

BCGEU  **The Comp-Ten REPORT** JAN. 2011

Story ideas and comments for the Comp-Ten Report can be submitted to: comp10report@bcgeu.ca



Fair taxes and quality public services

Kelly McDonald, Local 1006 Chair

We've heard about all the cuts to public services: cuts to education, cuts to healthcare, cuts to home care for seniors, cuts to highways maintenance, cuts to forestry and enforcement, cuts to women's shelters, cuts to legal aid... The list goes on and on.

Public sector workers are being targeted for everything that goes wrong and especially for the lack of funding in provincial and federal budgets. That's unfair!

The real problem lies within our tax system. The Canadian tax system in Canada is unfair! Politicians are saying that we have a deficit problem and that they have no choice but to cut public services and freeze wages of public employees. This is false!

In fact, we have a revenue and tax fairness problem. Public employees are simply paying the price of bad taxation policy choices.

Tax cuts to the rich and to large corporations have hurt our econo-

story continues on page 2...



From left: Jim Manson, Component 10 Treasurer, Sid Wonitowy, Trades and Technical Component Chair, Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union, and Mike Nuyens, Component 10 chair

Saskatchewan highways tour

Mike Nuyens, Component 10 Chairperson

A BCGEU Component 10 delegation was invited to visit members of the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union (SGEU) and to visit highways yards in Saskatchewan in October 2010. The SGEU represents public sector highways maintenance workers and is concerned that the province may consider privatizing the highways sector in the province.

The tour consisted of worksite visits around the Regina area, meetings with key union executive members, as well as presentations to the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and other provincial unions. Your component delegation was asked to discuss the impacts of highways privatization in British Columbia for our members, the traveling public and for our province's tax payers.

The delegation felt that it was

very important to share the positive and negative experiences associated with our 22-year experience with highway privatization.

The week in Saskatchewan was well received, and appears to have had a positive impact. Our brothers and sisters in Saskatchewan also report that the response to the SGEU campaign on privatization has been very positive.



The box and wing attachments on this truck were fabricated by SGEU members in their welding fabricating shop in Regina, SK.

Important - Bargaining Committee Elections 2011

Elections for bargaining committees in all 26 service areas will commence in January 2011, with a completion date of no later than March 4, 2011.

Each area will elect three committee members plus one alternate.

The elected committee will then elect their committee chairperson.

The chairperson will be required to attend a bargaining conference scheduled for April 7 & 8, 2011 at BCGEU headquarters in Burnaby.

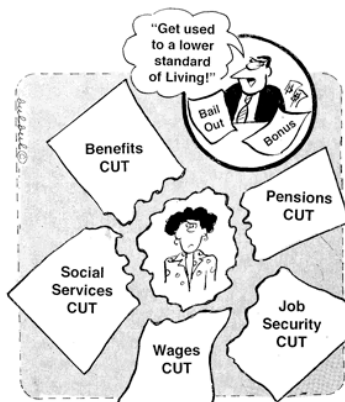
Fair taxes and quality public services

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my. Did you know that the richest one percent of Canadians actually pay less tax than the poorest ten percent? In British Columbia, the government gets more revenue from student tuition fees than from taxes on corporations!

With an average tax rate of around 15%, Canadian corporations enjoy the lowest tax rates of all the G7 countries. Our rate is two-thirds lower than in the USA.

This doesn't sound fair to me. And it probably does not sound fair to you either.



Two possible solutions to fix this mess that the Canadian government has created: a small tax increase to the super rich – people earning over \$250,000 per year; and stopping the irresponsible corporate tax cuts.

Implementing these changes will help keep our necessary public services fully funded.

You can help! Go to the campaign website alltogethernow.nupge.ca and sign the online "equality pledge". It will take two minutes of your time to send a message that you support tax fairness and quality public services.

But most importantly, please talk to your family, friends and co-workers about the importance of quality public services. It's just too easy to take access to health-care or clean drinking water for granted.

Imagine our lives without these public services. It's time to speak up, and start a conversation. You can also follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ATNcampaign

Take action:

- sign the "equality pledge" ;
- Talk to your friends about tax fairness. Talk to your neighbours;
- "Like" the campaign on Facebook.

www.facebook.com/ATNcampaign



B.C. NDP Transportation Critic Harry Bains signed the Quality Public Services and Fair Taxation pledge at the B.C. Federation of Labour Convention in December in Vancouver.



Dave Cumming, Chair of Local 1003, with AirCare member Ken Kan at the East Vancouver AirCare testing location on Charles Street.

AirCare close to 2020 extension

Oliver Rohlf,
BCGEU Communications

The Lower Mainland personal vehicle emissions testing program, AirCare, will likely be extended and even expanded until 2020. Metro Vancouver mayors and councilors have unanimously recommended extending the program, and expanding it to focus on heavy-duty diesel vehicles. Your union has been actively advocating for this extension.

One hundred and fourteen local 1003 members work at AirCare facilities in the Lower Mainland. “We are doing our bit for the environment,” says BCGEU local 1003 member Roy Cross who works at the South Vancouver AirCare testing location. “I can see why some cars fail and others pass, it’s sometimes pretty obvious. I think AirCare is beneficial for everyone, including our environment.” AirCare workers perform real “green jobs” that drive economic growth and help limit our collective environmental footprint.

Metro Vancouver’s recommendation follows an independent review process that concluded that AirCare is the most cost-effective way of removing auto emissions

from the air everyone breathes. AirCare catches nearly 50,000 cars that still fail the test every year – nearly 15% of the total.

AirCare’s environmental and health benefits will outweigh the program costs until at least 2020, the review concluded. Transportation still accounts for nearly 40% of British Columbia’s greenhouse gas emissions. Cutting our exhaust emissions is not only a very important way to keep our air breathable, but also will help avert the potentially catastrophic effects of climate change.

“The bottom line is that AirCare means better air quality and better health for British Columbians, and especially for Fraser Valley residents who are most affected by air quality issues,” BCGEU President Darryl Walker says.

AirCare has been in place since 1992, and the current program had been scheduled to end on December 31, 2011. The final decision regarding AirCare’s extension rests with the government of British Columbia. A decision is due in the coming months.



BCGEU contributed 150 emergency blankets to the November “Blanket BC” campaign which collected blankets for those in need. Blanket BC was started by Gregory Ould, a ProTrans worker and member of Local 1003. Ould (r) is joined by Vancouver Councillor Kerry Jang and Ould’s son. Jang is holding the City of Vancouver Proclamation declaring November 26 “Blanket BC Day in Vancouver.” Well done Gregory! For more details, see www.blanketbc.com

What is “heavy lifting”?

There is no numerical definition of “heavy lifting,” but the common definition refers to manually lifting loads at or above the safe lifting limit as defined by the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety (see their website www.ccohs.ca).

The commonly accepted weight limit for healthy workers is considered to be around 22.5kg (approximately 50 lbs). This limit is significantly affected by the manner in which the material is being manipulated and an individual's weight, height, age and gender.

The risk for injury for lifting over 50 lbs is very high, research shows. Lifting anything above that weight could easily lead to back and musculoskeletal injury - even for individuals with greater strength and fitness than the norm.



Maximum weight a worker can lift

Mike Prystae, Component 10, OH&S Chair

Lifting or manually handling materials is the type of work activity that cause the highest number of musculoskeletal injuries, according to the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety. Injury often occurs when attempting to lift a load that is too heavy. Even so, there are no set weight limits for loads to be lifted by workers anywhere in Canada. “How much is too much” remains a question without a straightforward answer.

While attempts have been made to produce weight limit guidelines, no completely satisfactory guide has yet been developed. This is because the strenuousness of lifting depends on many diverse factors. The absolute weight of the load is not the only factor that determines how much one can lift. How much can be lifted safely is also influenced by other characteristics of the task, such as the horizontal distance between the

load and the body, starting height, lifting distance, frequency of lifting, body position, and quality of grip. Thus there are no regulations that can set a limit as to how much one can lift manually.

Under occupational health and safety laws, employers across Canada are required to exercise “due diligence” and not to take reprisals against employers for voicing legitimate concerns about their health and safety at work.

Due diligence refers to the level of judgment, care, prudence, determination and activity that a person would be reasonably expected to do under particular circumstances. Applied to the field of occupational health and safety (OH&S), “due diligence” means that employers shall take all reasonable precautions under the particular circumstances to prevent injuries or accidents in the workplace. This duty applies to situations that are not addressed elsewhere in OH&S legislation.

To exercise due diligence, an employer must implement a plan to identify work place hazards and carry out the appropriate corrective action to prevent accidents or injuries arising from these hazards.

For further clarification please contact Worksafe BC at 1-888-621-7233.

Argo North Okanagan: collective agreement ready

BCGEU members at Argo North Okanagan should have received a copy of their collective agreement. Challenges to the interpretation of parts of the 2007 agreement by the employer required two arbitration hearings to pave the way for signing and printing the deal. Members who have not received a copy should contact their BCGEU Area Office.

BCGEU Region 2 womens conference explores life-work balance

By Sandy Fellers, Local 1010 Chair

Be strategic with your time. Give up superwoman aspirations. These were some of the pieces of advice delivered to participants at the BCGEU's Region 2 Women's Conference, "Double Duty: Finding Life/Work Harmony." The two-day conference, held in mid-October, featured guest speakers, panel discussions and the chance for BCGEU members to share ideas to better achieve balance in their busy lives. Delegates agreed on one thing: juggling life and work is an endless challenge.

Participants identified a variety of other barriers to life-work harmony, including a lack of flexible work hours, guilt about taking time for themselves, family responsibilities, and the threat of job loss. Numerous presentations were made, including a recent NUPGE survey on women's lives which found that women are



experiencing higher levels of work-life conflict due to unpaid care-giving, lack of control over their time, and an unequal division of labour in the home.

The discussions resulted in a number of recommendations, including better worker education and communication on workplace rights, standards for flexible work hours and job sharing, time management training, and for women to learn to say a guilt-free "no" to excessive demands on their time. Attendees said the chance to network and speak with other busy women at the conference was especially beneficial.

Getting young workers involved in the union

By Jeff Wolgram, Local 1004

I recently attended my first young workers committee meeting, as a recent appointee for component 10. The BCGEU young workers committee is made up of workers under 30 years old from all the union components from all over the province.

The committee really wants to address the apathy that young workers around the province have towards their union. We want to target and encourage and challenge young workers to get involved in their union.

Some key ideas emerging from the meeting included featuring the young workers committee more prominently on the BCGEU website. We want to profile BCGEU young workers, and make it easier for young workers to get in touch with someone in their area or their

component. Another idea was to develop a newsletter directed at young union workers to keep them informed of developments that particularly affect young workers.

The committee is also an excellent conduit for sharing information and ideas that originate from different components and geographic areas. I found it very encouraging to meet the committee

members, who are passionate not only about the union, but about social issues more broadly.

I feel privileged and honoured to be a part of this committee especially as a component 10 representative. I look forward to continuing to meet with the committee and work towards making a difference for young workers.



BCGEU Young Worker Committee meeting in October 2010

Retirement

George Foisy: “Life has been good”

After a long and very rewarding career with the Ministry of Transportation, George Foisy has decided to hang up his ticket book. Foisy has been chair of BCGEU local 2006 and second vice chair of BCGEU component 20 that includes many of the B.C. government ministries focused on forests and the environment, as well as technical and operational services such as Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement (CVSE).

George started his career back in 1974, working with surveyors and testing asphalt, aggregates, soils, and concrete. In 1984, George went to the weigh scales in Fort Nelson, and was made supervisor in 12 months. He went to Invermere as a portable scaler for road enforcement two years later. In 1988, George ended up with the Williams Lake and Caribou enforcement branch of CVSE.



George Foisy in December 2010

George believes he did a good job and enjoyed his work. He sometimes wonders how many lives he may have saved doing the work he loved. It stands to reason that he actively dislikes the dismantling of the CVSE in recent years.

In 2003, there were 220 full-time enforcement officers. That number is now at 160 full-time equivalent positions. As a result, CVSE is nowhere nearly as efficient, and affects everybody's safety on the roads, George believes.

George and his wife Maxine have just returned from a long cruise and are planning more holidays in the future. They reside in the Lower Mainland, but would love to return to the Caribou someday.

Thank you, George, for your 35 years of dedication as a union steward, local chair, bargaining chair, and the many other hats you wore within the union movement. It's pretty clear why your name has been put forward for BCGEU Life Membership! Best of luck, brother George, and enjoy retirement: you deserve it!

Obituaries



William Hall
(1934 - 2010)

Bill worked with the Ministry of Highways in the Dawson Creek Area prior to privatization. In 1988, he became the Trade Journeyman in the Pouce Coupe yard of Peace Country Maintenance Ltd., the contractor.

For a number of years, Bill was a union steward, occupational health and safety representative, and chair of the bargaining committee.

Outside of work, Bill was a grinner and a picker and played music for many dances in the area. He played music for seniors who lived at South View Manor in Dawson Creek.

Bill is survived by his wife Jean Hall, children Lynn (Gary) Noël, Lyle (Ella) Hall, Trent (Kathy) Hingley, Jim Hall, Tricia Grismer, Janet Hall; and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mattice. Both were tragically killed in a vehicle accident last October. Terry has been working with VSA in service area 14 almost since privatization. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Terry, the Mattice family and all their friends at this very sad time.



Kirsty & Kiara Mattice

Local 1005 wishes to announce with great sadness the passing of Terry Mattice's daughter and granddaughter, Kirsty and Kiara