awareness on the conditions of education and our schools. During the strike, CUPE members marched with teachers in their rallies, sent letters of support to teachers and to local newspapers. Now AEEC is going to pick-up on that work.

The provincial funding envelope for public education has left our schools in deplorable conditions, with overcrowded classrooms, shortages of library hours and not enough teaching assistants for children with special needs. These appalling conditions are affecting the educational opportunities of all children in Alberta. The objective of the AEEC campaign is to raise public awareness on the role of all school board employees as crucial members of the school community and to target the provincial government for increased funding to address staffing shortages over the long term.

Misleading “Right to Work “ Laws

The Government of Alberta is reforming the Alberta Labour Code. Organized labour is on guard to ensure that “Right to Work” is not on the agenda.

By Peter Wiebe

A few years ago, organized labour in Alberta fought back against “Right to Work” and won. Recently, a government backbencher raised the spectre of “Right to Work” once again. Forms of “Right to Work” legislation are being implemented in British Columbia and Ontario. Let’s be crystal clear about what this could mean to CUPE members.

Right to work laws have nothing to do with guaranteed employment as the phrase suggests. Rather they are to



impose drastic restrictions on collective bargaining. We call them right to work for less.

These laws impose limits on the freedom of unions and employers to include union security clauses in collective agreements. Union security are provisions that include the requirement for all employees to pay union dues, pay dues and joining the union after

hiring or be a member of a union before being hired. When these restrictions are imposed, unions are undermined financially and morally. After all, if members are not required to pay, then the “free rider effect “ kicks in.

The free riders are workers who take advantage of “Right to Work” laws to enjoy union benefits, wages and job site protection while refusing to pay union dues. The union is obligated to defend these workers through expensive negotiations, grievances and arbitration processes, but is unable to collect for those services. This



of course drains the Union’s finances, effectiveness and viability and results in overall worker dissatisfaction with unions. Ultimately the result is the demise of unions through decertifications and failed organizing and certification drives.

The impact of forty-seven years of “Right to Work” laws in the United States is well studied and the economic and social evidence is not very favourable for the “Right to Work” proponents.

All 21 “right to work” States are below the national average in annual pay. Per capita personal income is lower in the “right to work “ States.

Poverty rates are higher in these states. Bankruptcies, which are an economic instability gage, are higher in “right to work” States. Free collective bargaining states have significantly better medical insurance coverage than “right to work” states. The top three crime rates in the US are “Right to Work” states. A children’s health study showed that the “right to work” states were 62% below the national average where as the free collective bargaining states were 79% above the national average.

**Arm Yourself to Fightback
at the
CUPE Alberta Weeklong School**

**May 5-10
Red Deer College**

Courses:

**Communicating CUPE
Introduction to Pensions
Global Trade and Direct Action
Workplace Literacy**

**For more information call Josey Finley
(403) 235-6955**

WHY NOT USE THE HERITAGE TRUST FUND FOR HERITAGE?

How does one begin to put a dollar value on a love letter from Col. MacLeod to his wife? Or a series of drawings by a first nations artist of the changes he saw taking place on the prairies in the 19th century? Or a bible that stopped a bullet, saving a soldier's life in the First World War? Well, the provincial government has named their price and it comes up short.

Today the collections of the Glenbow Museum and its services to the public are at grave risk because of waning government support. A recent announcement of a \$1 million shortfall for the upcoming budget year and a decision to cut back means the staff at the Glenbow Museum are facing yet another round in a series of lay offs. Albertans should be aware of the impact these cuts will have on them. This is not an anonymous collection of baseball cards. Alberta's history at stake.

From the history of Alberta's military units, to its artists, to its early settlers, to its first peoples - artifacts and archival materials relating to all of these areas are preserved at the Glenbow. It is the staff that brings our history alive and gives meaning to our culture and heritage to the thousands of museum visitors every year. The services Glenbow staff provide to the public are the exhibitions themselves, a range of public programs, loans to communities, community outreach, responding to reference inquiries, and support to First Nations peo-

ple, to name but a few.

Management at the Glenbow claims that the current financial difficulties are a "short-term" problem. However, a quick review of recent history demonstrates chronic financial challenges at the Glenbow. From 1983 to the present, the government of Alberta has cut funding to the Glenbow three times. While funding has not cut in the last few years, the fact that there is no inflationary increase for the annual grant means that each year the provincial contribution is worth less than the year before. The Museum is at the point now where further cuts to staff will seriously endanger the care of the collections. And, cuts will limit attempts to increase public interest in the museum as exhibit preparation and community outreach are compromised. The heritage collections and staff knowledge base at Glenbow are a provincial resource. We think it is time the provincial government recognized it.

Here's a novel idea for the province. Why does the provincial government not access the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund to preserve Alberta's heritage? The Heritage Fund currently stands at \$12.46 billion. \$1 million to save one of Canada's finest cultural institutions is a drop in the bucket. Open the coffers and support Glenbow and other heritage institutions around the province. Avert the current crisis at the Glenbow and keep Alberta's history alive.

The executive of CUPE Local 1645, employees of the Glenbow Museum.

British expert warns against P3 hospitals

Dr. Allyson Pollock, a British expert on the funding and delivery of health care services, has a clear message for Canadians: the privatization of hospitals will lead to a reduced quality of patient care, fewer beds and higher costs. "This would be catastrophic for Canada," Pollock says. "Canada has something that's very precious. You have nothing like the health care problems we have in the UK. If you go down this route the consequences for health care are very serious. The poor will get poorer and the sick will get sicker. It will lead to enormous inequities in provision and supply."

Pollock was invited by CUPE to Canada in order to brief the Romanow commission on the dismal experience in Britain with public-private partnerships (P3s) in the health care sector. "A decade after Britain began to introduce P3s, we have now seen a massive reduction in the quality of and access to health care services, including a 30 per cent reduction in the number of hospital beds and a 25 per cent reduction in clinical staffing budgets. This is directly linked to the introduction of privatization into the health care system," she says.

"Mr. Romanow has said there is a consensus among Canadians that universal health care is desirable. Simply put, in Britain privatization has marked the death of universality," she says



CUPE Across the Country

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan group home workers file human rights complaints on IWD

On March 8, 37 more workers from community-based agencies filed wage discrimination complaints with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

Veronica Erickson, a community integration worker at the Vocational Training Centre in Preeceville, says she decided to file the complaint because "I'm sick and tired of being paid such a pitifully poor wage for doing work that is so important in our community." Erickson, a CUPE member, makes \$8.69 an hour. "I have to work at a second job just to keep my family's financial head above water," she says.

The complaints by group home and vocational training center workers were filed on International Women's Day to highlight the discriminatory wages paid to employees in this female-dominated sector. They follow 60 complaints filed last October as part of a strategy to secure equal pay with government employees for work of equal value.

The community-based workers want the provincial government to provide an additional \$40 million to their agencies over three years, beginning with the budget expected later this month.

Ontario

CUPE is joining with other progressive employers in Ontario in defying a new Tory law. The law forces employers to post information telling workers how to decertify from their union.

After consulting with its unions, CUPE is refusing to post this propaganda until the government requires all non-union employers to disseminate information to workers on how to join a union.

British Columbia

Speaking in your own voice was a theme that emerged from a gathering of aboriginal CUPE members in Terrace, BC. So was speaking out against the Liberal government in Victoria.

Closeness to family, sisterhood, language, culture and caring for others were also among the comments from about 30 aboriginal CUPE and HEU members from across BC's northwest region.

The members, from as far away as Masset on the Queen Charlottes, were in Terrace for a three-day workshop on how to use their union's democratic tools to address aboriginal issues.



CUPE Alberta New Member Stats

This past year, we welcomed over 1000 new members. We just keep growing. Who is the union of choice?

Local	Employer	Members
787	City of Grande Prairie	17
2832	Westlock Foundation	30
1158	Town of Cochrane Library Board	7
40	Foothills School Division	49
2340	Renoir Retirement Home (Calgary)	83
417	City of Red Deer Collicutt Centre	120
408	Sodexo Marriott (Lethbridge Hospital)	67
40	ABS Casino (Calgary)	315
2114	County of Stettler Housing Authority	40
189	Age Care Ltd.	17
520	Sodexo MS Canada Ltd. (lounge staff - airport)	13
135	Town of Drumheller (inside workers)	33
417	Town of Three Hills	13
838	Heart River Housing (Pleasant View Lodge)	16
3550	Sturgeon School Division	164
3484	Devon Schools - Black Gold School Division	31
3550	Through a letter of understanding, Local 3350 has an additional 300+ supply support staff	

Secondary picketing legal

- Canadian Association of Labour Media

In January, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that secondary picketing "typically defined as picketing in support of a union which occurs at a location other than the employer's premises" is generally lawful.

The case stemmed from Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union Local 558, whose members were locked out by Pepsi-Cola in Saskatchewan in 1997. To press their demands the union picketed retail outlets carrying Pepsi products. The Canadian Labour Congress helped RWDSU Local 558 in the legal battle.

In its ruling the Supreme Court says: "labour speech engages the core values of freedom of expression, and is fundamental not only to the identity and self-worth of individual workers and the strength of their collective effort, but also to the functioning of a democratic society."

Pandemic continued...

If a community has not dealt with the impending pandemic, union leaders should encourage their employers to do so and thus be a partner in the planning. Initial involvement will ensure that members who play a part in the process will be treated properly and fairly. Communication about that process with union members cannot be emphasized enough.

First and foremost, union members should be educated about Pandemic. Here are some facts:

--There have been at least three pandemics in the 20th Century: 1918-19, 1957-58, and 1968-69. Each was associated with high death rates, social disruption and high economic costs.

--It is estimated that there will be between 10,000 to 60,000 deaths in Canada.

--In addition to overcrowding of hospitals and emergency rooms, there could be a shortage of health care personnel, should they too become sick.

--Influenza is spread by droplets such as a sneeze.

--WASH HANDS frequently, especially prior to eating foods. Chances of contracting or spreading the virus are reduced.

Union members are encouraged to obtain more information through their health authorities and disaster services.

This is your corner

Got an Idea?

Got a Story to Share?

Send your ideas along to the newsletter committee and we will consider it for inclusion in the next edition of "The Other Side."

Contact Josy Burrough at (780) 539-4060
jburrough@city.grande-prairie.ab.ca
or Pam Beattie at (780) 484-7644
pbeattie@cupe.ca

DID YOU KNOW?

* Of the largest economies in the world, 51 are corporations and only 49 are countries.

* Corporate profits for the top 200 corporations grew 362.4 per cent between 1983 and 1999. The number of employed workers only grew 14.4 percent.

* The combined sales of the top 200 corporations are bigger than all the countries of the world minus the top ten countries.

* The top 200 corporations' combined sales are 18 times the size of the combined annual income of the 1.2 billion (or 24% of the world's) poorest people.

* The top 200 corporation's sales are equivalent to 27.5 percent of world economic activity, but they only employ 0.78 percent of the world's workforce.

* U.S. corporations dominate the top 200, with 82 and Japan is second with only 41.

* Wal-Mart is the top private employer in the world with 1,140,000 workers or 5 percent of the top 200's combined workforce.

* Of the 82 U.S. corporations, 44 did not pay the full standard corporate tax during the 96 -98 period. Seven actually paid less than zero.

Facts taken from CorpWatch.

Leave Them Laughing



The following were answers provided by 6th graders during a history test.

1) Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made King. Dying, he gasped out "Tee Hee, Brutus".

2) Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.

3) Karl Marx was one of the Marx Brothers.