**Bargaining in a Boom – Highlights from the Union Agreement Conference**

By Liz Purves

CALGARY – News that Alberta’s new Education Minister is considering using ‘public private partnerships (P3s)’ to build new schools for Calgary should have parents, taxpayers, and school trustees very concerned.

That was the message from CUPE Alberta President D’Arcy Lanovaz – who said P3s were such a disaster in Nova Scotia that the Conservative government there abandoned it.

"After looking at the Nova Scotia experience, it is clear that P3s will cost Albertans more."

In the late 1990s, the Liberal government of Nova Scotia argued that the need for new school construction was so great, they needed to go the P3 route. The Liberals negotiated a deal to build 55 schools using the private sector.

Lanovaz said the subsequent Conservative government decided to scrap the Liberal P3 plan after costs increased by $32 million – enough to build three schools.

"Not only did Nova Scotians pay more for construction than they would have by conventional financing, but because the deals were so complicated, a number of disputes arose and went to arbitration," said Lanovaz. "The arbitration results added more costs and resulted in poorer schools."

**P3 schools a disaster waiting to happen**

Lanovaz provided several examples of negative arbitration decisions in P3 schools:

- Schools have lost the right to cafeteria and vending machine profits, and might have to give up a portion of funds raised through school fundraising events.
- Hourly rates for the rental of school space for sports groups have increased from $7/hour to $57/hour.
- A leaked report shows that while the government wanted the private partner to carry $50 million in liability insurance, the private companies only have to carry $10 million.

In scrapping P3s, Nova Scotia Conservative Education Minister Jane Purves said, "P3 schools grew too elaborate and too costly."

Neil Leblanc, Conservative Finance Minister of NS said, "The former government tried to use accounting to push the costs of the new schools off book, but they didn’t fool our lenders or taxpayers. Debt is debt is debt, and we must account for it."

"If Alberta doesn’t heed the lessons of Nova Scotia, we will pay more, get less, lose control over our schools, and make them less safe for our children," said Lanovaz.

"My message to the Alberta government is don’t repeat the mistakes of other governments. We have the resources to build our schools – without the extra costs of P3s."

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The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 8 began in the early 1970s with the merger of NUPE (National Union of Public Employees) Local 8 and the United Garment Workers of America. Local 8 quickly branched out by organizing laundry workers in Edmonton, Calgary, and across Canada. In 1911, Canadian postal workers went on strike, and in 1914, the Alberta and Alberta's Labour History

By Mike Scott

Local Focus: Local 8 – a part of Alberta’s labour history

The 1995 strike made Ralph Klein to negotiate a settlement after insisting he would not get involved. The executive of CUPE 8 is kept busy representing workers throughout the province, working on wages and working conditions. The conservative government has promised little in the way of health care reform, leaving for higher paying, lower stress careers. In 2001 CUPE lost acute care members to the AUPE in a contract dispute, leaving the local primarily focused on collective bargaining. A new Premier for Alberta – what does it mean to CUPE?

By Lou Arab, Communications Representative

MEDICINE HAT – Garth Valky, Mayor of Medicine Hat, told 200 delegates at the CUPE Alberta Convention he didn’t think they would see a “public-private partnership” to build a new city arena. “We are going with a P3 here, no, I don’t see that happening,” said Valky. Valky said the city will seek financing from the provincial and federal government as well as the bond market and encouraged CUPE National President Paul Moist to remain. “But we want to operate it. You won’t lose jobs, in fact, you’ll likely get more to apply for from the delegates.”

By www.alberta.cupe.ca

CUPE Alberta to hold Conference on Trades

EDMONTON – CUPE Alberta has announced it will held its first ever “Trades Conference” to examine and address the unique issues of trades in the public sector. CUPE President D’Arcy Lanovaz said that while skilled trades do make up a large segment of the membership, it is important to address some of the issues that are unique to the trades industry.

“Conference isn’t important to hold any conference,” said Lanovaz. “But to Alberta, the trades are one sector we have a lot of work to do in.”

The conference will include panel and workshop discussions about key issues, such as bargaining with elected and union leaders, sharing information and strategies among locals.

The conference will take place April 27-29 in Edmonton.

Health Authority announced they were contracting out laundry services at Calgary’s General hospital to a private company. Other hospital workers, members of CUPE, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employes (AUPE), the Nurses and Health Guild members, and even some doctors staged work to protest in support of the laundry staff. The solidarity shown amongst the health care community forced Ralph Klein to negotiate a settlement after insisting he would not get involved. The executive of CUPE 8 is kept busy representing workers in one of the most demanding sectors in CUPE, but they are making progress on wages and working conditions. Do you know the wages are not attractive enough to make it a worthwhile career choice for young people?, asks President Collette Singh. “When dealing with the private sector employer, it’s hard to negotiate an attractive wage scale as that cuts into their profits, but we are making gains.”

TILMA – A bad deal

MEDICINE HAT – An agreement signed in secret between BC and Alberta to build schools with the help of private sector was made public by school boards, municipalities and the provincial government. The Alberta Government’s decision to abrogate the collective bargaining rights of CUPE Alberta delegates by Trade Representative Eileen Gould.

Gould said the Trades Investment Management Agreement (TILA), was easy to understand. “The key clause in the agreement is that it says government can’t restrict business,” said Gould. “Restrictions can save governments for up to $5 million if they are restricted.”

Gould said the clause would make Alberta and BC “more competitive than other states” since almost every policy action taken by government restricts business in some way. According to Gould, wrestle in restricting smoking in public places, hand over bonds from schools, or zoning would subject governments to lawsuits.

According to Gould, actions to restrict smoking in public places, hand over bonds from schools, or zoning would subject governments to lawsuits. Ruth Bregman, Director of Medicine Hat, told 200 delegates at the Alberta’s Trades Conference on Trades conference on Trades on April 27-29 in Edmonton.

New Premiers, same old problems for CUPE members

NDP leader Brian Mason commented that while large scale privatization schemes seem to be off the table, they may still kill public health care by a series of smaller scale projects.

“The Conservative having learned their lesson with the defeat of the Third Way” and they know that Albertans do not support privatized health care,” said Mason. “While they are unlikely to embark further cut out privatization schemes, the risks that they will allow public health care to die a 1,000 cut deaths.”

Medicine Hat Mayor tells CUPE convention - no P3 arena

By Lou Arab, Communications Representative

A new Premier for Alberta – what does it mean to CUPE?

By www.alberta.cupe.ca

Photo contest winner announced!

MEDICINE HAT – CUPE 888 Member Lorraine Wills was the big winner of this year’s CUPE Alberta photo contest, taking grand prize for this photo of a community ‘going green’ party and also winning in the ‘CUPE at Work’ category.

See all the winners at www.alberta.cupe.ca.
MEDICINE HAT – In his address to CUPE Alberta convention delegates, National CUPE President Paul Moist said the union’s job is to stand up for a “fair and compassionate” Canada.

“We are fighting against the income trusts, the Enrons, the Fraser Institute, the Conference Board of Canada – they all represent greed,” said Moist. “These folks want less wages, less benefits, and no corporate taxes.”

“I am sickened by recent loss of thousands of autoworkers jobs. I am sickened by the loss of thousands of paper-workers’ jobs,” said Moist. “What’s the demand for public services if everyone’s moving? We need to work with autoworkers, paper-workers, CUPE stands for good paying jobs for all Canadians.”

“Our union stands for the opposite of greed. We stand for a fair and compassionate Canada. That is a Canada worth fighting for. If we lock arms as workers, we can’t help but win.”

Moist highlighted several battles ahead for CUPE, including the Trade, Investment & Labour Mobilization (TILMA) agreement, P3s, and reduction of manufacturing jobs.

The National President recognized the earlier announcement by Medicine Hat Mayor Garth Vallely that the City was unlikely to proceed with a P3 arena, and hinted CUPE would encourage public pension plans to invest in municipal bonds if they are floated by the city to build a publicly owned and operated facility.

Moist noted that Alberta locals are leading the way in bargaining strong contracts, and said the province’s locals are being recognized nationally for fighting racism and volunteering in their communities.

**“We want a fair and compassionate Canada” – Moist**

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MEDICINE HAT – CUPE Alberta President D’Arcy Lanovaz was re-elected for another two-year term, defeating challenger Margaret Templeton from CUPE 1606.

Complete convention election results:

**President**

D’Arcy Lanovaz, CUPE 38 ELECTED
Margaret Templeton, CUPE 1606

**Secretary**

Rh’ena Oake, CUPE 1169
Elected by acclamation

**General VP – South**

Carol Boklaschuk, CUPE 408
Elected by acclamation

**Alternate Area VP North East**

Dee Kibler, CUPE 1661
Joyce Baker, CUPE 1606 ELECTED

**Alternate Area VP, Red Deer**

Caleb Rosenthal, CUPE 4733
Elected by acclamation

**Alternate Area VP – Calgary**

Shellina Hassanali, CUPE 4731 ELECTED
Mark Langlois, CUPE 37

**Alternate Area VP – Fort McMurray**

Emily Bird, CUPE 1605
Elected by acclamation

**Alternate Area VP – Northwest**

Ruth Shimka, CUPE 2550
Elected by acclamation

**Alternate Area VP – Edmonton**

Lola Barrett, CUPE 41 ELECTED
Janice Kube, CUPE 3950

**Alternate Area VP – Lethbridge**

Liz Chistie, CUPE 408
Elected by acclamation

**Alternate Area VP – Medicine Hat**

Jake Bratten, CUPE 829
Elected by acclamation

**Young Worker VP**

Danielle Williamson, CUPE 40
Elected by acclamation

**Three Year Trustee**

Gerry Fawcett, CUPE 1169 ELECTED
Aruna Lall, Local 41

**Area VP – Edmonton**

Neil Keller, CUPE 30
Elected by acclamation

**National Executive Board nominee**

D’Arcy Lanovaz, CUPE 38
Elected by acclamation

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