

Privatization

Your component and the BCGEU as a whole have been grappling with the reality of thousands of members being privatized and laid off in many program areas since 2001. The Ministry of Transportation has been hit harder than most. Since 1995, the ministry has been cut by over 68%. In addition to layoffs, the ministry has attempted to privatize six program areas. These include your program, inland ferries, electrical branch, geotech drilling, sign shop and radio and communications. Many members in other ministries were also affected with the privatization of the Surrey Nursery, and Fort Steele and Barkerville. Apparently our heritage is for sale.

In an ongoing effort to scale down and transfer members from Riverview and Forensic Psychiatric Hospital to the health sector, many Component 20 members have also been affected.

The BCGEU has been working on these issues at various levels.

The ministry joint union-management committee has been discussing the issue for some time. The ministry has shown no interest in reversing their decisions on any of the privatizations or layoffs. Even after we've researched a number of areas and identified that it costs the government more money by privatizing the operations, they don't appear to care. We have also met with the public service agency through the Privatization Impact Review Committee to try to pitch the case with them and try to identify ways of mitigating the impact to members. Union staff have also been negotiating transfer agreements with the new employers, electing bargaining committees, and where possible negotiating meld agreements or new collective agreements.

The union continues to raise these issues publicly through media campaigns, convincing local governments to make resolutions that oppose privatization of important public services and the downloading to communities, as well as through our union members' ongoing involvement with local community coalitions. We believe the general public is realizing the magnitude of the problem and will continue to pressure their local MLA's.