



August 2013

**MEDIA
PLANET**

UNIONS & LABOUR

3 REASONS
TO THANK
UNIONS



UNIONS WORKING FOR US ALL

This labour day, thank Alberta's unions for their **tremendous efforts in the flood relief**, and their contribution to our Canadian standard of living

Featuring

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Unions fighting back

UNION WAGES

How higher wages benefit the economy

UNION HISTORY

A timeline of events



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REASON 1
WEEKENDS –
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EDITOR'S
PICK



PAGE 4

Union workers
help those in need

UNIONS & LABOUR
1ST EDITION, AUGUST 2013

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Distributed within:
The Calgary Herald, August 2013
This section was created by Mediaplanet
and did not involve The Calgary Herald or
its Editorial Departments.

Unions helped to create the standard of living that Albertans have grown accustomed to, and are still working to ensure that worker's rights are fought for.

A Canadian standard of living



Gil McGowan
PRESIDENT, ALBERTA
FEDERATION OF LABOUR

“There will always be those who put profits ahead of people, and who will peddle a low-wage agenda. But we will also be there, fighting for working people and their families.”

For more than 100 years, the Alberta Federation of Labour has been the hub of the province's union movement. We've fought for — and won — workplace rights, safe working conditions and fair wages for all working Albertans

Middle class standard of living

The AFL celebrated its 100th anniversary last summer, which brought into focus the history of the union movement. But labour history doesn't begin and end with anniversaries and dates. Our history is ongoing, and it's a perpetual struggle to maintain the middle class standard of living that we've won for Canadians.

Today, one of the biggest threats to the middle class is Stephen Harper's low-wage agenda that brings in low-paid guest workers, underfunds public services, undermines pensions, and exports good-paying jobs to countries with lower environmental, human rights and labour standards.

Temporary Foreign Workers

The Alberta Federation of Labour has become one of the leading voices in opposing the Temporary Foreign Worker program. We have uncovered examples of how employers misuse the program. We have shown how this program is being used regardless of need. We have shown that Temporary Foreign Workers are be-

ing mistreated.

And by doing so, we increased public pressure on the Harper Government and convinced them that they had to abolish the rule that allowed employers to pay TFWs 15% less than other workers. We convinced them to impose a \$275 application fee to help cover the policing of the program. Although these are important steps in the right direction, Canada needs to eliminate the TFW program and replace it with immigration that gives workers coming to the country the same rights as Canadians.

Increasing communication

Here in Alberta, the Federation has helped start an adult conversation about provincial budgeting. Last year's austerity budget was a wake-up call for many Albertans, who are now more than ever ready for a conversation about fixing the province's revenue problem.

Deep budget cuts have undermined health and education. This doesn't make sense in a province as wealthy as Alberta. There's no good reason for it. The only reason we have a deficit is because years of irresponsible tax and royalty giveaways have blown a hole in the revenue base needed to fund quality public services.

Managing our resources

Alberta's resource sector continues to provide jobs for many of our members and spin-off revenues and services are vital to Alberta's economy. So,

plans to export refining and upgrading jobs to countries with low wages and lax regulations should be of concern to all Albertans. We should not be seeing jobs lost down the pipeline.

The Federation has been a consistent and strong voice for in-province upgrading to get the most out of our non-renewable resources — resources owned by the people of this province. We have been successful in convincing the Government of Alberta to continue its Bitumen Royalty In-Kind program, and have made a case for the economic viability of more upgraders in Alberta to government and industry alike.

Looking to the future

As part of a national movement, we've made the expansion of the Canadian Pension Plan part of a national conversation of retirement security. Most provinces are calling for CPP expansion, although the national government has yet to be persuaded. Alberta is the last province that has yet to sign on, but there are positive signs, and I am hopeful for discussions this fall.

These issues matter to all Albertans, not just union members. There will always be those who put profits ahead of people, and who will peddle a low-wage agenda. But we will also be there, fighting for working people and their families.

GIL MCGOWAN
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CALGARY BENEFITS FROM UNION WAGES

Researchers at the Canadian Labour Congress have found that on average unionized workers in Calgary earn \$2.67 an hour more than do non-union workers.

That extra money in the pockets of the city's 135,300 unionized employees translates into an added \$11 million every week paid into the local economy.

At the provincial level, unionized workers in Alberta earn \$4.60 an hour more on average than do non-union workers. That adds an extra \$56 million per week to the provincial economy.

Spending at home

Decent wages mean prosperous communities because unionized workers spend their pay cheques close to home. They support local businesses and bolster the local tax base which, in turn, supports public works, community services and charities. We have found that centres with more union members support a richer mix of businesses and services — dentists, chiropractors, therapists, health specialists and family lawyers. These services benefit everyone. In short, these communities are better places in which to live and to work.

Standards set by unions

But it doesn't end there. Many of



Amanda Freistadt
ALBERTA
REPRESENTATIVE,
CLC

the things first won by unions are enjoyed by all workers today, including minimum wages, overtime pay, workplace safety standards, maternity and paternity leaves, vacation pay, and protection from discrimination and harassment.

We believe in the old saying that what we want for ourselves we seek for all. We have pushed those who hold elected office in our local boards, city councils and legislatures to provide a broad range of fami-

ly-supporting public programs and services. That is why, for example, the labour movement is working to convince governments to improve Canada Pension Plan benefits. This would ensure that every retired Canadian — whether or not they belonged to a union — will receive a liveable retirement income from CPP. It can easily be done and it's only fair.

Looking after women and young people

Being in a union is especially important for women and younger workers. CLC researchers found that in Alberta women who belong to unions earn an average of

\$6.90 an hour more than do women in non-unionized workplaces. In Canada as a whole, young workers aged 15 to 29 earn an additional \$5.53 an hour if they belong to unions. That is important as they build lives for themselves, paying off student loans, taking mortgages, and starting families.

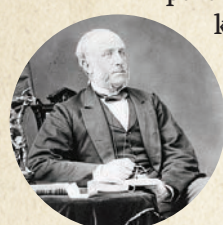
We in the labour movement take satisfaction in knowing that we have helped to build a stronger and more secure economy for everyone in Calgary and all of Alberta. When unions stand up for fairness, they raise the bar for everyone.

AMANDA FREISTADT
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A history of unions in Canada

1872 THE TORONTO TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION STRIKE AND THE TRADE UNIONS ACT

The **Toronto Typographical Union** takes up the cause of the “Nine-Hour Movement” and goes out on strike March 25, 1872, with its demands for a shorter work week are ignored. A few weeks later, on April 14, a parade is organized in Toronto to show support for the striking workers. Ten thousand people participate. George Brown, politician and editor of the Toronto Globe, hits back by launching legal action against the striking workers. At the time, union activity is still a criminal act under Canadian law. Brown has police arrest and jail 24 members of the strike committee for conspiracy. The arrests are much protested, and the Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, promises to repeal the “barbarous” anti-union laws. The Trade Unions Act is passed by Parliament on June 14, 1872, legalizing unions. In the years following, parades are organized in honour of the Toronto demonstration. The celebration is officially recognized on July 23, 1894 when the federal government, under Prime Minister John Thompson, makes Labour Day a national holiday.

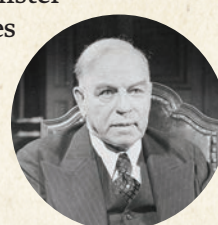


1889 ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE RELATIONS OF LABOUR AND CAPITAL

The **federal government** establishes the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital. In its report, the commission notes that many workers were being hurt on the job. It condemns oppressive working conditions in many industries. The commission makes a string of recommendations to improve working conditions - but the federal government does not act on them, saying to do so would infringe on provincial authority.

1900 FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ESTABLISHED

The **Conciliation Act of 1900** establishes voluntary conciliation of a labour dispute and results in the creation of the Labour Department. The office is meant to assist in the prevention and settlement of trade disputes. Previously, labour matters were handled by the Postmaster General. William Lyon MacKenzie King is appointed the department's first deputy minister and later becomes the first minister of Labour after his election to parliament in 1909.



1919 THE WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE

In the years following the First World War, high unemployment rates and inflation contribute to growing unrest amongst members of the labour movement. In May 1919, after talks break down between workers in the building and metal trades and their employers, the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council call for a general strike. More than 30,000 workers from different occupations, both public and private sector, across the city walk off their jobs, crippling the city. The strike ends June 25, but not before “Bloody Saturday” when the RCMP charge a group of strikers, resulting in 30 casualties and one death.

1914 WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT, ONTARIO

Ontario becomes the first province in Canada to introduce a state social insurance plan with the Workmen's Compensation Act. Prior to this legislation, the only recourse for employees injured on the job is to sue their employers for damages, but as lawsuits increase, employers turn to the government seeking an insurance plan for industrial accidents. The government issues a Royal Commission to be led by Sir William Meredith. In his final report, released in 1913, Meredith suggests a trade-off where workers give up their right to sue in exchange for compensation. He advocates for no-fault insurance. The Act is modeled after his recommendations.



1972 COMMON FRONT, QUEBEC

After years of unrest between the labour movement and the Quebec provincial government, three public service unions unite in 1972 in the Common Front to negotiate with the government for higher wages and better working conditions. On the province's refusal, over 200,000 union members from government, education and social services hit the picket lines. The general strike lasts 10 days. It ends with the imprisonment of the three union presidents and legislation ordering employees back to work.



1944 WARTIME LABOUR RELATIONS REGULATIONS, ORDER-IN-COUNCIL P.C. 1003

Labour relations fall under provincial jurisdiction, but during the Second World War the federal government, exercising its emergency wartime powers, establishes a national system of labour relations law. From the privy council order comes the introduction of a labour relations board, but P.C. 1003 also establishes provisions on the certification of unions, the legal obligation for both parties to enter into good-faith collective bargaining, and prohibitions on unfair labour practices. The order is abolished at the close of the war, but similar provincial legislation is enacted across the country in 1948.

1967 FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF RELATIONS ACT

In 1965, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers defies government policies and stages an illegal, country-wide strike. At issue is the right to bargain collectively, the right to strike, higher wages and better management. The strike lasts two weeks and is one of the largest “wildcat” strikes in Canadian history. As a result of the labour dispute, the government extends collective bargaining rights to the public service, although some workers, like the RCMP and the military, are excluded.

1972 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH ACT, SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan passes the Occupational Health Act, considered the first legislation of its kind in North America. The act makes health and safety the joint responsibility of management and workers and sets the framework for future legislation, enshrining three important rights for workers:

- The right to know about hazards and dangers in the workplace.
- The right to participate in health and safety issues through a workplace committee.
- The right to refuse unsafe work.

2007 SUPREME COURT OF CANADA'S RULING ON BILL 29

The **Supreme Court of Canada** rules that the British Columbia government violated Charter rights when it introduced legislation that would unfairly affect its unionized health-care and social services employees. The provincial legislation would have taken away a number of protections provided for by previous collective agreements. The court's decision reverses 20 years of Charter jurisprudence on workplace association rights.



1976 DAY OF PROTEST

A year after the federal government introduces wage and price control legislation, the Canadian Labour Congress sponsors a national Day of Protest to mark the anniversary. Over a million workers are estimated to have participated in demonstrations across the country.

INSPIRATION

When devastation hit Southern Alberta this year, thousands of Albertans were affected. **Many joined the flood relief efforts, including hard working union members.**

REASON

2

BREAKS
AT WORK –
INCLUDING
LUNCH!

UNIONS AND THE CALGARY FLOOD



The massive floods in Calgary and southern Alberta devastated more than just homes and property, they also ruined many lives in their wake, prompting the local population and unions to band together to rebuild their shattered communities.

Deb Magson, Treasurer at CUPE Local 38, the union for the 4,400 inside workers at the City of Calgary, saw the effects of one of the province's worst natural disasters ever recorded both from the air on her way back from a labour convention in B.C., and up close as she worked tirelessly for 17 days straight to help organize a response.

Immediate response

In her job with the city, Magson programs software for the call centre that represents development and building approvals for the municipality's 311 updates and information. With the need to orga-

nize, she received a call from the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) and volunteered to head to Strathcona, southwest of the city, to register citizens who had been displaced from the east. She then headed to Ambrose University College to help shelter people temporarily housed in the school's empty dormitories.

"City workers from parks, transit and roads started trickling in to volunteer where we transitioned specific roles for them," says Magson. "Smaller groups of union workers went out and did clean up with their own pickup trucks, much of which was organized from member to member. There were guys who worked throughout their days off, cleaning up and running supplies to and from different areas to help out."

Teamwork

Magson spoke to the union presi-

SOUTHERN ALBERTA FLOOD EFFECTS
The floods caused over \$250 million worth of damage to the city of Calgary this year with an estimated recovery period of 10 years

PHOTOS: CANADIAN RED CROSS

dent from Local 37 and the foreman for Local 709, and they all agreed that the disaster was an opportunity to step up and give back to the community. Key to this was that union members across the board all voted to donate \$25,000 from each Local to the city for rebuilding purposes. The money came not from donations, but from the unions' existing coffers.

The move was further echoed by UFCW Canada, the country's largest private sector union, coordinated with Locals 401 and 1118 to set up a Flood Disaster Relief Fund to help members affected by the flooding. UFCW Canada pledged \$250,000 to get the fund up and running.

"There was no hesitation to put that money forward. That's why

they had to have special meetings to hold those votes," she says. "In my Local and my workplace, we had a co-worker and friend of mine who lost absolutely everything. She had her cat, a couple pairs of jeans and a t-shirt, just like her husband — and nothing else."

When Magson and the couple went back, their home was practically a write-off. Soon, 40-50 volunteers arrived and began helping strip the whole place in under three hours, Magson explains.

"Their life was basically sitting in a pile of rubble in the yard, so members from our area got together and replaced everything in her house," she says. "They bought them furniture, clothing, food — and that's out of members' pockets, not from dues

or the union's coffers. These aren't just union members, they're city workers and they care about their community."

Endless support

The camaraderie and friendships she formed that day mean more to her now after that experience, she adds. The city and surrounding area are still recovering from the disaster, but the selfless volunteerism and neighbourly help moved Magson in a way that she will never forget: "We're here to help each other in any way we can."

TED KRITSONIS

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CUPE: providing and protecting Canada's public services.



CUPE
ALBERTA



What unions mean to Olivia Chow

Olivia Chow knows what the **impact on her family** was when her mother became a member of a union at a Toronto hotel.

“She was able to raise me on the money she earned, which the union had negotiated,” said Chow, a prominent New Democrat MP and the widow of the late NDP leader, Jack Layton.

“My mother worked until she was in her late 60s, though the job she was doing in the laundry department was very labour intensive ... I’m glad there was a union there to protect her.”

Chow was a teenager when her family moved from Hong Kong to Canada in 1970. Her father (a school superintendent and former high

school biology teacher) and mother (a teacher) could not find employment in the professions they were trained in.

Her mother, Ho Sze, finally found work in a garment factory doing piece work but earned very little money until she was able to get a job at a hotel where the workers were members of the Hotel & Restaurant Employees & Bartenders International Union (HRE). She started as a hotel maid, then moved into the laundry department.

Endless support

At the age of about 20, Chow joined her mother on a picket line during

a strike against that Toronto hotel.

Chow, who has worked at one level or another in public life for three decades, stressed that unions “are the reason that Canadians have a 40-hour work week, vacation pay, equal pay for work of equal value and much more.”

“Unions represent unity, a coming together,” she said. “Today, unions need to engage young people to help them understand that concept, that people are not alone ... that they can push together for a better standard of life.”

BOB SPENCE

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Q & A

An Industry Perspective

Q: How have unions helped to create an identity for Alberta?

A: The work done by CUPE and other public sector unions builds the very communities we live in.

Our unions promote the public services that hold our cities and towns together. The schools that educate our children, the public parks that are maintained by public servants, our roads, hospitals, universities, and other public services are not only run by union members — but their very existence was fought for by unions. And we continue to promote their value to our identity and community.



Marle Roberts
President,
CUPE Alberta

Q: What role do unions play in establishing workers rights?

A: We have a saying that ‘unions created the weekend.’ It’s not just a saying, if it were not for unions, we would not have the forty hour week, sick leave, pension plans, Medicare, or workplace safety laws.

Some argue that these protections can be established by law, and that we don’t need unions to fight for them. But anyone who’s ever worked in a non-union job knows that unless you have a lawyer, all the laws in the world won’t help you if your boss treats you badly. Unions fight for better wages and working conditions, and the rest of the workplace follows.

Q: What does the general non-unionized public need to know about unions that they don’t already know?

A: Unions are about much more than wages and working conditions — although that remains our core purpose.

The labour movement is very proud of many of our non-workplace related victories. Canada’s Medicare system might not exist were it not for the work done by union members to create it. It’s the labour movement that continues to fight for better public services like child care, better education, and

better public transit. These issues are about much more than wages for our members — they are about building a better, fairer society for all of us.

Q: What are some of the biggest misconceptions about unions?

A: When most people think of unions they think of strikes. But 99.9 per cent of union contracts are settled without a strike. In fact, strikes are always a last resort for union members. No one likes to go on strike — union members have to live without salaries, the public is disrupted, and strikes are confrontational and difficult situations. When a union votes to strike (and it is always a democratic decision) it does so because it has no other option. Often strikes are called because an employer is trying to reduce wages or working conditions in some way.

MARLE ROBERTS

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Superstore strike coming soon?



Please express your support!

Superstore employees in Alberta are represented by The United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 401. In just a few short weeks, there is a real possibility we will be going on strike. Superstore’s multi-billion dollar parent company, Loblaw has launched an attack on vulnerable retail workers. **We’re getting ready to fight back!**



During the month of September, we celebrate Labour Day and we ask that you watch for Superstore employees who are wearing purple **Bargaining Strong Together** and **I’m on STRIKE ALERT!** buttons. Please offer your support to them. And remember, if there is a strike or lockout please show your support for Superstore and Liquorstore Employees by refusing to shop at all Loblaw retail outlets. (Superstore & Liquorstore, Extra Foods, nofrills, T&T, Holt Renfrew, YIG, Joe Fresh, Whole Sale Club)

For more information go to gounion.ca or call 1.800.252.7975

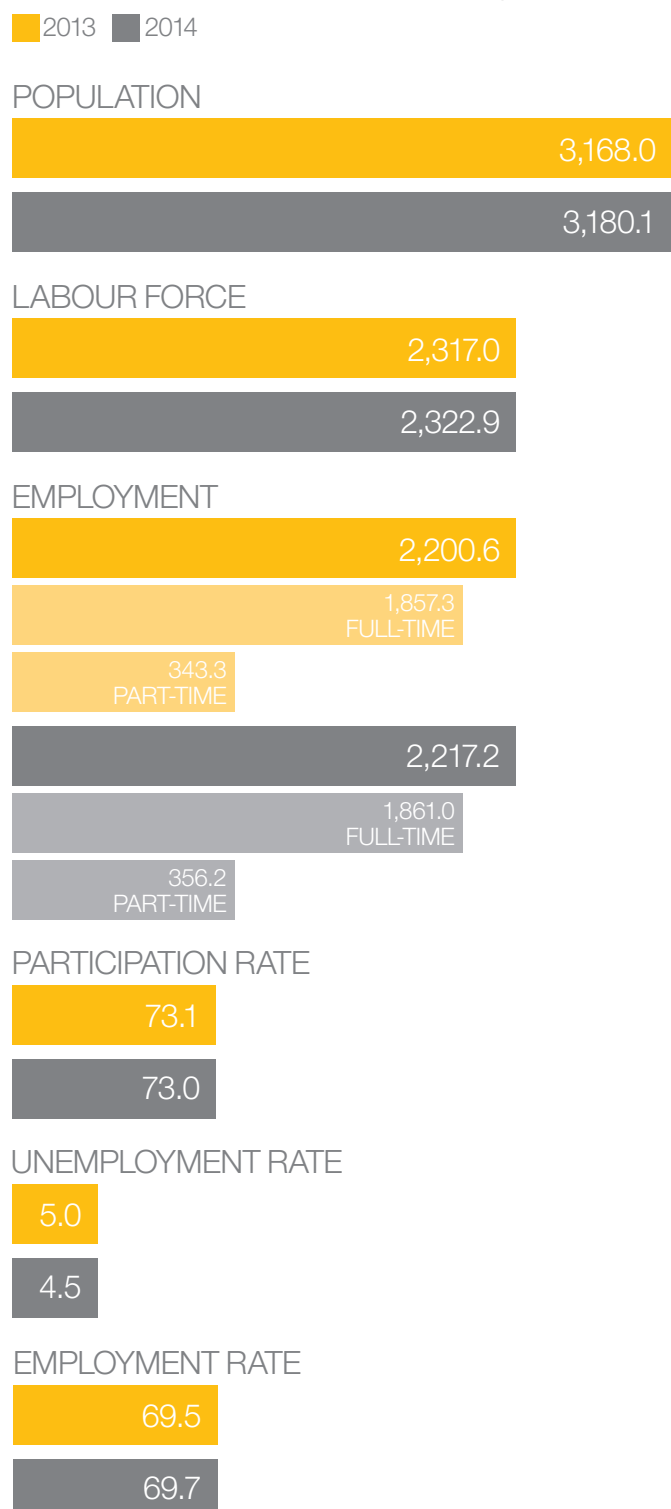


INSIGHT



LABOUR FORCE

ALBERTA'S LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS (figures in thousands)



UNEMPLOYMENT DYNAMICS

AMONG CANADIAN YOUTH

In 2012, the **UNEMPLOYMENT RATE** of youths aged 15 to 24 was

14.3%

compared with a rate of

6.0%

for **CORE-AGE ADULTS** aged 25 to 54.

Most of the gap between the unemployment rates of youths and adults is the result of higher unemployment inflows among youths.

In 2012, 2.6% of youths aged 15 to 24 who were working in a given month became unemployed the next month. In comparison, the corresponding proportion among workers aged 25 to 54 was 1.1%.

Inflows to unemployment have been higher among youths than among adults every year since 1977.

3.5%

the average monthly layoff rate among those aged 15 to 24 in 2012. This was more than double the rate of 1.3% recorded among working adults aged 25 to 54.

79.4%

of youths aged 15 to 24 who had become unemployed were no longer unemployed less than three months later in 2012. That proportion, for adults aged 25 to 54 was 67.6%.

In 2012, 67.6% of youths aged 15 to 24 who had become unemployed and who did not subsequently leave the labour force found a job in less than three months. For adults aged 25 to 54, this proportion was 58.0%.

STATISTICS CANADA
editorial@mediaplanet.com

WHY JOIN A UNION

You don't have to go far these days to hear negative things being said about unions. Many politicians, employers and people in the media openly criticize the labour movement. They say that unions are out of touch and out of date. They also claim that unions no longer "deliver the goods" for their members.

Yet despite all these criticisms and complaints, 4 million Canadian workers proudly call themselves union members. In fact, one in every three working people in the country belong to a union. In Alberta alone, more than 300,000 people are covered by union contracts — an increase of more than 40,000 since 1996.

Why do so many people choose to belong to unions? Because it makes sense!

The truth is that Canadian unions still have an exceptional track record when it comes to improving wages and conditions for working people. The union advantage is clear to see.

BETTER BENEFITS

Union representation also means that you are more likely to have a dental and health care plan at your workplace, coverage for sickness or accidents, and a pension plan to which your employer contributes.

For example, Statistics Canada reports that either a pension plan or a group RRSP, compared to just 33 per cent of non-union workers, covers 83 per cent of unionized employees. Unionized workers generally have better paid vacation leave than non-union employees (84 per cent compared to 65 per cent).

The same gap exists for health care benefits such as dental plan coverage (77 per cent to 45 per cent) and supplemental health care plans (84 per cent for unionized compared to 45 per cent for non-union).

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

In a non-union workplace, workers are at the mercy of the boss. If an employee has a complaint related to the workplace, he or she can attempt to talk to a manager about it, but the manager doesn't have to do anything. The manager might act on the complaint, ignore it or even punish the employee for raising the issue - it all depends on the nature of the complaint, the company's labour-management philosophy or even the manager's mood on that particular day.

In a unionized workplace, grievances and complaints are handled in an entirely different manner. Unlike the non-union environment where the workers are basically subject to the whims of management, unionized workers have a clear set of rights which are outlined in detail in their collective agreements.

Union members don't have to face the boss or make their way through the red tape of labour law alone. Union shop stewards and representatives are there to support individual workers who have been treated unfairly.

UNION SERVICES

Union members also benefit from ongoing training and educational opportunities through courses offered by their union as well as through central labour bodies such as the Alberta Federation of Labour. Union members have access to courses on health and safety, bargaining, peer counselling, literacy as well as on broader issues of globalization, racism, and equity issues.

Union members also often have access to a broad range of other support services: everything from counselling for family and personal problems to help with tax preparation to discounts and special offers negotiated with local businesses. What a particular union offers its members depends on what the members themselves want.

A BINDING CONTRACT

The biggest thing that separates union from non-union workplaces is the collective agreement. In non-union workplaces, employees are often at the mercy of managers who play favorites and change terms and conditions of employment on a whim. But in a unionized environment, workers have written and legally-binding guarantees covering things like wages and benefits. Collective agreements give union workers rights and protections that are not available to other workers.

HIGHER WAGES

One of the most obvious benefits of belonging to a union is higher pay. In Canada, the average full time worker who belongs to a union earns \$20.29 an hour compared to \$17.22 per hour for non-unionized workers.

The difference for part-time workers is even more dramatic. Non-union part-timers earn \$10.60 an hour compared to \$17.31 for union workers. This means the union wage advantage for part-time workers is almost 70 per cent!

Unionized part time employees also tend to work more hours per week, and when combined with higher average hourly wages, this means that weekly earnings nearly double (\$343.94 versus \$181.65).

Unions have also significantly closed the gender gap. Women with union representation earn an average of 89 per cent of the wages earned by men, compared to 71 per cent in non-unionized workplaces.

As Statistics Canada says, "It has long been known that unionized employees make more than non-union workers."

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and safety is a major concern for unions. Evidence clearly shows that unions lead to healthier and safer workplaces. A 1996 study showed that 79 per cent of unionized workplaces reported high compliance with health and safety regulations, compared to only 54 per cent of non-unionized workplaces.

Unions give workers a voice in making their workplaces safe by participating in decision making about health and safety through Joint Health and Safety Committees. Unionized workers also have access to training on health and safety. And they have support when they challenge employers about unsafe working conditions.

In cases where workers do get injured on the job, the union can help workers through the maze of Workers Compensation. Studies have shown that this support results in a higher likelihood of unionized workers receiving WCB benefits.

ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

In addition to helping their members in the workplace, most unions and central labour bodies are also active in their communities, helping to make conditions better for working people and their families, both union and non-union. Unions individually and collectively pressure the government on issues that impact working people such as minimum wage, hours of work, health and safety regulations and other employment standards.

Unions have been at the forefront of struggles to preserve and protect health care, education and other important public services. Unions fight budget cuts and laws that help big business while eroding the quality of life in our communities. Unions support people in need by lobbying government on Employment Insurance, public pension plans, and welfare to ensure that all people have a safety net underneath them. Unions have been a key player in educating the public about the negative impacts of globalization in Canada and around the world.

Through training, support, research, information sharing and coalition work, unions help their members become active on issues that are important to them and the communities they live in.