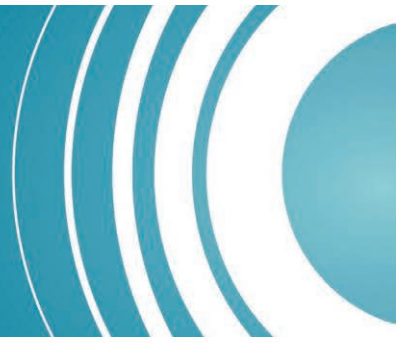


Voice



THE NEWSLETTER OF CUPE ALBERTA |

SPRING 2017

CUPE Alberta joins coalition to phase out public funding of private schools

CUPE AB is working with Progress Alberta and other organizations to call on the provincial government to phase out public funding of private schools and reallocate that funding to strengthen the public, Catholic and francophone school systems.

The coalition's proposal calls for the phase out of funding over three years, using the funds to reduce class sizes, school fees, and increase staff and resources to deal with the increasing complexity of Alberta's classrooms.

According to a recent poll, 64% of decided Albertans do not agree with funding private schools.



CUPE Alberta President Marle Roberts and CUPE 520 Recording Secretary Chris Hymas participated in the launching of a campaign to defund private schools and divert the funding into public education.

Alberta is one of only five provinces in Canada that subsidize private schools. Alberta's private schools receive the most generous subsidies – with taxpayers funding 70% of a private student's costs. This results in more than \$100 million per year being siphoned from public schools to private.

In Ontario, where taxpayers do not subsidize private schools, 5.6 per cent of students are enrolled in private schools. In Alberta only 3.6 per cent of students are enrolled in private schools, yet we have the highest per capita public subsidy in Canada.

CUPE Alberta President Marle Roberts said it's important that CUPE stand up for public education.

"Subsidizing the wealthy and privileged does little to improve education or society. It simply puts money into the pockets of the rich," said Roberts. "We have a bigger responsibility to the overwhelming number of citizens who can never afford private schools."

If you want private schools defunded and the government to invest in stronger public education, call your MLA. If you would like more information, contact CUPE AB. 🌸

A tale of two budgets, and the impact on public employees



Alberta Finance Minister Joe Ceci delivers his budget as Premier Rachel Notley looks on. Alberta's budget invested in infrastructure and public services but Saskatchewan went with cuts and tax hikes for everyone except corporations (who got a tax break).

Alberta's reliance upon revenue from oil and gas has had a 'boom and bust' effect on government revenue for decades. When oil and gas prices are high, government rack up huge surpluses, and when prices drop, deficits appear.

During the 44 year reign of the Alberta Conservatives, the approach to low resource prices was to slash public services and raise user fees and taxes. The Ralph Klein government cut the wages of public sector workers by 5%, laid off and privatized public workers, and cut funding to health care and education. They even blew up a hospital in Calgary.

Alberta Conservatives hiked health care premiums, raised taxes on alcohol, and increased a range of user fees.

With the collapse of oil prices in 2015, conservatives are again calling for cuts to public sector wages, reduced spending, and slashing

programs people depend on.

In three budgets since forming office, the Alberta NDP have taken the opposite approach, holding the line on spending, and protecting public sector workers from cuts. The NDP increased infrastructure funding – spending on the construction of schools, hospitals, roads and other assets. This kind of spending was largely cut in the last decade of rapid growth in Alberta – and Notley argues the province has a lot of catching up to do.

Notley and the NDP have argued that following the route of the Wildrose and Conservative opposition would lead to thousands more unemployed Albertans, lower levels of public services, harm to the most vulnerable citizens, longer hospital wait times, and more crowded schools.

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The spring budget from Saskatchewan backs up Notley's claims.

In Saskatchewan, rather than protect services and public sector workers, Premier Brad Wall has cut deeply. He increased the provincial sales tax from 5% to 6% and widened the number of things the tax is charged on to include food and children's clothing. The Saskatchewan government is closing half of all libraries, cutting municipal grants (meaning more cuts to come), and shutting down a rural bus service that's been in place for decades. Education and health care have seen reductions in their budgets, meaning longer wait times and more crowded hospitals. Fees for long term care are increasing, farmers will pay more

for fuel, and alcohol taxes are going way up.

Saskatchewan is even taxing construction projects although construction projects are something most governments try to encourage during economic downturns.

Two provinces, both reliant upon energy resources. In both cases, Conservative governments failed to save during good times.

In Alberta – services and the people who deliver them are being protected. In Saskatchewan, public services are crumbling and public employees are filing for Employment Insurance. 🌸



Climate Plan helps diversify and stabilize Alberta's economy

The Alberta carbon levy came into effect on January 1st of this year as part of Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan. The levy is included in the price of fuels that emit greenhouse gases, and provides Alberta with a means of transitioning into a diversified economy.

The money raised by the levy will be reinvested into the Alberta economy in the form of diversification, job creation and carbon rebates

to help individuals adjust to the levy. Two-thirds of all Albertans will receive a rebate.

If you are interested in learning more, you can check out the Pembina Institute's website at www.pembina.org/blog/faq-carbon-pricing; or the Alberta Government's website at <http://www.alberta.ca/climate-carbon-pricing.aspx> 🌸

When is an injury compensable?

A worker is eligible for Workers' Compensation when:

- They are a worker as defined by the Workers' Compensation Act
- There is an employer as defined by the Workers' Compensation Act
- There is an accident or exposure
- The personal injury or illness arose out of and during the course of employment
- There is compatibility between the diagnosis of the injury and the accident or exposure circumstances.

Compensable injuries can be considered in the following categories:

Sudden onset injuries: the worker is right one moment and hurt the next. Falls, cuts, etc.

Gradual onset injuries and diseases: These injuries can come while the worker is still on the job, or years after, the key to determining if these kinds of injuries are compensable is to prove that the work was a significant contributing factor to the injury. These types of injuries include repetitive strain, injuries from unaccustomed workloads, diseases that result from workplace substance exposure, and heart attacks. There must be evidence to support a relationship between the injury and the work.

Recurrences: Often workers will return to work after being off on Workers' Compensation but are forced to leave work because the injury reoccurs. Again, the key is to prove whether the first injury was a significant contributing factor to the reoccurrence.

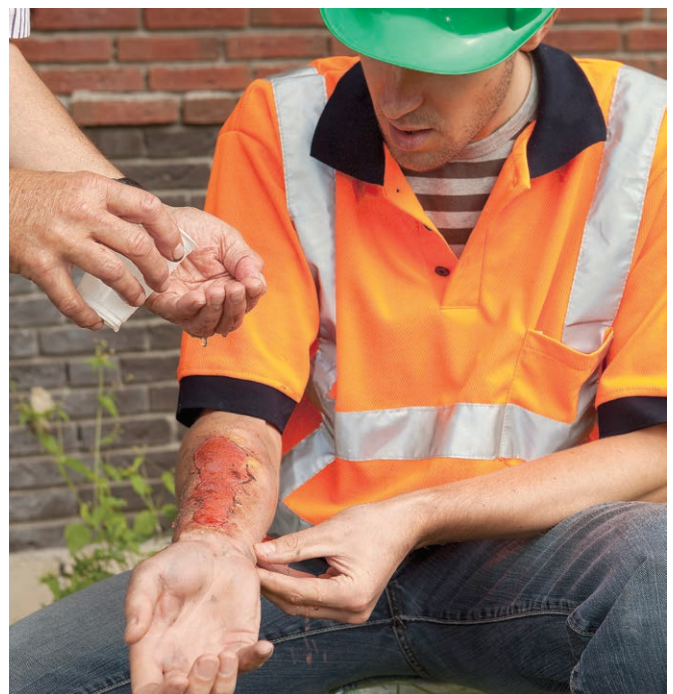
Secondary injuries: Injuries that result as a secondary condition to an original compensable claim. The worker would need to prove that the original injury was the significant contributing factor in the secondary injury that occurred.

Serious and wilful misconduct: Workers' Compensation is a no fault system, and therefore whether a worker is negligent or at fault for any injury has no bearing on whether the injury or illness is compensable. However, if the injury or

illness is deemed by the WCB to be the result of serious and wilful misconduct, compensation can be denied.

Workers' Compensation is protection available to those injured in work related activities. Many workers do not submit claims as they are not aware the injury or illness is work related thus eligible for compensation.

It is generally understood that compensation is provided for work related diseases and injuries that are work related, what is generally misunderstood is the criteria that determines if the injury or disease is work related, and thus possibly not compensable. If you are unsure if you have suffered an injury or not, the best course of action is to file a claim. The worst thing that can happen is that the claim will be denied. If you do not file a claim, it will be difficult to prove later on that the injury was work related. 🌸



If your injury is compensable, make sure you report it.

Acronyms 'r us

How many do you know?

Unions are notorious for using acronyms instead of plain old words. It's hard for activists to keep up, let alone rank and file members.

As a general rule, acronyms do not qualify as 'plain language' and should be avoided if we want people to understand what we are talking about. But they are part of our language – so we should know what they stand for.

Here is a list of commonly used acronyms used in CUPE (there's one!), other unions and in our workplaces.

AEEC - Alberta Educational Employees Committee (of CUPE Alberta)
AFL - Alberta Federation of Labour
AHEC - Alberta Healthcare Employees Committee (of CUPE Alberta)
AHS - Alberta Health Services
ALEC - Alberta Library Employees Committee (of CUPE Alberta)
AMEC - Alberta Municipal Employees Committee (of CUPE Alberta)
AUPE - Alberta Union of Provincial Employees
ATA - Alberta Teachers Association
CA - collective agreement
CIRB - Canadian Industrial Relations board
CLAC - Christian Labour Association of Canada
CLC - Canadian Labour Congress
CPP - Canada Pension Plan
CUPE - Canadian Union of Public Employees
ESA - Employment Standards Act
HSA - Health Spending Account
HSAA - Health Sciences Association of Alberta
IBN - Interest Based Negotiations
LAPP - Local Authorities Pension Plan
LRB - Labour Relations Board
OH&S - Occupational Health & Safety
PAC - Political Action Committee
PIA - Public Interest Alberta
SALAD - System for the Analysis of Labour Agreement Data
UNA - United Nurses of Alberta
WCB - Workers' Compensation Board 🌸

CUPE Alberta scholarship winner



Scholarship recipient Cedar Albus is presented her scholarship cheque by CUPE Alberta President Marle Roberts. This scholarship was made possible with the support of Personal Insurance.

Labour history: the nine-hour movement

The Nine Hour Movement was an international phenomenon, taking place in Canada between January to June 1872. The movement's goal was to standardize shorter working days. Though this mandate was unsuccessful, the movement did have an impact, including setting the foundation for the Canadian Labour Union.

Beginning in Hamilton, the demand for the nine-hour day (some workers were expected to labour as long as 12 hours) spread quickly to Toronto and Montreal, gathering support in Ontario towns from Sarnia to Perth, also as far east as Halifax.

The leading figures in the movement were Toronto's J.S. Williams, a printer and John Hewitt. Hamilton's James Ryan, a Great Western Railway engineer and James Black employed at Montreal's Grand Trunk Railway Works were also involved. Railway mechanics would figure prominently in the attempt to create a movement of agitation for shorter hours. Ryan traveled to Montreal coordinating a strategy of actions in Hamilton and Toronto that might be supported by Montreal workers. He encouraged the formation of Nine Hour Leagues. These Leagues united union and non-union workers, decreasing barriers between them and building connections across central Canada. As of March 1872, with Black as its President, Montreal's Nine Hour League had 2,000 members.

The Ontario Workman newspaper was based on cooperative principles in Toronto by J.S. Williams and other printers in partnership with the Toronto Typographical Union Local 91.

Williams challenged employers with labourers' collective strength. He organized an April demonstration of 10,000 and led a strike against Toronto's master printers. The latter job action led to Williams' arrest on conspiracy charges. Williams and a number of other leaders maintained close connections to Conservative Party leader Sir John A. Macdonald. Macdonald later provided funds to keep the Ontario

Workman solvent and in the hands of his working man friends.

Between March and April, the eventually unsuccessful Toronto printers' strike revealed the antagonism employers had to new labour initiatives. Trade unions were declared illegal in Canada and were judged to be conspiracies in restraint of trade. Unperturbed, John Hewitt led the formation of the Canadian Labour Protective and Mutual Improvement Association in Hamilton on May 3, 1872.

Hamilton leader James Ryan staggered demonstrations over the course of May and June of 1872, ending in a massive show of force. However, the printers' strike and the related attacks by newspaper owner George Brown and other printers forced Ryan to act sooner. On May 15, Hamilton's "nine hour pioneers" defied opposition with a procession of 1,500 workers, a general strike of the city's skilled working men. Labour reform seemed attainable.

The Nine Hour Movement was largely unsuccessful. Employer hostility and waning prosperity spelled its defeat. There were also significant divisions within the working class. Women and unskilled workers were relegated to the periphery.

However, the Nine Hour Movement was not a complete failure. Workers declared that their institutions and political stance were a reflection of their economic needs. The Canadian Labour Protective and Mutual Improvement Association gave way to the Canadian Labour Union (CLU), formed in April 1873.

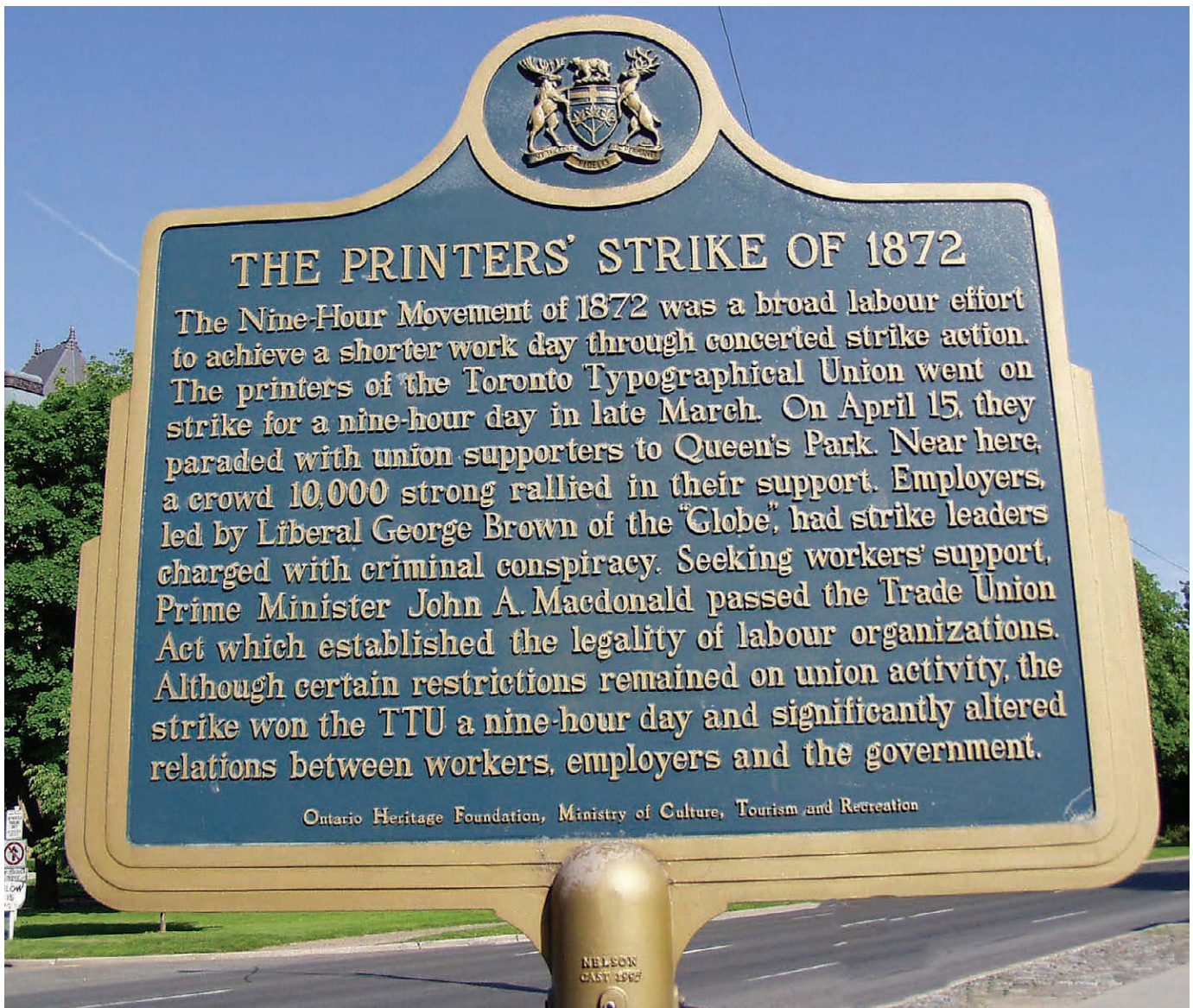
The CLU was possible because working class activists won concessions following the end of the Nine Hour Movement of 1872, these included the limited right to associate in trade unions, the repeal of negative legislation, the passage of laws strengthening workers' rights for action against employers.

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Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's Prime Minister of the time, saw the possibility of class struggle in the Nine Hour Leagues. He feared a recurrence of the British Chartist movement in Canada that included demands for universal suffrage and unending battles between employers and labourers. Macdonald thought that in granting the workers' movement concessions, he would consolidate a relationship with labouring people that would last into the

coming decades. Canadian workers organized more trade unions, fought strikes and created a larger movement, centered in the Knights of Labour, in the 1880's than had ever been possible in the early 1870's.

The Nine Hour Movement preceded these 1880 developments and transitioned a struggle to create unions and organize Canadian workers. ❁



This plaque near the Ontario Legislature celebrates the Toronto Printers' Strike of 1872 and the role it played in bringing the nine-hour workday to Ontario and Canada.

Building solidarity

What is solidarity? Union members hear the word on a regular basis, but somewhere the meaning has gotten lost. Solidarity and being a part of a large union like CUPE is something we can be proud of.

So what does it mean? Solidarity is trust, standing together.

- S** - Solidarity describes people standing together.
- O** - Solidarity describes the way members come together and organize.
- L** - Solidarity is a term that over the years has gotten a little lost.
- I** - Solidarity teaches that change and justice are not impossible.
- D** - Solidarity shows determination.
- A** - Solidarity brings activists together.
- R** - Solidarity recognizes members of all races, genders, religions and backgrounds.
- I** - Solidarity shows inventive ways shared to makes gains at the bargaining table.
- T** - Solidarity shows our employers what teamwork is.
- Y** - Solidarity should be practiced yearlong. 🌸

Voice

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