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MEETING SCHEDULE FOR JULY AND AUGUST 2022

Our next general meeting, open to all members, will be held in September. There will be no meetings in July and August unless there is some kind of emergency. Details of the September meeting will be sent out to all members well in advance. Stay tuned.

EDITORIAL NOTE

We did not publish a newsletter in May due to the fact that the editor and the administrator were kind of burnt out after producing who knows how many consecutive issues. Instead of putting out a May issue, we decided that we both needed a bit of a rest. But now we are back, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and ready to produce even better issues of our publication. And don't forget that we welcome article contributions from our CUPE 3911 members. Cheers, Dougal and Evelyn.

JUNE UPDATE: CUPE 3911 BARGAINING

The bargaining committee has continued to engage in productive negotiations with the employer. We have met twice in June and have dates scheduled through this summer. We are concluding our non-monetary negotiations and anticipate presenting monetary proposals in the middle of July.



We have made many gains in improving clarity of processes and equity within our language. We are excited at some of the new language that gives us more input into important decisions and processes at Athabasca University. We continue to try

to find common ground on very important negotiations around academic freedom and contracting out.

We recognize that monetary negotiations will not be easy. We will be looking to members for support as these negotiations are crucial. Our wages have stagnated over the past decade and a half, leaving

us far behind most of our contemporaries in the country. We provide quality work; we are experts in our field and we deserve to be compensated in a way that recognizes all that we bring to Athabasca University and our students.

Kind regards, Glynnis Lieb PhD

AU SILENT AS UCP ARBITRARILY FIRES AU BOARD CHAIR

By Dr. Dougal MacDonald, Communications

On May 25, the UCP government fired Athabasca University Board Chair Nancy Laird. Laird, a former energy executive with zero background in post-secondary education (PSE), was rammed into power in August 2019 when the UCP launched a blitzkrieg against all of Alberta's university boards, replacing 43 sitting chairs and members with their own appointees. Laird replaced Vivian Manasc, owner of the architectural firm Manasc-Isaac, who had been appointed by the previous NDP government.

According to an April 4 letter to Advanced Education Minister Nicolaides, made public by the *Tyee*, Laird provoked UCP ire when she told Nicolaides that the AU board would not be following his directive to increase the number of staff in Athabasca to bolster its economic development. Such defiance of the rulers must of course be punished!

So, supposedly the specific reason Laird was fired was that the UCP is a staunch defender of the principle of keeping a significant part of AU's operation in the town of Athabasca, AU's birthplace. This of course flies in the face of the well-known fact that the UCP has proven over and over that its only post-secondary education principle is that the PSEs should be the handservant of the corporations. They should be job training institutions and nothing more.

We certainly agree that AU should maintain a strong presence in Athabasca but we are also very well aware that the UCP could really care less about the future of Athabasca. Their only goal at this time (and in the future) is to get re-elected and continue to pursue their predetermined sell-out agenda. No doubt they are basically hoping that firing Laird in the name of helping Athabasca will increase the

number of votes they get in the Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock riding in the 2023 provincial election. (Along with that new \$70 million highway bridge that Jason and his crew are helping to make a reality, due to be completed in 2025.)

Laird's replacement is again someone with no post-secondary education experience but tight UCP connections. Calgary corporate lawyer and UCP follower Byron W. Nelson is the new Chair of the AU Board of Governors. Nelson has a long Conservative Party history. He ran unsuccessfully against Kenney for leadership of Alberta's PC Party in 2017, receiving 40 votes out of 1476 ballots cast, less than 3%. Prior to that he worked for British Conservative Prime Minister John Major during his General Election Tour of 1997 and provided tour support for Canadian Conservative Prime Minister Kim Campbell in 1993. Nelson was the Progressive Conservative candidate for Calgary-Bow in the 2015 Alberta election, where he lost to the NDP candidate.



The current administration of AU has made no significant comment on the firing of Laird, either to defend her or to attack her. This is par for the course. Although the new president of AU did recently proclaim that the long-term plan for AU

was to become an even more virtual university, seemingly in defiance of the mandate of the UCP to keep it as bricks and mortar in Athabasca, since Laird's firing he has said little about the UCP or its mandate for AU. Instead AU administration has just the usual canned announcements that Laird is out and Nelson is in.

One should beware of assuming that the UCP has now become an ally of the staff in the fight to maintain the university's physical presence in Athabasca. The UCP vs AU upper administration is merely a contradiction among those in power. The UCP has ultimate power because it doles out money to the PSEs and appoints the Board members and it is wielding that power. Firing Laird highlighted that. Meanwhile, local AU Board members also want the university to stay so their businesses can thrive. It looks like AU administration has for now accepted the new status quo and is keeping quiet,

perhaps hoping for a more cooperative government next election.

One thing that is clear from these power plays is there is still no evidence that the UCP will at some point start acting in the interests of improving post-secondary education in Alberta. As already noted, it has shown over and over that it is hell-bent on simply making our universities the handservants of industry, as per its *Alberta 2030* plan, while at the same time always flaunting that since they are the government they will decide everything to do with the PSE sector and listen to no one. Anyone who gets in the way, including their own appointees, will be trampled.

It will be interesting to see what happens next. Will the UCP and AU publicly kiss and make up or will the issue continue to simmer while both sides maintain an icy politeness? Only time will tell.

ATHABASCA U'S NEAR VIRTUAL PLAN WORRIES TOWN RESIDENTS

By Cailynn Klingbeil, University Affairs, June 6, 2022

Over the past five decades, Athabasca University (AU) has grown into an online institution with about 43,000 students, headquartered in the northern Alberta town of Athabasca. But tensions are growing between university executives, townspeople and the provincial government over how rooted in Athabasca the online school should be, and who should decide that.

AU's new president, Peter Scott, has advanced plans predating his tenure for a "near virtual" work environment that would see most staff work remotely on a permanent basis, with such a virtual workforce considered a way to recruit top talent. Meanwhile, residents in the town of about 2,800 have mobilized to keep university jobs in their community, arguing the near virtual strategy would be disastrous for the region.

In late March, more than 300 people crowded into the lounge at the Athabasca Regional Multiplex to hear Alberta Premier Jason Kenney and two of his ministers share their government's plans for the university. They announced directives for AU to strengthen its presence in Athabasca — the boldest step yet in the ongoing saga over the institution's future.

Bolstering a rural economy

Rob Balay, Athabasca's mayor and a former member of AU's board of governors, led the proceedings at the multiplex on March 24. He remembers the jam-packed room erupting when Mr. Kenney announced that AU was staying put. "There was the largest roar in that crowd you could ever imagine," Mr. Balay said. Mr. Kenney first reminded the crowd of AU's origins: how it was relocated 145 km from Edmonton to Athabasca in 1984 because the premier of the day believed "we can do big and important things in rural Alberta." Mr. Kenney said his government wanted to ensure that such rural economic development continued. "A postsecondary institution is a community and it needs a heart," he said in a video of the event. "It needs to be able to have a culture, and you can't replicate that virtually online."

Mr. Kenney and Advanced Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides said they were amending legislation to ensure permanent representation of Athabasca residents on the school's board. They announced they were asking the institution to develop a strategy by June 30 to maintain and grow the number of people it employs in Athabasca, along with a reopening strategy so that local employees could resume working onsite and the public could access registries, student support and specialized services.

Peter Scott, the university's president since January 2022, was not in the room. While he declined to be interviewed by *University Affairs*, he previously told *The Tyee* he views the government's instructions as a request, not a directive, and one he will not abide by. "We will have a virtual campus," he told the Vancouver-based online news magazine. "And our strategy to deliver the virtual workforce, to make the virtual campus work, has also been agreed to in a longstanding way."

Dr. Nicolaides said bringing jobs and economic opportunity to Athabasca was part of the school's founding mission, and his government wants to ensure that is not lost. "I have no concerns with the academic priorities of the institution," he told *University Affairs*. "I believe they can and should continue to excel as an online delivery institution and reach learners where they're at. But the main concern is that the near virtual strategy appears to also be decreasing the number of individuals that could potentially live and work in the community."

Requiring people to live in Athabasca hampers the school's ability to lure prospective employees, Dr. Scott told the *Globe and Mail*.

The issue of local job losses dates back to 2015 when the Athabasca University Faculty Association (AUFA) identified positions that were gradually leaving the area. The AUFA and the union representing support staff at the university campaigned to keep jobs in the town, but the issue didn't gain broader traction until a community group called Keep Athabasca University in Athabasca took up the cause a few years ago.

Mr. Balay was involved with the community group, which has been raising awareness about the issue through a letter-writing campaign, among other measures. The town council and Athabasca County council also contributed \$22,500 each to help hire a lobbyist from Canadian Strategy Group, Mr. Balay said, while additional funds were raised by the community group.

David Powell is president of the AUFA, which represents more than 400 faculty and professional staff members at the university. Some of those members live in Athabasca while others don't; AU's academics have worked remotely across the country since the mid-2000s. A self-described data nerd, Mr. Powell has dug into the local job loss numbers. He found that 18 out of 25 senior leaders at the university were living in Athabasca in 2016, while today only five out of 35 do. All told, there were 415 AU positions located in Athabasca in 2016; in 2021 there were 299 positions.

Since the premier's announcement, Mr. Powell has heard questions about government overreach. The government went on to rescind AU board chair Nancy Laird's appointment in May, naming Byron Nelson instead. But to Mr. Powell, the location of a university's buildings and jobs are not within the spirit of institutional autonomy. "A university does not have a unilateral right to pack up shop and leave town," he said.

Drifting from the community

AU has operated a "semi-virtual" work environment since 2006, according to its most recent annual report, with more than half of its staff working remotely. In December 2018, the board of governors approved a proposal toward "optimizing" that environment.

By March 2020, prior to any pandemic lockdown, 54 per cent of AU's staff were home-based. In response to COVID-19, all employees that could work remotely were required to. Satellite offices in Calgary and Edmonton were closed permanently, which Dr. Scott has said reaffirms the school's primary physical location in Athabasca. In May 2020, AU's board approved the shift to a "near virtual" organization post-pandemic.

As a board member from 2014 to 2020, Mr. Balay had voted for the "near virtual" plan. But he said he was told at the time that the university's Athabasca footprint would increase, as positions previously located in Calgary and Edmonton moved back to the town. "I don't know how we got from that to the point we are today," he said. As of mid-May, Mr. Balay said the university's buildings in Athabasca were still sitting empty.

Mr. Powell said as jobs leave, the quality of life for AUFA members still in town suffers and the fabric of the community changes. "For a small Albertan town, it's a vibrant, interesting place with a lot going on. And a lot of that has to do with the fact that the university is here as the top employer," he said. The AUFA wants to see the university maintain or expand its presence in Athabasca, with decisions on whether to work in office left up to individuals, and inducements tied to required in office hours on campus.

Mavis Jacobs, a member of the Keep Athabasca in Athabasca University group, worked at the institution for 20 years in various roles, including director of administration and director at the school of business. She worries about the impact of the "near virtual" plan on staff and students, and feels the university's fixation on moving everyone virtual, regardless of staff preference, flies in the face of the open, flexible culture that existed when she worked there. "They're on this mission, which I call an experiment, because it's really unknown how well organizations will survive in a totally virtual environment," she said, adding there are local "trickle-down" effects too, from lowering public school enrolments to challenges recruiting doctors.

Ms. Jacobs, Mr. Balay, Mr. Powell and many other Athabasca residents will be watching the next stage in the saga closely, eager to find out what's next for the future of the school and their town. "We want the university to succeed," said Mr. Balay, "because if the university succeeds and they're in our community, we succeed."



UCP APPOINTEES TO MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION WILL FURTHER DAMAGE ADVANCED EDUCATION

By Dr. Dougal MacDonald, Communications

The Minister's Advisory Council on Higher Education and Skills (MACHES) was established in January 2022 under the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) to help the UCP implement its *Alberta 2030* plan to totally subordinate post-secondary education to the interests of business. MACHES is described on the UCP government web page as a "system-level council" responsible for "advising the minister on metrics for measuring performance,

long-term strategic goals for the direction of Alberta's advanced education system, and any other matters as requested by the Minister."

MACHES has now announced the names of its nine members. Here are a few selected nuggets from each of their official biographies with brief editorial comments appended. As I read those biographies I kept thinking about what kinds of vastly superior

appointees I would have liked to have seen in their places. Maybe Dr. Pam Palmater for one?

Dr. James Barmby, Chair: Barmby began with Alberta Advanced Education in 1986, highlighted by a four-year assignment as special assistant to the deputy minister. In 1994, he stepped into the role of senior writer and planning consultant for the minister, working with senior government officials and consultants to draft the Ralph Klein government's policies for post-secondary education. *Comment: Just what we need, a throwback to the Klein Days.*

Dr. Frank Cotaë: Cotaë owned several franchise operations in the United States, and has served as a Chief Financial Officer and advisor for start-up companies. Cotaë "enlists collaboration with provincial, national, and international organizations and industry stakeholders for the purpose of informing his development of curriculum that reflects the employers' and industry needs for graduate skills". *Comment: The quote nicely summarizes the UCP's plans.*

Darshana Dave: Dave is Economic Development Officer-Entrepreneurship & Innovation at Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism. She has been instrumental in developing business incubators and startups. She has worked in various industries, including Technology, Manufacturing, Non-Profits, Post-Secondary, Startups, and Project Management. *Comment: Post-secondary education reduced to job training.*

Dr. David Finch: Finch currently holds several academic appointments in university business schools, including at Mount Royal University. Prior to academia, Finch held progressively senior roles in areas of corporate strategy with Bell Canada, Rogers Communications, and Harris Corporation. *Comment: His business is business.*

Dr. Glen A. Jones: Jones is Professor of Higher Education and Director of the Centre for the Study of Canadian and International Higher Education at the University of Toronto. In 2008, he was appointed the inaugural Ontario Research Chair on Postsecondary Education Policy and Measurement. *Comment: "Measurement" fits well with the UCP plan for performance-based funding.*

Ms. Anne Rimmer: Rimmer is a Policy Analyst in the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Cities and Regions at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). "She provides recommendations and analysis to higher OECD member states with a specific focus on identifying best practices and innovations for higher education institutions to support their local ecosystems". *Comment: If we just insert the word "business" ahead of "ecosystems" all becomes clear.*

Mr. Denis Ram: Ram currently works at Parlee McLaws LLP in corporate and commercial law. *Comment: Obviously well-qualified to discuss advanced education lol. Denis, I have no legal training so can I take one of your cases?*

Dr. Terry Rock: Rock is President & CEO of Platform Calgary, an organization focused on driving growth and velocity in Calgary's tech and innovation ecosystem. Platform works with over 70 partners to advance startup founders, investors, tech talent and corporate innovators in the new Platform Innovation Centre in Calgary's East Village. *Comment: His business is business.*

Dr. Elka Walsh: Walsh leads Microsoft's pan-Canadian learning and skills strategy as National Learning and Skills Lead. *Comment: Microsoft as the model for future post-secondary education. Scary thought.*

The selections for the members of MACHES reinforces that the UCP aims to continue on its path to further turn Alberta's post-secondary education system into the handservant of industry, an aim well documented in the *Alberta 2030* report. For those who wish to do further research on the committee and its members and draw their own conclusions, full biographies are available on the Government of Alberta page for the Minister's Advisory Council on Higher Education and Skills. Also, helpful for the big picture would be to review the *Alberta 2030* document and/or the analysis in the June 2021 issue of *The Outsider*.



A LEADERSHIP REVIEW IN WHICH ACCOUNTABILITY IS THE VICTIM

By Peggy Morton, former president CUPE 2111

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney announced his resignation as United Conservative Party (UCP) leader on May 18 after receiving only 51.4 per cent approval from UCP members voting in a mail-in leadership review. Kenney immediately offered his resignation, stating “The result is not what I hoped for or frankly what I expected. While 51 per cent of the vote passes the constitutional threshold of a majority, it clearly is not adequate support to continue on as leader.”

Three days prior to the announcement of the results, Kenney repeated that he would stay as leader if he received 50 per cent plus one votes. This, he said, was because this was no ordinary vote, as thousands of people whose aim was to “destabilize the government” had “diluted” the Yes vote. These people had never before been members of the Conservative, Wildrose or United Conservative parties, he said, and were driven by anger over things like COVID-19 vaccines.

Of a membership of around 60,000, the UCP said 34,298 people or around 57 per cent of UCP members voted. Of these, 17,638 said Yes and 16,660 said No to the question “Do you approve of Jason Kenney’s leadership?”

Following a caucus meeting on May 19, it was announced that Kenney will remain as leader until a new leader is chosen. This decision was pitched as bringing “continuity and stability and for his government to focus on the people’s priorities, including revamping the health care system and growing the economy.” Kenney subsequently stated that he will not run in the contest for a new leader.

Kenney’s resignation as leader of the UCP signals that the private interests which control the decision-making power in Alberta have concluded that Kenney could not win the next election which will take place in the spring of 2023. Kenney’s assault on the rights of workers, youth and students, women, seniors, farmers and ranchers, Indigenous peoples, and on the natural environment have made him the most unpopular premier in Canada, which is saying a lot, with polling numbers prior to the

leadership vote indicating that only around 20 per cent of electors think he should stay as premier.

In the months leading up to the leadership vote, Kenney and the UCP governing body used every trick in the book to try and save him. Meanwhile, the factions which oppose him cried foul, describing the workings of the UCP as reeking of a dictatorial, mafia-like organization, rife with fraud and illegality.

Despite the fact that fewer than one per cent of the population of voting age in Alberta voted in the leadership review, political pundits are drawing all sorts of conclusions. A recurrent theme is that Kenney was booted because he was “not right-wing enough.” Such statements are intended to obscure and derail the resistance to the neo-liberal, anti-social offensive. Kenney and the UCP have been rejected for their criminal negligence and refusal to uphold their social responsibility to the people of Alberta during the pandemic, their aggressive agenda of privatization, huge handouts to the rich energy oligarchs, brutality towards migrant workers, attacks on education, pushing projects such as coal mining on the eastern slopes of the Rockies that endanger precious sources of water, and attempts to impose a reactionary, backward, racist and misogynist school curriculum.

Kenney arrogantly assumed that all he needed was a pair of jeans and a blue pickup truck, and he would be transformed into a true (blue) Albertan and could get away with his flagrant disregard for the demands of the working people. His rule was characterized by revenge-seeking against the workers and their unions, environmentalists, teachers and education workers, doctors, health care workers, and anyone who opposed his rule. His last act before he announced his resignation was to go to visit his masters in Washington, cap in hand as salesman for the oil monopolies who control Alberta’s resources.

The news media also promote the idea that Kenney was caught between those who opposed him for imposing measures that were too restrictive and those who wanted further restrictions to stop the spread of COVID-19. This picture of a working class and people at odds with itself is used to keep people divided and divert from the need for democratic renewal. Unity can only be built on the basis of an informed public opinion, not by disinforming public opinion to prevent the

development of an opposition which stands against the integration of Alberta and Canada into the U.S. war machine and economy and the anti-national, anti-people rule which is being imposed at a rapid rate.

What the leadership vote displayed in all its ugliness is a process where the tiny minority of electors who are members of a cartel party are permitted to say Yes or No to who will potentially lead a province, in a process rife with corruption and intrigue. The people are then said to have surrendered their right to govern themselves to these cartel parties and their leaders who exercise prerogative powers and rule by decree. The conception of representation has no credibility as a result of the abuse of power by governments which wage the anti-social offensive while claiming to “represent” the people. Nowhere in the process of selection of the leaders of these cartel parties are the concerns of the people to be found. It shows that the democratic institutions said to be representative are a subterfuge.

Alberta workers and their allies, the Indigenous peoples and Métis are determined to see their claims on society met in a manner that mobilizes them as a force which humanizes the social and natural environment. This is the way forward today to throw off the yoke of the cartel party system.



ALBERTA TEACHERS LOOK FOR A WAY FORWARD FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

(by Kevan Hunter, ATA Local 38)

Alberta teachers voted reluctantly in favour of a new collective agreement on June 9th, 2022. 51% of teachers accepted the mediator’s recommendation for a contract retroactive to September 2020, which will be in force until August 31, 2023.

Without question, the deal would have been soundly rejected if not for the blackmail of the United Conservative Party government. At Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) member information meetings, teachers learned of a plan whereby if the deal was rejected, some school boards would lock teachers out over the summer and withhold their pay for days already worked. Teachers typically work from September to June, but a portion of pay is held until the summer months. To deny pay for days already worked would be highly illegal. Nevertheless, this gave many teachers pause. Fearing they would have to individually fight for their pay, some accepted the agreement under duress.

The agreement provides for nominal wage increases of 1.75 per cent and 2 per cent in September 2022 and 2023 respectively. This continues the assault on teachers and education workers and the refusal to fund the public education system. The Alberta consumer price index rose by 6.3 per cent from April 2021 to April 2022, which means that the 2022 nominal increase is actually a cut of 4.55 per cent for that year. Teachers have received zero wage increases in all years from 2012 to 2019, with the exception of a two per cent increase in 2015, while the Alberta consumer price index increased by 20 per cent from 2012 to 2022, leaving teachers with an 18 per cent wage cut over the last ten years.

The agreement does not address the longstanding concerns of teachers for measures to limit class size and address increasing complexity of classes, with growing numbers of students with special needs and English language learners. In fact, there is no guarantee that the government will increase education funding to cover paying teachers. A two per cent increase in salary can easily lead to a two per cent increase in class sizes, with deteriorating conditions for students and increasing workloads for teachers in the form of more marking, more individualized needs to address and more communication with parents.

The vote has revealed that teachers are more ready than they have been since 2002 — when 21,000 Alberta teachers were on strike, some for close to a month — to take action to defend their working conditions, students’ learning conditions, and public education as a whole. More teachers voted than at

any time in recent history, and their vote showed determination to find a way forward in the face of a government which is systematically attempting to wreck public education.

What's next? September brings a new curriculum in Language Arts (K-3), Math (K-3), and Health and Wellness (K-6). Teachers, along with parents, professors of education, and other concerned Albertans have been speaking up loudly, raising their concerns about this curriculum since it was released a year ago. The opposition has been such that government was forced to take a step back, delaying implementation of a new curriculum in most subjects.

Teachers are still considering the implications of Bill 15, through which the government has asserted control over teacher discipline, which reverses the

century old arrangements through which the ATA has been responsible for defending the public interest by ensuring that standards for professional conduct and competence are upheld. In its place, the government wishes to assert ministerial dictate which will favour the private interests they serve.

Teachers know instinctively that they can't afford to wait and see what will happen with the next election or the next collective agreement. How to organize to defend their rights and the right of students to education is never immediately apparent. It is through discussion and working things out together that teachers, and all working people, have always found solutions. Experience tells us it is crucial to develop that discussion, carry out actions with analysis, and then sum up and see where to go next. Consoling ourselves that we will fight "next time" will not do. It can be done! Let's discuss!



SOLIDARITY WITH BOILERMAKERS AND ELECTRICIANS (BY AFL)

Solidarity: Support Boilermakers Lodge 146, 2 Years on the Line

WHAT: Show of Support to Mark the 2nd Year of the IBB 146 Lockout. Join the Boilermakers Lodge 146 on the picket line!

WHY: IBB 146 is hoping for a big turnout of allies to recognize the solidarity and accomplishments of the picketers over the past 2 years. IBB 146 would like to show their appreciation for the support and solidarity of the labour movement and celebrate the strength of the union members standing up for our fellow workers. There will be a FREE Food Truck in the MORNING and Ice Cream Truck in the AFTERNOON.

WHEN: Tuesday, June 28, 2022 from 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Speeches at 1:00 p.m.

WHERE: CESSCO (Lockout Site) 7310 - 99th Street NW, Edmonton

*Additional parking around back on 100th street, please don't park in Barb & Ernie's or Totem Sports.

Thank you for showing solidarity to the members of the Boilermakers Lodge 146 who've been picketing rain or shine since they were locked out on June 28, 2020.

#Standwith146

Bring signs/flags, sunscreen, a friend, and your solidarity.
Please wear a mask and socially distance.

Facebook Event Page: <https://fb.me/e/3jD8HJN0Z>

Check out the End the Lockout webpage to find out more: <https://www.endourlockout.org/>

Solidarity: Support IBEW CN Rail Picket Line

WHAT: The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), which represents about 750 Canadian National Railway Co. Employees, advise that signal and communication workers have walked off the job across the country. These workers maintain and repair railway crossings, respond to railway emergencies and install, maintain, and repair railway systems that expedite the movement of trains – a vital part of our country's supply chain.

WHY: At the bargaining table, these members are seeking fair wage increases to keep up with other trades, two-day weekends, pay for all time worked and compensation for travel required for company services.

WHEN: Daily 7am until 5pm

WHERE: 10229 127 Ave NW, Edmonton

Notice will be sent out of any additional locations and times. If you are able, please join them in a show of solidarity and support.

Bring signs/flags, a friend, and your solidarity. Please wear a mask and socially distance.



OXFAM REPORT “PROFITING FROM PAIN”

Reprinted from Workers Forum

Oxfam, the well-known international charity, calculates 573 individuals became new billionaires during the pandemic while hundreds of millions of people fell into extreme poverty. The combined wealth of the billionaire class rose more in the first 24 months of the COVID-19 crisis than it did over the previous 23 years. The brief says the total wealth of billionaires equals 13.9 per cent of global GDP now, up from 4.4 per cent in 2000.

Over the past two years, existing billionaires have become richer and a new billionaire has emerged every 30 hours as moguls from the pharma, food, energy, tech and military industries reaped the rewards of what Oxfam calls a “rigged” economic system.

In the pharmaceutical sector alone existing billionaires became richer and 40 new ones joined their ranks as companies like Moderna and Pfizer profited from the purchase of COVID-19 vaccines and other medications they control by governments such as the ones in Canada. Oxfam points out that the development of the vaccines was funded by public investment but under private control. Those private interests then turned around and sold the vaccines to governments for up to 24 times more than their price of production bringing Big Pharma \$1,000 a second in profit, Oxfam asserts.

The billionaires in food and agribusiness enjoyed a 45 per cent increase of their wealth over two years, reaching \$382 billion and adding 62 people to their ranks. The U.S. Cargill “farm” family alone now has 12 billionaire members, up from eight before the pandemic, Oxfam notes. Profits soar in agribusiness as prices for food force many into hunger. Their billionaire peers from the Walton “retail” family, who own roughly half of the retail chain Walmart, are now collectively worth \$238 billion.

Ian Thomson, manager of policy for Oxfam Canada, minced no words when he said, “The extremely rich and powerful are profiting from pain and suffering. This is unconscionable.... This rising wealth and rising poverty are two sides of the same coin, proof that our economic system is functioning

exactly how the rich and powerful designed it to do.”

The five largest energy companies, including BP, Shell, TotalEnergies, Exxon, and Chevron declared a combined net profit of \$82 billion in 2021 alone. The report shows the oil sector saw its profit margins double during the pandemic as prices soared. Oil, gas, and coal billionaires have increased their wealth by \$53.3 billion, or 24 per cent, in just two years.

The tech and green sectors likewise saw rapid growth during the pandemic and produced some of the wealthiest individuals as a result, according to the brief. Apple, Microsoft, Tesla, Amazon, and Alphabet declared \$271 billion in net profit in 2021, almost twice as much as in 2019. Seven of the ten richest people in the world are tech or green investors.

With prices of essential products like food going through the roof, Oxfam estimates 263 million more people will crash into extreme poverty this year, prompting Gabriela Bucher, Executive Director of Oxfam International, to warn, “This grotesque inequality is breaking the bonds that hold us together as humanity. It is divisive, corrosive, and dangerous. This is inequality that literally kills.... [The rich] have seized a shocking amount of the world’s wealth as a result of privatization and monopolies, gutting regulation and workers’ rights while stashing their cash in tax havens — all with the complicity of governments.”

In Canada, Oxfam estimates the wealth of billionaires has increased by 57.1 per cent since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. The 41 richest Canadian billionaires have amassed as much social wealth as that held by 40 per cent of Canadians.

Oxfam’s new research reveals “corporations in the energy, food and pharmaceutical sectors — where monopolies are especially common — are posting record-high profits, even as wages have barely budged and workers struggle with decades-high prices amid COVID-19.

“The fortunes of food and energy billionaires have risen by \$453 billion in the last two years, equivalent to \$1 billion every two days. Five of the world’s largest energy companies (BP, Shell, TotalEnergies, Exxon and Chevron) are together

making \$2,600 profit every second, and there are now 62 new food billionaires.

“From Sri Lanka to Sudan, record-high global food prices are sparking social and political upheaval. Sixty per cent of low-income countries are on the brink of debt distress.

“While inflation is rising everywhere, price hikes are particularly devastating for low-wage workers whose health and livelihoods were already most vulnerable to COVID-19, particularly women, racialized and marginalized people.”

Additional information from the report:

- “Today, 2,668 billionaires — 573 more than in 2020 — own \$12.7 trillion, an increase of \$3.78 trillion.
- “The world’s 10 richest men own more wealth than the bottom 40 per cent of humanity, 3.1 billion people.
- “The richest 20 billionaires are worth more than the entire GDP of Sub-Saharan Africa.

- “The super-rich have stashed nearly \$8 trillion in tax havens.

“With commodity prices skyrocketing, 263 million more people will crash into extreme poverty this year. The World Bank defines extreme poverty as living on less than \$1.90 per day. One person is likely dying of hunger every 48 seconds in drought-ravaged Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, according to estimates by Oxfam and Save the Children.”



CRIMINALIZATION OF WET’SUWET’EN LAND DEFENDERS CONTINUTES

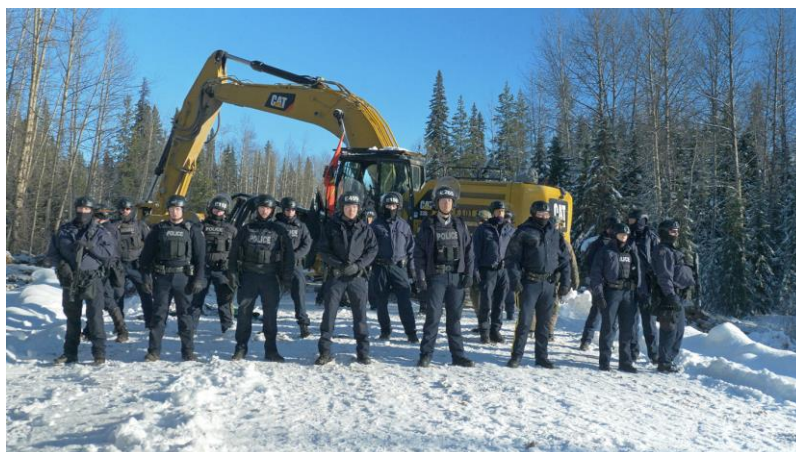
Report from Gidimt’en Checkpoint, BC

On June 2, Gidimt’en Checkpoint confirmed that “Yesterday the Crown prosecution decided to pursue criminal contempt charges against everyone that was arrested at Gidimt’en Checkpoint village site (15) including legal observers. The criminalization of Indigenous land defenders goes against our inherent rights and title.

“The decision to pursue criminal contempt for those at Coyote Camp will be announced on July 7th, including charges against Sleydo’ and nine others.

“In previous cases the Attorney General cited it would not be in the public interest. We will always uphold Wet’suwet’en law and responsibility.”

Calls for a letter campaign to and other ways to support can be found on their website: yintahaccess.com



Sample Letter to B.C. Attorney General David Eby

Honourable David Eby Attorney General
PO Box 9044 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2
AG.Minister@gov.bc.ca
Phone: 250 387-1866
Fax: 250 387-6411

Dear Mr. Eby,

I am writing as a concerned citizen about the human rights violations and violations of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, among other things, that have been happening in Wet'suwet'en Territory. The Hereditary Chiefs have repeatedly stated they do not consent to this pipeline and people are being arrested for upholding their laws through their traditional governance system which has been recognized through the Delgamuukw-Gisdaywa Supreme Court of Canada victory December 11, 1997.

Recently, your office agreed to intervene to criminalize Indigenous land defenders that were arrested on November 18th. I urge you to decline intervention on July 7th against Sleydo' and others arrested on November 19th, 2021. That would further criminalize the land defenders currently facing charges as Coastal GasLink is requesting. Violently entering homes without warrants is not the process for dealing with Wet'suwet'en sovereignty.

The Hereditary Chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en Nation have stated their position and are defending their territory and sacred headwaters Wedzin Kwa as they have done since time immemorial. We as guests on unceded land need to respect the decisions of the Hereditary Chiefs and enact reconciliation instead of disrespecting and criminalizing them further for practicing their culture and laws.

Sincerely,
[sign]

Random Thoughts: Kenney's decision to stay head of the UCP in spite of getting trounced in the leadership review reminds me of that old song by Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks, "How Can I Miss You When You Won't Go Away?"

*"I've talked to your mother and I've talked to your dad
They say they've tried but it's all in vain
I've begged and I've pleaded, I even got mad
Now we must face it, you give me a pain*

I'd say that pretty much says it all. Kenney gives us a pain and he needs to get gone. But the UCP leadership election is not until October 6 so that means we'll have to put up with him for at least another four months. My guess is he probably thinks that he could still get himself re-elected or else run everything from behind the scenes like Rasputin. In any case, as Dan Hicks concludes his song:

*"How can I miss you when you won't go away?
I keep telling you day after day
But you won't listen, you always stay and stay
How can I miss you when you won't go away?"*

CUPE 3911 MONTHLY GRIEVANCE SUMMARY REPORT

By Ernie Jacobson, Grievance Officer

A grievance results from a violation of the Collective Agreement, Human Rights, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Labour Relations Act, or other University policies. If you feel there has been a dispute or difference of opinion or interpretation between yourself and the employer you should contact your administrator and/or your executive immediately. If the matter cannot be resolved informally then a grievance can be filed.

There are three types of grievances: individual, group, and policy.

- An individual grievance is a complaint that an action by the employer has violated the rights of an individual as set out in the Collective Agreement, law or by some unfair practice. E.g., discipline, demotion, timesheets etc.
- A group grievance is a complaint by a group of individuals all affected the same way, e.g., all employees in a particular department.
- A policy grievance is a complaint by the Union that an action or failure or refusal to act by the employer is a violation of the Collective Agreement that could affect all members covered by the agreement.

GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE ACTIVITY REPORT FOR JUNE 2022

Summary of Activity for the past month:

- Employer denied two grievances re termination at step two. An offer was made by employer, and was rejected by member in both cases, so both grievances are continued to adjudication.
- Grievance re posting of a position and issue of seniority and hiring criteria has reached arbitration and is being handled by CUPE lawyer.
- Harassment grievance for member is still under investigation.
- Prior to another harassment grievance investigation being completed, member in question has chosen to resign.
- Inquiry into hiring of academic coordinator was investigated. It was determined that work was assigned to a newly hired associate professor rather than applicant.
- Accommodation for a member with a vision issue is under investigation.
- Issue of privacy of medical information of members filing grievances and returning to duty is still under discussion.

The union currently has 4 active grievances, 3 grievances which have gone to arbitration, and several areas of discussion with the employer.

Respectfully submitted

Ernie Jacobson, CUPE3911 Grievance Officer, June 21, 2022

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CUPE 3911 Monthly General Meeting. Saturday, September 24, 2022, 930 AM.

COCAL 14. Queretaro, Mexico, August 4-7, 2022.

CUPE 3911 Website. We have a shiny new CUPE 3911 website which we urge all our members to visit and use. The URL is CUPE3911.ca

EDITORIAL POLICY: THE OUTSIDER

The Outsider is the voice of CUPE 3911. It is our vehicle for communicating with our members, on a regular (monthly) basis, about the issues that concern and confront us as workers. The Outsider is also the voice of our members. We encourage and welcome relevant contributions from members. While contributions are welcome, they need to contribute positively to the welfare of our union local and our members. They also need to contribute positively to the advancement of public post-secondary education in Alberta. We will not accept or print attacks on any of our members or our union leadership/executive. We also reserve the right to reply to any submissions that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of CUPE 3911 and its policies. Please direct all articles, letters, comments, and ideas to our administrator.