



INSIDE OUT
SEPTEMBER 2020



INSIDEOUT

EMPOWER, ORGANIZE, RESIST

InsideOut is the monthly publication of the Edmonton Local of CUPW. This newsletter aspires to educate and inform members and affiliates about our union's activities, opportunities, and challenges, as well as to raise awareness regarding all-things labour. Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily the official views of the Local.

The InsideOut committee is always interested in submissions of original articles, photographs, or illustrations, but submissions of general interest will be considered. We will also publish Letters to the Editor should you feel an issue requires further discussion. Prospective material must always concern CUPW or the labour movement.

To make a submission or get involved, contact the InsideOut Committee at communications730@gmail.com.

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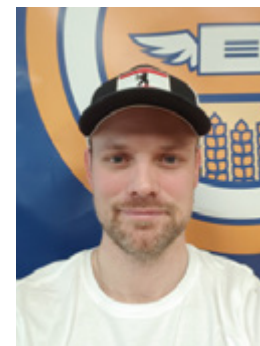
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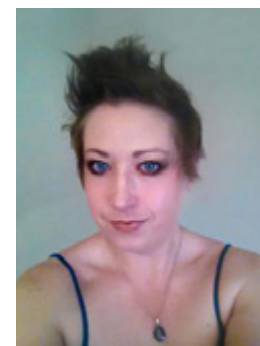
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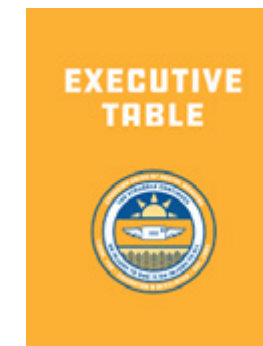
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ARBITRATION 2020



POSTAL WORKERS LOSE

LESSONS FROM ARBITRATION 2020

& LOCAL COVID-19 CONCERNS

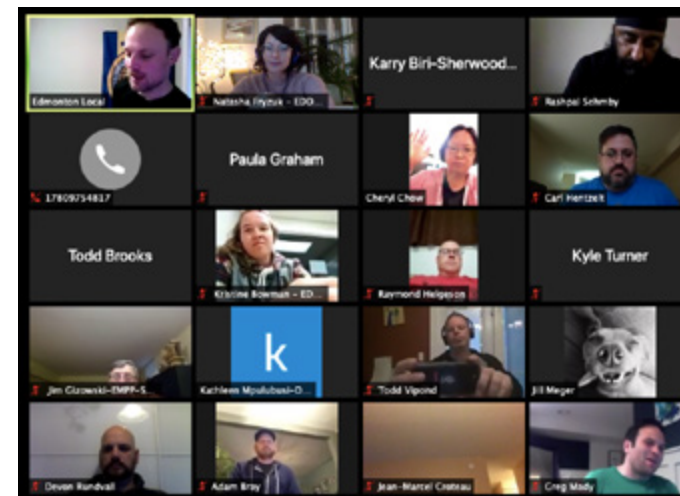
563 days after having our constitutional rights violated by back-to-work legislation, Arbitrator MacPherson imposed a new contract on our union. Considering she was the candidate proposed by the company rejecting each of our major demands, and then appointed by a government only interested in preserving the status-quo, the result was what we've been warning members about since this mess started: the conditions making your job worse will continue to fester.

Yes, our pay was increased to barely match inflation, but in the context of the whole contract, this amounts to little more than a band-aid being applied to a severed artery -- it'll take slightly longer, but we're still bleeding out.

Up front, it should be acknowledged that our negotiation team did the best they felt they could given the limited options they felt they had at their disposal. No one should be doubting their effort throughout this utterly demoralizing process but the deck was always stacked against them right from the start.

Without leverage, there was never anything they could do to bring about a more favourable outcome. As argued many times before, arbitration is not an exercise in fairness anymore than the Canadian constitution is an enforcement of our rights: both are only a performance of justice without any intention to uphold, or apply, it. A mere show, where we are made to be powerless spectators.

We don't even need to look that deeply to see the process for the joke that it is. On the one hand, MacPherson supported CPC's divide-and-conquer tier system of reduced benefits, pensions and wages for newer employees to keep Canada Post "economically viable". On the other hand, MacPherson actively ignored our postal banking proposal which would've created an extremely lucrative revenue stream for CPC, a valuable public alternative for Canadians, as well as better positioned us to compete with Amazon. Saving money by rejecting a way to make considerably more money: again, the performance of fairness, impartiality, and rationality, rather than an actual application of it.



June 6th online GMM.

The list is too long to go into detail here but some of the other serious problems maintained, or created by this imposed contract include: the formal creation of a night router position, no protections against position deletions due to manufactured attrition (big problem in the EMPP), RSMCs being tricked into 6-day delivery where weekend parcels receive no value, a cost of living provision that is designed to never trigger despite our wage increases barely keeping up with inflation, and a refusal to grant full access to staffing and volume information.

Worst of all, the route measurement system governing close to 70% of our local membership, that enshrines the overburdening leading to most work-related injuries at CPC, will remain as is with no mechanism to enforce proper values for parcel delivery. It seems that CPC, the government and the arbitrator are all of the same mind: the beatings will continue until morale improves.

What Now?

Since the arbitration has been made public, our National executive has been thoroughly detailing how all the decisions will be implemented. The hope is that once they're done explaining the technicalities they'll provide a statement on what the arbitration, as a whole, means for our union and what they feel must be done to avoid the same trap moving forward as this contract expires in less than two years. Whatever perspective and program they offer will have tremendous consequences for the future of every one of us.

Where does that leave our local? Until the pandemic complicated our ability to hold mass floor meetings and educationals, we had ambitious plans to continue developing workflow organizers and activists in all our facilities as well as expand this model to other interested locals in our region. As we move into September, we'll see if health protocols relax within Alberta and between the other provinces.

Regardless of when we can resume, the strategy remains the same: broadly build organizing capacity to confront immediate problems in local facilities which, in turn, builds confidence and experience to better position us to confront bigger struggles down the road. Just like any other skill, the ability to properly organize is not innate, it must be trained, developed, and supported. We've seen what happens if we completely surrender ourselves to the arbitration model; we'd be foolish to not fully commit to an alternative approach.

A year from now, our local delegation will be attending a regional conference where we'll be debating what demands will be brought forward for the next round of negotiations and what policies will be directing our union at the national level. Much the same way we've reformed the priorities of our local, it's important we start planning, discussing, and coordinating the change we'd like to see in the rest of the union while doing what we can to lead by example with successful workflow action.

EMPP COVID-19 Case & Mandatory Masks

As many of you may already know, one of our members in the EMPP tested positive for COVID-19 on Aug 21. Their last day of work before going into isolation and seeking testing was Aug 16. AHS intervened immediately after the case was confirmed and the EMPP was shut down for a complete fumigated deep-cleaning. Those on scheduled shifts that were cancelled were sent home with pay, and regular operations resumed Aug 22 at 10am. Anyone in close contact with the member was instructed to self-isolate (with pay) and seek testing.

(Continued on next page)

As of writing this, neither the self-isolating members or AHS tracking have resulted in any more confirmed cases.

Although many of us are suffering pandemic fatigue and may be letting our guard down, this latest scare should remind us to remain vigilant in our health measures. Last month, Edmonton city council passed a bylaw that makes wearing a mask mandatory for all public, indoor places. Although this bylaw applies to our Edmonton members at retail outlets and counters dealing with the public, it does not apply to our members while working in the depots or processing plant. Despite this bylaw not applying to most of our Edmonton members while at work, our local union Executive is strongly encouraging our members to always wear a mask while working in their facilities.

The biggest reason for this appeal is that when a person is infected with C19, that person might not show symptoms for many days, or may remain asymptomatic throughout. In either case, if a person is unknowingly infected but is properly wearing a mask that fully covers their nose and mouth, it will drastically reduce the potential, and extent, the virus could spread throughout the workplace. Wearing a mask during this pandemic is a small gesture of consideration that will help keep ourselves and our co-workers safer.

As we've said from the beginning, it's inevitable some of our members will contract C19 but the distancing, sanitization and face covering measures we take now will determine how much that infection is able to spread. Getting into this habit of mask wearing before back-to-school and flu season is upon us is especially important because infection rates will likely rise again.

Our local received roughly 900 face masks from the National union office which we did our best to distribute evenly throughout our local of 2400 members over the past month. We were told more masks would be sent to us but were not given a date. We will update you when we receive more but, until then, please make use of other widely available masks, bandanas, or face coverings. As always, our office is here to help should you have any questions or concerns. 📬

By Roland Schmidt, Local President.

UNIONS AND ANTI-RACISM CALL TO ACTION

By Natasha Fryzuk

Recently, Sandy Hudson – co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement presence in Canada and of Black Lives Matter Toronto – tweeted in response to the NBA players' wildcat strike: "What can we say about labour unions and their role as social justice organizations if the NBA strikes over anti-Black racism before unions will?"

In June of this year, I attended a webinar hosted by the Canadian Labour Congress, entitled What are Unions Doing About Anti-Black Racism. Sandy Hudson was one of the panelists, and offered many insights and ideas on what actions labour unions can take to move in the direction of authentic anti-racist solidarity. These are as follows:

- If the union leadership is very white, we can consider targeted recruitment of Black, Indigenous and POC to Shop Steward training, committee memberships, and other educationals.
- Invite Black and Indigenous activists and organizers from outside our union to attend our educationals.
- Offer office meeting space and access to supplies like poster-making materials to Edmonton's Black and Indigenous grassroots, activist organizations.
- Donate money to support Black and Indigenous activist groups.
- Issue solidarity statements to throw our weight behind Black and Indigenous organizations' causes and events.

The fact that these discussions, and corresponding protests, are now happening all over North America makes it a perfect time to prioritize this call to action, and I can't think of a better place to do so than within our own union. In the past year our local has shown we can be brave, vulnerable, able to take risks, and to have difficult conversations. We never need to wait for direction to come from National to do so.

Feedback and suggestions are welcome at communications 730@gmail.com 📬

AS THE WORLD CHANGES HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

By Rashpal Sehmy, Health & Safety Officer

Hoping everyone is doing well, as the world has changed with various restrictions placed upon us due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Workers must adapt to these changes around them, not only in their workplaces but also in how they may be struggling from heightened anxiety.

This reminds me of a few phone calls I have received in the office recently, as we continue to help our members in need. Some members wanted to thank us for our work, one in particular saying, "others may not see what you and the officers are doing to help those of us with mental health issues and deep-rooted psychological issues."

The real question is, how are you and the other officers in the local doing?" The conversation went from this to: "with all the protests happening around the world, I hope you are not being mistreated by our members or those in the public." As I sat there listening, I must say I was genuinely pleased that members of our local were concerned for the wellbeing of myself, and all our full-time officers.

Other members in need found that - for whatever reasons during their quarantine - their leave was coded incorrectly, or their personal time was used instead of special leave with pay. Because these members reached out to our office, we have been able to include them in a group grievance. It is always important to reach out when things go awry to ensure time limits are not missed in filing grievances. The same would hold true if you have received any type of discipline, including suspension, discharge, or release for incapacity. Contacting your respective Shop Stewards or the Grievance Office and ensuring the proper grievances are filed is an important piece of maintaining our rights.

Also, thanks to the Shop Stewards and members who have reached out to our office to report any injury on duty. This has been an immense help, especially in guiding members to fill out any necessary forms.

As we move about in our daily workplaces, and life in general, if you feel the need to reach out for help, the below list has various resources available to those seeking aid.

- Call 211 for 24-hour information and referral line connecting you to social health and government services.
- Distress Line: 780-482-4357 (HELP) Provides: crisis intervention, suicide prevention, family violence prevention, emergency intervention and response, emotional support, community resource referral.
- Canadian Mental Health Association Website (Includes Resources for Indigenous Peoples): edmonton.cmha.ca / 24 Hour Distress Line: 780-482-4357
- Alberta Health Services: 24 Hour Addiction Line: 1-866-332-2322
- Alberta Health Services: 24 Hour Mental Health Line: 1-877-303-2642 📬



WORKFLOW ACTION AT DEPOT 2

SOLVING THE PARKING ISSUE

One of the longest fights members of our local have faced since the implementation of Taking Back the Workfloor program has been won. After two years of direct action, the parking problems at Depot 2 have been resolved in favor of the workers and Collective Agreement (CA).

Parking has always been a problem at Depot 2. About 2 years ago the city ripped up the street and repurposed the lanes in front of the depot, the place where most of us had to park since there isn't much parking in the depot lot. At most depots, parking is always a challenge. The corporation feels that it isn't their responsibility to ensure safe parking with safe access to our facilities.

For the better part of a decade, most of the Depot 2 staff have been parking on the street in front of the depot. The street had no sidewalk, limited lighting, and no separation from the big rigs that would back off and across the main road on a regular basis. In the winter time CUPW members would have to walk several hundred feet on ice covered roads in traffic to attend the corporation's safety meetings where we were told, "make it safe make it home. If there is ice, don't deliver."

Bad News for Depot 2

The bad news came to Depot 2 about three years ago.

The city sent out a flyer to the neighborhoods around the depot. It contained information that the city would be repurposing the road in front of the depot. There would no longer be parking on either side of the road and a center turning lane would be installed. A CUPW letter carrier presented this information to the superintendent, who responded that nothing would be done. A year later, construction notices were placed, equipment appeared, and tensions rose.

In a less than organized fashion, people began to question the plans of the corporation. The truth

was quickly revealed that there wasn't one. CPC's perspective in general is that they aren't responsible to provide parking to staff. They told the members to park in a nearby neighborhood. It was quickly discovered that the neighbors would be less than receptive to that.

The community had already struggled with a nearby business and the city thus limited the nearby roads to 2-hour parking. The only public parking was a kilometer away; you could get closer by walking on CN train tracks, on CN land, which is illegal and dangerous. In response, organized members put forward a demand using the CA article about parking, but it fell on deaf ears.

Taking Action

Time was of the essence in this fight, so many tools were pulled from the bag. Article 33 was brought forward as a possible refusal tactic until a solution was found, but the membership lacked confidence. Taking Back the Workfloor training was very early and new for the whole depot, but it quickly became very real when members had to walk through an active construction site with heavy equipment operating along narrowed lanes of traffic.

People were allowed to park in the terribly overcrowded parking lot at the depot. The jockeying for parking, combined with swapping personal vehicles with work vehicles, was mayhem. A few near misses and a couple of dented fenders later, an LJOH member demanded that management have a meeting with our Health and Safety officer, Rashpal Sehmy, who states:

"It was clear from a meeting that took place that our employer knew of the construction issues well in advance and this would cause parking issues for our members. Once again for whatever reasons it took a while for a clear plan to be brought forward as to what will take place to get employees safely to their depot."



Parking lot rented from the City for Depot 2.

Parking at the plant was arranged with a shuttle bus to drive employees to and from the depot for the duration of the construction. It was a small victory and confidence started to grow. The organizers were not idle during this time. An analysis of possible walking paths from the plant to Depot 2 was done: It was clear that there was no continuous sidewalk from the plant to Depot 2. This became a sticking point for the membership.

Keeping Up the Pressure

As winter approached and construction finished up we continued our push. We circulated a petition focusing on health and safety and article 36.05 of the CA, which states that the company has to "endeavor to improve parking facilities for its employees," if not constructing a new facility. The company caved fairly quickly on this but changed the service from a shuttle bus to a school bus. It wasn't glamorous but it was safe.

As the Christmas season ramped up, hours increased at the plant and temp labour was brought in to help process. The parking lot became crowded with 5-ton trucks and all the extra staff's cars and the parking lot was jammed at shift changes. A decision was made in offices and it was presented on the workfloor with less than 24 hours notice: the parking lot would move but the shuttle would continue.

A survey map was presented. No real address was provided, not even a postal code. A very heated meeting followed wherein two shop stewards took

on the fight with many brothers and sisters in support. When the stewards departed the meeting, the acting superintendent declared that Canada Post has no responsibility for parking. The stewards confronted the superintendent about lying to the floor about article 36.05. The acting superintendent was obstinate.

More Lots, More Problems

The first day at the new parking lot was a disaster: no one knew where to park and the bus driver (a contractor) went above and beyond to help the staff find the parking lot on the grainy photocopied survey map. That same day, a floor talk was lead by the local manager. The floor's reaction to the changes had been effective and parking was restored at the plant on the following regular business day. Both Shop Stewards were served with two-four notices. (See: "Shop Stewards Targeted at Depot 2" in our February 2020 issue for details.)

Resolution

This brings us all the way to the spring of 2020, where COVID-19 was taking hold of our lives. Social distancing was impossible on a short school bus (the bus company, to their credit, made a valiant effort to keep the bus clean between loads of people).

With the pressure from the workfloor to resolve this issue in a safe and fair manner, the inevitable became real. A newly-completed city parking lot that is less than 200 meters away from the depot was recently rented by the corporation. Depot 2 now has sufficient parking for regular staff for the foreseeable future.

Congratulations to everyone who fought for safe working conditions in defense of our CA, and to the improvement of our working facilities. 🇨🇦

By James Ball, Education Officer



ATTACKING THE TRADES IN ALBERTA

REPORTING FROM THE BOILERMAKERS' LODGE 146 PICKET LINE

The following article originally appeared in Organizing Work (www.organizing.work). Content warning: the article does contain some swearing.

There has been very little coverage of the CESSCO Fabrication and Engineering lockout of the Boilermakers' Lodge 146.

There's an Edmonton Journal article, linked to on Lodge 146's website, that does a good job at getting the official positions of the company and the union: the collective agreement expired almost 2.5 years ago and the two parties couldn't come to an agreement, as CESSCO (a manufacturer of industrial machinery used in the oil patch) wants to cut wages, reduce pensions, and eliminate seniority.

While this is useful information for getting a superficial understanding of the lockout, it is missing the point of view of the workers themselves. So I went to the picket line to talk to some members of Lodge 146 and get their perspective.

Two things became clear to me through the conversations I had on the picket line that day: the jobs at CESSCO, along with CESSCO's reputation, are being destroyed; and an already dangerous job is becoming increasingly unsafe.

The lockout

On June 20th, 2020, CESSCO CEO David Hummel issued a notice of lockout to all CESSCO employees

represented by Lodge 146. The lockout began on June 28th and picketing began on June 29th. CESSCO wasn't set to resume operations until July 6th, but workers were already aware of CESSCO's intention to bring in scab labor.

On the afternoon of July 8th, I sat with three members of Lodge 146 at CESSCO's north entrance, along 75th Avenue and 99th Street in Edmonton, Alberta. This entrance is where security has been escorting scabs in and out. Off to the side of the entrance, there is a large, inflatable fat cat wearing a top hat. In one hand, the cat holds a sack of money. The other hand is wrapped around a worker's neck.

One boilermaker pointed to the CESSCO building on the other side of the fence, "This Local here, Local 146, was founded on the floor of the CESSCO shop [in 1948]. That's what makes this an insult to injury." A more senior member of Lodge 146 chimed in, "It's fucking terrible what they're doing to this place."

Mack Walker, assistant business manager with Lodge 146, says that that in the last 5 years, there have not been any significant raises or increases. A more junior member added, "We're not asking for much [in these negotiations], just want the same shit, really." Instead, CESSCO came to the bargaining table with rollbacks: reduced pay, elimination of seniority, and pensions that would be reduced to less than half of what they are currently getting.

"Where that pension money came from over the

years was off wage packages. So one year, they put in 75 cents – instead of taking a raise, they put that into pensions. Over the years, you got up to being one of the best [pensions] in Edmonton in these shops. It's not like these companies are just giving \$3 an hour. It's coming off wage packages."

What CESSCO is trying to introduce is a pension based on a percentage of gross income. In the past, everyone's pension was earning \$3.40 per hour. Under CESSCO's proposal, pension contributions would be 4% of gross income: "a journeyman here, we did the math, would only get \$1.60 per hour... A first year apprentice would get, like, 80-cents per hour."

Speedups and safety

Over the course of our conversation, the health and safety concerns became clear. CESSCO management has been telling workers that they are losing projects to the competition. Because of this, they purposefully underbid how long a project will take, just to get work in the door. As a result, everything is rushed: "Everything here," one worker said, "I can tell you right now, is so underbid. Everything is always a rush job, and it's like, 'how? We are trying.'"

In one case, a project was bid to take just under 10 hours, but it took closer to 18 hours to complete. "We had to move it, we had to place it here, we had to switch guys, we had to take out the machines that didn't work, put in ones that did work. And so, at the end of the day, we finished the job and, yeah, you guys may have lost money on it, but how is that our fault?"

Another Lodge 146 member, out to support his union brothers, added, "In all these shops, you could never do a job good enough or fast enough, it's always pile more on your plate, hurry up, hurry up." He continued, "From what I've heard – I don't work here, but what I've heard – they've been pushing guys for speed, these new managers, and there's lots of fuck-ups now. We're talking 6-digit fuck-ups."

It's because of this, he believes, that CESSCO is able to claim they're not making money: "Maybe if you

slowed down, paid attention to the quality of the work on the first go-around... It might cost a little more, but it costs way more when you gotta rework shit two or three times over. In the end, you gotta transfer that cost to the client or you eat it yourself. Obviously they're trying to keep the clients happy, so they're probably eating it."

I asked about the health and safety issues this must be creating. A member of Lodge 146 responded, "They'll tell you safety is #1, but that's just their first way of axing you if something goes wrong" – referring to disciplining workers for safety violations.

The right tradesperson for the job?

In the past, workers who came out of CESSCO had an excellent reputation, said the men on the picket line. "This used to be the spot where good guys [worked]. You want a good production welder, and he left the shop to come out to the field" – the oil and gas projects in the north of the province – "if you got a guy who spent a decade [at CESSCO] welding, that guy was the go-to guy to get things done. They had a pedigree here."

When asked about the scabs currently working, one member speculated they were likely journeymen welders, so there wasn't much they could actually do. Boilermakers cut, shape, and form vessels – all things they learn in their trade that would not be taught in the welding curriculum. I asked if they thought the scabs would be expected to do all the work of a boilermaker, and they responded the scabs will likely be expected to do everything.

There are, however, some members of Lodge 146 who scabbed. Before the lockout, someone was even petitioning to have Lodge 146 decertified from CESSCO. The union has a charges process for scabbing, and has been using it. Fines have been levied, but at least one person got around that by choosing to have an RRSP instead of the union pension, as the fine would have come out of his pension. The case has been sent to union headquarters in Kansas City, Kansas.

(Continued on next page)

When asked what would happen to members of Lodge 146 who crossed the picket line, the more senior member said, “You know what? 30-years, I’ve never seen it happen... I’ve never seen someone cross the line like that and go to work when there are brothers on the outside of the fence...” Another member added, “Brother brother, at the hall. On the job, fuck ‘em all. They’re only good union men when it’s convenient for them.”

The attack on labor in Alberta

In Alberta (as well as Nova Scotia and Quebec), boilermakers are considered a compulsory trade. This means that, by law, in order to work in the trade a person must be a certified journeyman or a registered apprentice in the trade. Compulsory trades involve work where public and worker safety need to be closely monitored; as per the guidelines set by the Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board, workplaces require a certain ratio of apprentices to journeymen and a journeyman must oversee all hours and skills of an apprentice.

When asked about the continuation of the boilermakers as a compulsory trade, one member was not optimistic: “I think Jason Kenney wants to squish it. I don’t know... I don’t really want to get too much into politics here, but I have a feeling they want everything done for cheaper [...] and anything they can do to replace us with somebody cheaper, they’re gonna maybe go through that avenue.”

The broader context here is Alberta Premier Jason Kenney and the United Conservative Party’s attacks on labor, including for the sake of propping up the oil and gas industry in the province.

Bill 1, The Critical Infrastructure Defence Act, was introduced earlier in 2020. It threatens large fines for people or groups who block so-called “critical infrastructure.” This includes roads, pipelines, and railways. This bill appeared after a flurry of solidarity rail blockades went up in order show support for the Wet’suwet’en, who are blocking the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline through their unceded (First Nations) territory.



Community members supporting Lodge 146 picket.

Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta’s Workplaces Act, so named under the pretense that the former New Democratic Party government had allowed unions to gain too much power, was introduced in early July 2020. The goal of this bill is to “restore balance” between businesses and unions by limiting how unions can spend their money and preventing the blocking or delaying of scabs from crossing a picket line, and even preventing workers from picketing their workplace.

The Building Trades of Alberta, which represents 18 skilled trades unions (Lodge 146 is not part of it), released a press release in support of Bill 32. Specifically, it was in support of Division 7.1 of the Bill, which they say will “allow greater competition in the way project collective agreements in the province are negotiated.”

So, for the sake of “competition” in collective agreement negotiations, we have a body of unions that would support not being allowed to picket. Clearly there is a lot of work to be done if these groups are willing to sell out their members’ rights.

What will it take?

When asked what it will take to win the current struggle, workers on the picket line were not optimistic: “Maybe these people that they brought in to ‘save the day’ aren’t going to be as good or as fast as they thought they would be. So hopefully it will overrun costs and it will come back and bite

them.” Another member added, “Is there going to be a winner or a loser? I don’t know. No one actually wins in these situations.”

“I’m pretty cynical,” a younger member said, “I think their goal is to probably starve us out. It’s lose-lose regardless. This place is doomed. I’m sorry. I hope that one day it will get back on its feet, but I don’t know... I don’t know how they’re going to do it. It’s almost a perfect storm. There’s a pandemic, a global recession, so it’s like, ‘take it or leave it.’”

“Before this ever happened, I remember seeing on a white board, ‘There are two options’ – I don’t know who wrote it – there was ‘work’ and ‘don’t’. And I was like, ‘I wonder what that fucking means?’ Now, looking back, I’m like, ‘you can either work and be like these scabs, or sit out here.’ You’re going to give us these ultimatums... we’re just tradespeople. We just want to do our jobs, you know? Ah, man... I feel nauseous just talking about this place.”

A daring escape

Shortly after 4:30 pm, one of the security guards went up to the gate and jiggled the lock. He went back to the security truck and got bolt cutters, went back to the lock, cut it, and opened the gate. Two rental vans with tinted windows appeared and began to creep toward the exit.

The boilermakers and their supporters lined up at the edge of the CESSCO property and began walking back and forth. There was an agreement to only

hold up the vehicles for 5 minutes each, which was deemed a “reasonable” amount of time – as required by current law. A security guard started a timer. There was a fear that going over would lead to reprisals from the Alberta Labour Relations Board.

Once the time limit was up, a security guard got in front of the van. He started backing up in order to clear space for the van to start moving, albeit slowly, through the crowd that had gathered on 75th Avenue. The picket then re-formed at the property line to repeat the process for the second van. Unfortunately for this second van, once they made it onto the Avenue, there was an accident between two other vehicles, as well as someone learning how to make a U-turn, slow and steady.

While I don’t doubt that the security guards, scabs, and drivers felt miserable, I am left wondering what it would take to get the boilermakers I spoke with to feel more hopeful about their current situation. As far as the members I spoke to were aware, this was the first time Lodge 146 had been locked out or on strike, so I understand the desire to do it “right.”

But it’s clear that being “reasonable” isn’t getting us anywhere, because the law defines that in a way that will destroy unions like Lodge 146. If we want to fight and win, I’m thinking it’s time we become unreasonable. ✈️

By Kyle Turner, Rosedale letter carrier and Shop Steward

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THE UCP'S WAR ON UNIONS

WORKERS' RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

By Kathleen Mpulubusi, AFL Women's Caucus Representative

When the UCP government was elected in 2019, the labour movement in Alberta knew the storm was coming. Like a hurricane, Premier Kenney has come in fast and hard with extensive damage. In the name of cutting red tape and promoting productivity for business, the UCP government has steadily chipped away at the rights of working people and labour unions. Alberta's health and safety standards, already the lowest in Canada, have been cut further, minimum wage has been reduced, and tens of thousands of workers across a variety of sectors have been laid off.

The Previous NDP government made significant changes to the Labour Relations Code and Employment Standards, bringing them basically up to similar standards across the country. The changes made improvements to union certification and shifted the burden of proof from workers to employers regarding unfair labour practices. The NDP government also brought in improvements to the right to refuse unsafe work and the establishment of Local Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees – rights that we already enjoy under our Collective Agreement.

And now, the knockout punch of Hurricane Kenney: Bill 32, "The Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplace Act." The Bill claims it will save employers \$100-million per year by reducing red tape, enhancing worker choice, and promoting fairness and prosperity. Contrary to what Kenney claims, this Bill does not restore balance but actually upends the table in favour of employers.

The Battle Plan

Under Bill 32, Alberta is the first province in Canada to allow union members to withhold a portion of their dues from going to "political activities." This opt-in of dues would severely restrict the ability of unions to raise public awareness and campaign on issues that affect the lives of all workers.



Illustration by Mike Kendrick / ironcladfolly.com

CUPW's campaign for paid maternity leave and pay equity for RSMCs would be included in this. Other major campaigns on public health care, child care, education, and raising the minimum wage would also be severely limited with this Bill. The UCP wants to reduce "red tape" for businesses but wants to tie up unions with more "red tape" and limit their effectiveness as advocates for all workers, unionized or not.

Bill 32 also puts restrictions on pickets and secondary pickets by legislating where unions are allowed to picket and forces unions to apply to the Alberta Labour Relations Board for permission to picket. In addition, picketers are not allowed to impede or obstruct scabs from crossing picket lines. This is clearly intended to weaken organizing and the right to strike.

Not only does Bill 32 direct impact unions, but it also impacts non-unionized workers by changing the rules for calculating overtime, payroll, termination, and holiday pay. Workers could essentially not be paid overtime after 8-hours' work or not be informed when employers make changes to payroll deductions. Employers can also delay termination pay as well as allow for youth as young as 13-years-old to work without requiring a permit and allowing employers to pay them less than minimum wage.

An Injury to One is an Injury to All

CUPW is not subject to Bill 32, except for picketing an striking which is significant. The Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL), of which CUPW is an affiliate (along with 26 other unions), has launched a legal challenge on the grounds that the Bill is unconstitutional and interferes with union members' rights to association and freedom of expression. The opinion is that this Bill will be struck down by the courts but this is not something that will happen quickly and the intended damage will already be done.

But the fight is on. Unions are starting to mobilize and organize workers with potential plans for work stoppages and broad scale protests. The COVID-19 pandemic has made organizing more of a challenge, but if unions are going to survive the Kenney government, then this work is absolutely essential.

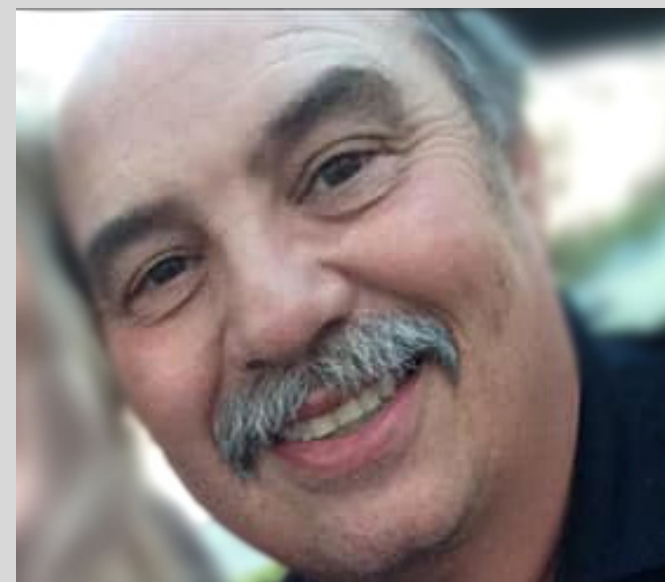
Unions are coming together like never before in order to fight against this government and to fight for all workers that are being negatively impacted by the government's corporate-friendly, austerity-driven agenda. CUPW is supportive of all these actions and we have to be ready to support our fellow union members in this major fight.

To learn more about the AFL's efforts to fight against the Kenney government, go to www.afl.org.

IN MEMORIAM



Heather Trepanier / EMPP



Al Delorme / Rosedale

UPCOMING LOCAL EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS

If you are interested in running for one of these positions, you must attend the next GMM. If you are unable to attend, you must submit in writing to the Union office your desire to accept nomination.

Interim Executive Positions:

Chief Shop Steward Wickets and Affiliates
Chief Shop Steward RSMCs

Interim Non-Executive Table Officer (until 2021):

Chief Shop Steward Shift 2 EMPP

Non-Executive Table Officers:

Chief Shop Steward Letter Carrier South Zone
Chief Shop Steward EMPP Shift 3
Chief Shop Steward RSMC West Zone

NEW EDUCATION OFFICER INTRODUCTION

By James Ball, Education Officer.

At the August GMM, I was sworn in as the Education Officer for our Local. There was little fanfare and certainly no handshaking or hugs over the Zoom call. This is the world we live in now and for the foreseeable future.

My task as Education Officer is to operate, plan, and organize the Local's curriculum – and carry out these tasks safely during a pandemic. The challenge here is the unknown, and while there haven't been any educations over the last few months, that is about to change. The world is opening up, and the next negotiation, work floor action, or 2-4 notice is coming and we must be prepared.

I started as a letter carrier in February 2015, where I toiled for 3-years because of the ongoing "negotiation" that dragged out to the end of 2017. I was made permanent shortly after the "kick the can down the road" contract. I joined a group of activists looking to organize our Local and was one of the first participants in the Taking Back Our Work Floor course as our local began to organize.

After putting the course to use on several occasions, I was inspired to get more involved in supporting our members and I became a Shop Steward. I believe strongly in defending the people who stand with me. Being a Shop Steward isn't being a lawyer, it's about being a communicator, a witness, and a shield.

A Steward's basic function is to keep the membership informed about events of the Local, from course applications and by-law changes, to Local notices and National articles. The next level of being a Steward is to witness events at your workplace and report back to the Chief Steward. Note taking is a must. Being a shield is the most difficult thing to do and to understand. Enforcement of the Collective Agreement to protect the membership from dangerous working conditions and unfair labour practices, bad management procedures,

and bullying is daunting – but it should be done while maintaining a cool head. This takes us back to communicating, knowing your limits and when to step back and hand it up to the appropriate office is key.

The courses we have scheduled aim to give you the tools to confidently and competently do just that. Do you have what it takes? I think a lot of you do!

This is a learning adventure for me. I endeavour to provide an education curriculum that meets the needs of the Local. The new leadership of our Local has been investing heavily in education for just over a year now and we're excited to empower a whole new generation of activists to keep pushing our Local forward.

One of the last courses offered by the Local was the facilitator training course where half a dozen participants joined 2nd National Vice-President Dave Bleakney in a week-long class about how to skilfully educate other members through education courses. This course is a prerequisite to teach most of the courses offered by our Union and now, for the first time in many years, these facilitator skills are being shared more widely among our members.

My goal is to make this Local as strong as possible by engaging the membership with the education they need to operate with trust, solidarity, and compassion. ✈️

UPCOMING COURSES

Basic Shop Steward October 6th to 8th (3 days)
October 20th to 22nd (3 days)

Advanced Steward October 26th to 30th (5 days)
November 2nd to 6th (5 days)

EMPP EMPLOYEES STEP UP TO HELP THE COMMUNITY

By Cheryl Chow, 2nd Vice-President



During the COVID-19 crisis, a group of EMPP employees dedicated their time, effort, and generosity to help those in our community with essential food items. Items collected included bread, jam, soups, cereals, macaroni and cheese dinners, and monetary donations to help purchase these items. Additional items were donated directly to the Edmonton Food Bank.

Their hard work and dedication was recognized by the Edmonton Food Bank Executive Director, Marjorie Bencz. She sent a letter to the Edmonton Mail Processing Plant thanking everyone for their "generous donation in these uncertain times."

Thank you to everyone at the EMPP for showing your support to the community. The letter is as follows:

Dear Friends,

RE: EMPP Food and Online Fund Drive

Over the last several weeks, we've dramatically altered our operations at Edmonton's Food Bank. Yet our food services have continued, and even in these difficult times, we have been able to help those who are struggling the most.

In mid-April, a man in his early twenties called in to ask for a hamper. When our Client Services team

asked about his current situation, he said he hadn't eaten in three days. He explained that he was living on a friend's couch, and had lost his job prior to the pandemic. We made sure that he received his hamper that day. Luckily, we had just picked up a huge donation of fresh vegetables from a local restaurant and he was able to walk out with a hamper overflowing with carrots, cucumbers, potatoes, and other fresh foods.

It is because of donations like yours that we are able to help those most in need. Your contribution of \$290 & 155 kilograms of food ensures that every hamper we provide has the basic essentials, and that we are able to glean fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, breads, pastries, and frozen product from the food industry.

Thank you for your generous donation in these uncertain times. Because of you, we will overcome these adversities, and ensure that nobody is left behind.

Thank you and stay well,

Marjorie Bencz, CM Executive Director ✈️



FREE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND OUR RIGHT TO STRIKE

By Jan Simpson, CUPW National President

The new Collective Agreements imposed by Arbitrator MacPherson address some of our concerns, but also leave some major issues unresolved. This award is a great example of how we cannot resolve our issues with compulsory arbitration. We need free collective bargaining and the right to strike. These rights have always been the power behind our major contractual gains.

Bill C-89 – Back-to-work legislation (2018)

When the chips are down, federal government after federal government has stepped in with heavy-handed legislation. Governments and employers know that denying free collective bargaining and the right to strike is not a good tool for healthy labour relations. They know that real advances and real labour peace come from freely negotiated agreements. For governments and employers, denying the right to strike makes an immediate problem seem to go away.

That is how the Trudeau government sold Bill C-89 in November 2018. This bill was supposed to restore postal service immediately and have new arbitrated contracts in place within 90 days of the government appointing an arbitrator. Instead, it took over 400 days for CUPW to achieve new collective agreements for both the Urban Operations and RSMC bargaining units.

Workers pay the price for back-to-work legislation. CUPW members worked two and a half years without new contracts, with the same old problems we were trying to solve through bargaining back in 2018.

Arbitrators and mediators can award pay, benefits, and other working conditions, but we know from bitter experience they are not able to resolve our workplace problems.

This is especially true with regard to work methods and health and safety.

We continue to fight in court to regain the right to strike. The unconstitutionality of the 2011 back-to-work legislation gave us a moral victory, but we need to continue the fight to restore some of the benefits that were interfered with during the 2011 strike and lockout.


Arbitration is not the way to go for achieving any lasting progress – we need negotiated contracts, and for that we need to exert our labour power from a rock-solid foundation.

The New Collective Agreements expire at the beginning of 2022:

We need to prepare for this fight now!

It is essential that we start talking to each other about how we need free collective bargaining and the right to strike in 2022.

Canada Post needs to know that in 2022, we are determined to bargain collective agreements that address and resolve our real issues. We need to start mobilizing now so we are ready when the new round of bargaining begins. We need to be committed and ready to strike, if necessary, in 2022. Canada Post Corporation has to take our demands and our proposals seriously.

More than ever, we must exert our labour power. The removal of our fundamental right to bargain freely and to strike, is not only a threat to CUPW, but to all workers. 

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CUPW 730 EDMONTON & AFFILIATES

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

VIDEO CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2020

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

WATCH YOUR E-MAIL FOR INFO OR
CONTACT THE OFFICE TO REGISTER
REGISTRATION DEADLINE SEPT. 10

