

SPRING 2017

NEW

# Workers' Voice

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Featuring

The **Young**  
**Workers'**  
**Voice**

## Mark Hancock

"...an obligation to resist."

President of

# CUPE

Canada's Largest Union

*Day of Mourning*



A Four-Part Feature

# *Reach out to* **all** *workers!*



## **It's a new world.**

How we communicate has changed along with new technologies, making our world a smaller place.

However, sometimes the message we want to convey may not have the maximum impact, particularly regarding the workplace. Employers, unions, government agencies, regulatory and safety boards are generally segmented, with websites targeting smaller, specific audiences.

The New Workers' Voice online edition allows you to connect and communicate universally with all workers, helping to unify on the issues that are important to everyone.

We welcome suggestions for stories, features and guest columns. We accept letters to the editor and other input you would like to have in the **New Workers' Voice**. Talk to us:

**workersvoice@outlook.com**

**[www.newworkersvoice.com](http://www.newworkersvoice.com)**





Established in 2001 as the Workers' Voice Magazine print edition, now the New Workers' Voice Magazine, online edition is a free online magazine for all. It is targeted to workers, labour unions, business owners, managers and government decision makers and anyone else searching the web for workplace issues.

Providing independent context and understanding of workplace issues we are pro-worker and pro-economic development, both private and public. Articles are aimed at worker progress, social justice, safety and education along with the issues and personalities involved.

We are an independent publication and receive no funding from any government, agency, association, union or individual. Our revenue is entirely advertising based so we welcome advertising support and ask you to support and applaud the advertisers you see in our pages.

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ОБЪЯВЛЕНИЕ

**Editorial  
PERSPECTIVE**

*Come in* We're  
**HIRING**

**NEEDED IMMEDIATELY  
at least 112,000 new  
customer care workers!**

I'm sure you, like everyone else, have experienced frustration when you've tried to reach, by phone, many private companies and government departments and agencies. When you speak with someone, the service is good, but that's the catch – getting to speak with a human being is hard to accomplish.

While Internet communications and information is a marvel, there are times when customers need to call by phone. It could be an older person who simply cannot use the internet and has to speak with someone, or someone whose question isn't answered online.

Try calling most government departments or agencies, and most mid-to-large size private companies. You likely end up frustrated, with more time and energy taken up listening to options and punching in numbers than would have been the case if someone had simply answered the phone.

Of the roughly 1.1 million businesses in Canada, about 830 thousand could be considered small with 1-10 employees. Generally, this type of operation does have a good system in place to offer excellent customer service by directly answering the phone, and if you do get a voice mail it is simply to leave a brief message for someone to call you back. Usually the right person does so very promptly.

But about 40% of the remaining 280,000 companies and government departments and agencies, about 112,000, have decided that voice-activated systems can somehow improve efficiencies, customer service and be good for their business. This has to be one of the silliest decisions any manager could make, especially if you consider the advertising and marketing budgets most companies have to spend to attract customers. It seems to be a poor strategy for success to advertise to get business, then have an automated phone system alienate customers. Many of

them become so frustrated they simply hang up.

To often these days, we end up with numerous phone answer options that almost always lead to nowhere. A customer, potential customer, or taxpayer is calling for a reason – to inquire about buying a product, or to get needed information about a government service. How can immediately sending them down a rabbit hole of phone-answering technologies, losing business by not talking with them and not making an immediate personal connection with a potential customer be good for business?

Making the situation worse, the truly remarkable bad management decisions of Federal Government layoffs and cutbacks makes you, the person who actually pays for government agencies like E.I. and Revenue Canada out of your pockets often want to scream.

There is an answer, and good customer service is here for the taking.

For both private business and for government dealing with taxpayers, the answer simply involves someone who answers the phone. As a manager, you can make a plan to stop the punch-button-option answering system, hire people to answer the phone, and have real workers talk to real customers. It's a win-win. You will offer much better service to your customers and grow your business; your customers will appreciate the good customer service.

Think about it. You know how you feel, and how refreshing it is when you call to have an engaging voice answer by identifying the organization and asking how they can be of assistance.

It may be a stretch but if all managers, especially government department managers, thought this through they would come to what I consider an obvious conclusion. Take my advice and maybe we could immediately create at least 112,000 new jobs both public and private – jobs that will pay for themselves immeasurably in customer satisfaction.

**Take my advice  
and maybe we  
could  
immediately  
create at least  
112,000 new jobs**





# WRITE **A** LETTER TO THE EDITOR

E-mail your letters to  
[workersvoice@outlook.com](mailto:workersvoice@outlook.com)

## A TRUMP IN CANADA

Dear Editor:

Not wanting to offend Buffoons, I will not call (so called) President Trump a Buffoon. Trump is in my opinion, representative of the very worst of politics and the old saying about how do you know when a politician is lying, his lips move, is so appropriate for this fraud.

I am certain that I don't need to review here why I say this because any thinking person who follows Trump knows what he is.

My concern is that Canada could easily have a Trump type person take a leadership role in our country as demonstrated when the likes of Kevin O'Leary and Kellie Leitch can be serious contenders.

How is this even possible? Two reasons 1. The internet which has killed media and is dominated by big business and 2. The sensationalism of types like a Trump.

With Facebook, Twitter and even mainstream media heralding lies and sleaze simply for ratings, anything said or even tweeted, seems to take on a life of its own and is republished, rebroadcast and hyped for sensationalist marketing purposes.

The more vile and stupid especially if it comes from

someone like Trump the better and the more publicity given.

This is free publicity which sells and Trump was sold as some kind of hero to the working person. This would be a bad joke in any other time but not today where real journalism has left the game.

Canadians should be aware of what can happen in this country if we are not on top of this.

Next election we had better get involved and only if an educated and aware population can get out and vote will we stop someone like Trump from poisoning our country.

*Michael Thoms, Winnipeg*

## THE CONTINUING FIGHT FOR A HIGHER MINIMUM WAGE

Dear Editor:

It seems that corporate welfare is at an all time high with many companies like Bombardier getting cash on the backs of taxpayers.

While corporate executive pay is at an all time high many companies have hands out for government help and tax breaks while workers are struggling to make ends meet.

Companies especially big multi-nationals continue to pay low wages while earning vast profits on the backs of low paid

workers.

How can governments continue to buy into the tired concept of companies being successful and then tricking down those benefits to workers.

Government must legislate a higher minimum wage across the country to at least \$15.00 per hour.

While I am not suggesting \$15.00 would be adequate, it would be good start and help many low wage earners.

*Rachelle Boone, Halifax*


## INTRODUCING...

this inaugural issue of the  
**NEW WORKERS' VOICE**  
MAGAZINE

Originally established in 2001 as The Workers' Voice Magazine, print edition, the **NEW WORKERS' VOICE MAGAZINE**, National online edition remains an independent publication for all.

Our aim is to freely provide this publication quarterly, so bookmark our site [www.newworkersvoice.com](http://www.newworkersvoice.com) and enjoy.

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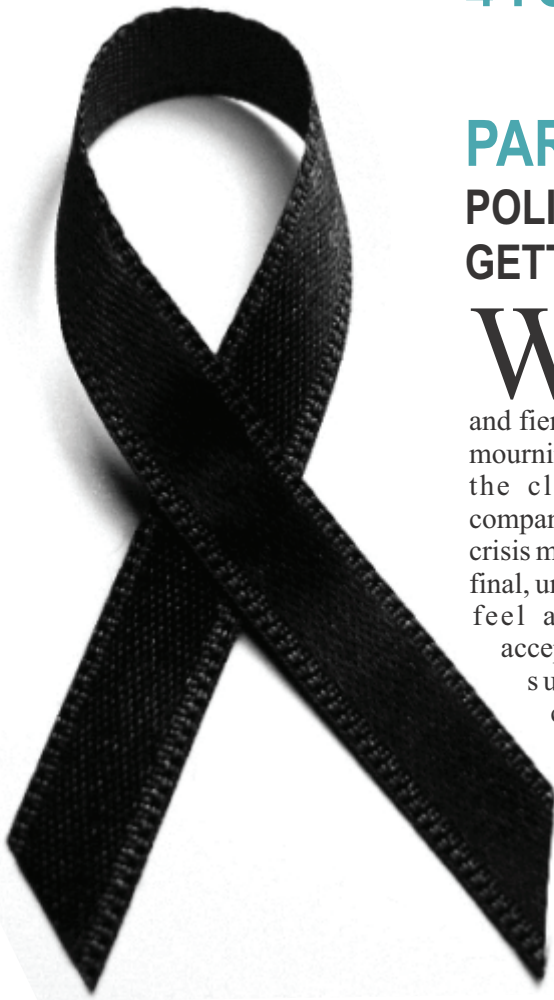
April 28

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# DAY of MOURNING

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## Workplace Injuries and Death 4 Part Feature



### PART 1

#### POLICY AND PROCEDURE GETTING IN THE WAY OF ACTION

When a workplace tragedy occurs, the public uproar is swift and fierce. For family and friends mourning the loss of a loved one, the closed-rank stance that companies often adopt as part of crisis management can seem like a final, unnecessary indignity. It can feel as though there is no acceptance of responsibility for such a tragedy when corporate policy and procedure is employed, often to an extreme.

Many of us have, or know someone who has, lost a family member or friend to an industrial accident. Every death, whatever its cause, is a painful loss, but for a person to die or be injured while trying to earn a living feels particularly tragic. The resultant grief and anger is very often directed toward the corporation or industry in which such a worker was employed and,

because of its source, is often brushed away as simply an emotional response from loved ones. But is it? Or is the public furor that tends to follow an occupational death or injury justified?

On April 28th, workers across Canada will remember and pay homage to their fellows killed or

**Three workers, killed,  
every working day. In  
locations that are  
supposedly  
safeguarded against  
all but the most  
unthinkable of  
eventualities.**

injured. The National Day of Mourning, held each year on April 28th, found its official status in 1990 when the Canadian government passed the Workers Mourning Day Act, both to commemorate the fallen and



## DAY OF MOURNING

injured, and to draw attention to the issue of occupational health and safety as a whole.

The Day of Mourning is a chance for those in a workplace and the public at large to take a moment to think of the cost of the injuries and illnesses that some people endure as a result of their efforts to earn a living for themselves and their families.

Over the last while great strides have been made in the reduction of occupational injuries in this country. Nationally, the trend has been toward a decline in numbers.

While this decline is a positive thing, it does not mean that workers lives do not continue to be altered or irreparably damaged on a daily basis in this country because of work-place injury.

In 2015, more than 850 people

day? Every working day?

Moreover, the rate of decrease of these injury numbers has leveled off in recent years; improvements from year to year are not as impressive as they once were. Yet, the costs of

can be attributed to the fact that before such an incident, the public is largely unaware of the occupational hazards facing certain careers.

Most industries and organizations, the Canadian



**Maybe, on April 28th, we can do more than simply lay a wreath, maybe we can ask for genuine change and action.**



died in Canada as a result of work-related accidents or illnesses. Add to this the 232,000 claims due to work-related injuries or disease.

This means that, on average, almost three workers are killed every working day in locations that are supposedly safeguarded against all but the most unthinkable of eventualities. Yet, if so unlikely, how can it happen three times in a single

injuries to workers remain incalculable. There can be no point at which we as a nation say "Well, X number of injuries this year, that's good enough" unless X is zero. Workers and employers must remain vigilant, aggressive, pro-active. Numbers and percentages must still decrease further.

It can be assumed that much of the outrage over workplace injuries

Government included, conduct frequent, often extensive, studies into their own efficacy, yet it can appear to the public that change-making policies only come into action after a tragedy has occurred.

To a public who has lost friends, family and loved ones, the dedication of resources, funds and manpower to bureaucratic methodology over common sense action can be frustrating and horrifying. Many feel that a reliance on policy and procedure is getting in the way of responsible action. Or that crisis management is taking the place of crisis prevention. And while uproar by the public and in the media after a tragedy is often emotionally fueled, as people grieve for lost lives, the question begs asking; are we doing all we can to protect the health and lives of workers in our community? Is our Government?

On this up-coming National Day of Mourning, perhaps we can all take a moment to look about ourselves; to take stock of our workplaces, our industries and our Government. Perhaps we can have a moment of thinking about personal responsibility, about respect for those who take the dangerous jobs unto themselves. Maybe, on April 28th, we can do more than simply lay a wreath, maybe we can ask for genuine change and action.



## PART 2

By: Bill Chedore

# DYING FOR A JOB

So many people in this country are dying to find a job. One that will let them live a comfortable life, support themselves and contribute to supporting their family. Jobs are scarce, so when we find a good one, we are on top of the world! We all would want that feeling to last, but this is where reality sucks as the saying goes. The sad truth is that, in Canada, so many worker's dreams get shattered every year due to workplace causes.

Most Canadians have no idea of what the real picture of our workplaces actually looks like. Let me paint that picture for you.

On average, each year, almost 900 men and women leave their homes, go to work, but never come home. Approximately 85 of them will be young (15-24). They are killed before they finish their work day. The next time they are seen by their families, is to identify the body. Sounds morbid, horrible and gruesome, but as I said earlier, reality

sucks!

Then again if you are fortunate enough, not to be killed at work, on average each year, 330,000 of you will be injured badly enough to have to miss time at work because of that injury. More than 30,000 of you will be between the ages of 15-24.

On top of the immediate horrors of workplace injuries, we have tens of thousands of injured workers who are destined to live with chronic pain for months, years and in far too many cases, a lifetime.

Having laid out the terrible statistics, we need to ask the question WHY? How is it possible that in Canada, where we have some of the best H&S legislation and regulations in the world, do we still manage to kill and injure workers at such alarming rates?

It would be safe to say that if hundreds of Corporate CEOs or Politicians or Bay St. Executives were being killed each year because

of their work and thousands were being injured and maimed, there would be a National Inquiry called in short order. Hearings would be held, thousands of witnesses would be called and at the end of it all, they would find the root cause and someone would be held accountable.

Why is it that there is no public outcry when working men and women are being killed and maimed in such astonishingly high numbers?

Is it because the numbers are spread across 10 provinces and 3 territories, so it becomes less evident? Is it because we don't hear about it very much? Is it because it is expected that workers will die and get injured at work? We can speculate endlessly, but until we take the issue of workplace health and safety seriously, we will continue to kill and maim working Canadians in horrific numbers every year.

As someone who has spent decades dealing with health and safety in the workplace, I've reached



## DAY OF MOURNING

some conclusions about workplaces deaths, injuries, the causes, consequences and solutions.

We know the statistics and we know the consequences are overwhelming for families of workers killed or seriously injured. What about the solutions?

Some would argue that the issue is complicated and the solutions are not easily found. My short answer to that is, BS!! The issue is not complicated. We are killing and injuring thousands of innocent people every year.

Over a 23 year period from 1993 -2015 , 20, 712 Canadian workers were killed on the job in Canada. During the same period,

inforce them in case we interfere with an employer's business plan. Killing and maiming people should not be a cost of doing business in this country. Government regulators at the federal and provincial/territorial levels can no longer simply watch the carnage in Canadian workplaces and do virtually nothing to stop it or at least reduce it.

I was told recently that the statistics are better than they used to be. No they are not, particularly not for workplace deaths. In fact in 2015 there was only a difference of 1 from 1993. During most of the years in-between, the numbers were actually higher. The workplace injury statistics on paper appear to have

have compensation for workers injured on the job. This meant that workers would no longer have the right to sue negligent employers. Today it is nothing short of an attack against workers, spearheaded by employers and their accomplices in crime, the Provinces/Territories and their Workers Compensation Boards. It is my opinion that in many cases injured workers are actually seeing a violation of their human rights.

Although most health and safety laws fall under provincial jurisdiction as does Workers Compensation, the fact remains that nationwide, Canadian Workers are Dying for a Job. Many employers are getting away with killing and maiming thousands and the road to preventing so much of this is not being used. At the moment there is no real incentive for employers to clean up their act. They know that the chances of being caught as a negligent employer are low, because the regulatory agencies are not committed to enforcing regulations. Their staffing levels are woefully low and the push back by employers and the lobbying for less regulation, has neutered any existing legislation that was designed to protect workers from death and injury.

It's time that law makers, police forces and regulatory agencies wake up, do their jobs and help stop the killing and maiming of Canadian Workers. As of the writing of this article, 70 days in 2017 have passed. If past statistics are any indication, approximately 140 workers have already been killed in Canada, and will we kill 2-3 workers every day unless somebody starts to care.

Will it be you, your brother, sister, father, mother, son or daughter? Who else will Die for a Job before the end of the year?

Join the fight to save lives. Show you care. Make your voice heard.

*Bill Chedore is National Coordinator of the Canadian Injured Workers Alliance*



7,604, 518 workers received injuries that caused them to lose time from work. Thousands of those lives could have been saved and hundreds of thousands of those workplace injuries could have been prevented. Corporations and government regulators need to be placing more emphasis on protecting workers than on protecting the interests and profits of the corporations. Rhetoric you say? No, once again, REALITY!!

We pass wonderful legislation, regulations and standards in Canada, but we lack the will to

dropped substantially; however that too is deceiving, because recent evidence shows that employers, in an attempt to prevent their WCB premiums from going up, are convincing injured workers not to file WCB claims and finding make-work projects to keep them in the workplace. Also more and more, employers are challenging worker's claims and appeals to try and prevent their premiums from rising.

Workers Compensation as it was created in 1914, looks nothing like it was intended, which was to



# Westray Mine Disaster

25 Years Anniversary  
May 9, 2017



## PART 3

*By Brian DuBreuil*

An explosion on 9 May 1992, deep inside the Westray Mine in Plymouth, Nova Scotia killed 26 underground miners. The mine had been open less than eight months. A public inquiry blamed mine management, bureaucrats and politicians for a tragedy “that should have been prevented.” As a result of the disaster, in 2004 Parliament passed Bill C-45 imposing criminal liability on corporations and executives that fail to ensure a safe workplace.

In 1988, Clifford Frame, the founder and chief executive of Toronto-based Curragh Resources Inc. announced his company was going to open a coal mine in Plymouth, Nova Scotia. For Pictou County, the new Westray mine



brought a promise of much needed jobs, and a return to a coal mining tradition that spanned 150 years. Westray would mine the Foord coal

seam, a coalfield known for its unstable formations and deadly methane gas explosions. The last mine to work the Foord seam prior to Westray — the Allan Mine — experienced eight methane gas explosions before closing in the 1950's.

Even before the mine opened, provincial bureaucrats raised concerns about the Westray development. Early on, the company scrapped the original plans and changed tunnel directions so it could tap into the coal seam sooner. Nova Scotia's Department of Natural Resources was worried that route would cross major geological faults. At one point, it threatened to pull Westray's mining permit, but backed

## DAY OF MOURNING

off for reasons that were never explained.

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour expressed concerns about training and certification of workers, and the lack of an emergency plan.

The mine officially opened on 11 September 1991. In its first two months of operation, the mine experienced four roof falls. Department of Labour inspectors repeatedly asked the company for roof support plans. The Department also raised concerns about the mine's failure to clean up the highly flammable coal dust that lined the floors and walls, and its lack of stone-dusting, a process to neutralize the material's explosive nature.

Weeks before the disaster, a provincial inspector issued an order to have the coal dust cleaned and stone-dusted, but did not enforce the order during a return visit just days before the explosion.

Twenty-six Dead

On 9 May 1992, a quiet Saturday morning, 26 miners were working underground in the Southwest 2 tunnel. Most of the

miners were in their early 30's. The youngest was 22 years old, the oldest 56. At 5:20 a.m., sparks from their continuous mining machine ignited methane gas that had not been properly ventilated. On the ground lay dangerously high levels of coal dust that had not been stone-dusted. The combination created a massive explosion that rocked the tiny community of Plymouth.



As distraught family members gathered down the road at the town's Fire Hall, special mine rescue teams known as draegermen — from Pictou County, Cape Breton and New Brunswick — searched for survivors underground, braving conditions described as “terrifying”. The rescue teams recovered 15 bodies. Finally, on 15 May, six days after the explosion, with no hope of finding anyone alive, search efforts were called off. The bodies of 11 miners were never found.

At the company's first press conference the day after the explosion, mine manager Gerald Phillips said Westray was “as safe a mine as there is.”

On the same day that Westray suspended recovery efforts, the provincial government appointed Nova Scotia Supreme Court Justice K. Peter Richard to conduct a public inquiry into the disaster. But due to legal challenges, and concerns the inquiry could impede a criminal investigation, the inquiry did not hold public hearings until November, 1995.

It would be another two years before Justice Richard released his final report, “The Westray Story: A Predictable Path to Disaster.” The report was a scathing indictment of the actions, or lack of action, of Westray managers, provincial bureaucrats and politicians. Richard concluded that “(Westray) is a story of incompetence, of mismanagement, of bureaucratic bungling, of deceit, of ruthlessness, of cover-up, of apathy, of expediency, and of cynical indifference.”

The Nova Scotia government immediately accepted and agreed to act on all of the inquiry's recommendations. For the first time it apologized to the miner's families, acknowledging that the “entire system” failed the workers at Westray.

Clifford Frame refused to testify at the inquiry — which only



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had jurisdiction in Nova Scotia, so it could not subpoena Frame in Toronto, to bring him to the inquiry.

Five months after the explosion, the Department of Labour filed 52 charges under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, against Curragh Resources and four local mine managers. At the same time, the RCMP was conducting its own criminal investigation. In December, the province announced it was dropping its charges over fears those trials could interfere with potential criminal charges.

On 20 April 1993, almost one year after the explosion, the RCMP called a press conference at the fire hall in Plymouth, where families had also gathered in the days following the disaster. The RCMP announced charges of manslaughter and criminal negligence causing death against Curragh Resources Inc., and former

mine managers Gerald Phillips and Roger Parry. The more than 100 people in attendance — many families of the 26 miners killed — responded with a standing ovation.

The families' euphoria was short-lived. The trial began in February 1995, but the charges were stayed when the judge ruled the prosecution had failed to disclose key evidence to the defense. That ruling was appealed twice, and two years later the Supreme Court of Canada ordered a new trial. But on 30 June 1997 Crown Attorneys returned to the fire hall in Plymouth to tell the miners' families that the case was over, they were dropping all charges. After reviewing the evidence, prosecutors believed there was no reasonable chance of a conviction.

In 2002, following lobbying efforts by unions and the Westray Families Group, the

federal government introduced Bill C-45. The “Westray Bill” established a legal duty for all persons who “direct the work of others” to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of workers and the public. It introduced new sections in the Criminal Code of Canada so that corporations and their representatives can be charged criminally if they fail to do so.

Since becoming law in 2004, fewer than a dozen charges have been laid under the legislation, and no one has been handed a jail sentence. In the three convictions to date, employers paid a fine after reaching a plea bargain. In 2014, the United Steelworkers union, with support from the Westray Families Group, launched a nationwide campaign urging the federal government to give police and prosecutors the training, tools and direction to enforce the provisions of Bill C-45.





## DAY OF MOURNING

In the weeks after the disaster, Curragh CEO Clifford Frame vowed to continue operations at Westray. But Frame's company could not survive the losses incurred following the explosion. In September, 1993 Curragh was placed into receivership, and the Westray Mine never re-opened.

The families of the 26 men who died launched a lawsuit against the province; however the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia ruled the government was protected from lawsuits under the Workers Compensation Act, and the claim was dismissed. The families did receive insurance payments, as well as payments from a \$1.8-million dollar fund raised from across Canada. The fund also provided scholarship funds for the 43 children who were left without fathers.



Shortly after the tragedy, volunteers, tradespeople and family members built a memorial to the men who died, just outside an industrial park in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. The site sits above what was the North Main tunnel of the Westray mine, the final resting place for the 11 miners whose bodies were never recovered. The names of all 26 miners are inscribed in rays of light from a coal miner's lamp. Underneath their names the inscription reads "Their light shall always shine."

*Reproduced in Part with permission of Historical Canada*



## The United Steelworkers Campaign to 'Stop the Killing, Enforce the Law'

The United Steelworkers began campaigning for changes to the Criminal Code of Canada as far back as the mid-1990s, when the Union testified at the Westray Disaster Inquiry under Justice Peter Richard. That testimony resulted in the Inquiry's recommendation for the federal government to consider amendments to the Criminal Code, amendments that would impose criminal liability on corporations for failing to ensure that their corporation maintained an appropriate standard of occupational health and safety in the workplace.

USW involvement with the Westray Mine started before the 1992 disaster through an organizing drive prompted by workers' concerns for safety at the mine. Westray was only open for eight months before it exploded, killing an entire shift of 26 fathers, sons, uncles, brothers and friends. It was the worst industrial fatality in recent memory. And, as Justice Richard said, it was the result of "a complex mosaic of actions, omissions, mistakes, incompetence, apathy, cynicism, stupidity and neglect".

Making corporate killing a criminal offence became the USW's goal, and teams of rank-and-file lobbyists met with federal Members of Parliament over several years until legislation was passed unanimously in the House of Commons in late 2003, and proclaimed into law in early 2004. Bill C-45, as it was known then, became what we now refer to as the Westray Law.

A decade and a half since the law was passed, and 25 years since Westray, the USW campaign has not stopped. The union is now seeking better enforcement of the law it fought to win. Workers are still dying. Companies are getting away with it. And it has to stop.

**STOP THE  
KILLING.  
ENFORCE  
THE LAW.**

#STOPTHEKILLING  
WWW.STOPTHEKILLING.CA



# Heroes in Peace:

## Building the Welland Ship Canal

### PART 4

By Kathleen Powell and Julie Rorison  
Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial Task Force

The Welland Ship Canal, also known as the fourth and current Welland Canal, was a major Canadian infrastructure project built between 1914 and 1932. Designed to modernize the existing canal system and shipping industry, this project cut right through the geography of the Niagara region to connect two Great Lakes. This amazing feat of human labour and engineering continues to carry thousands of vessels each year and is an economic driver for two nations.

The Welland Canal was built by men from 12 countries and 8 provinces.

At its peak, the works regularly engaged 4000 workers with many thousands more casual labourers over the course of the two decades of construction. It was one of the largest infrastructure projects in Canadian history. However the story of the Welland Canal is also a story of the staggering loss of 137 men who lost their lives as a result of construction accidents. This is believed to be the largest loss of life in the history of Canadian government infrastructure projects.

These men – and they were all men – were not just nameless, faceless

*Lock 7 under construction looking North. Photo courtesy of St. Catharines Museum – Mr. Brian Tibbs.*

workers. They came from all walks of life, young and old, married and single, Canadian born and newcomers. Some were veterans of the First World War. Some were engineers, carpenters, labourers, water boys, electricians and more.

Death on major infrastructure projects was not unusual in this time period, as the health and safety laws we appreciate today were not in place and the workers had minimal protections. This project and its death toll would lead to improvements in working conditions in Canada as well as a more formal



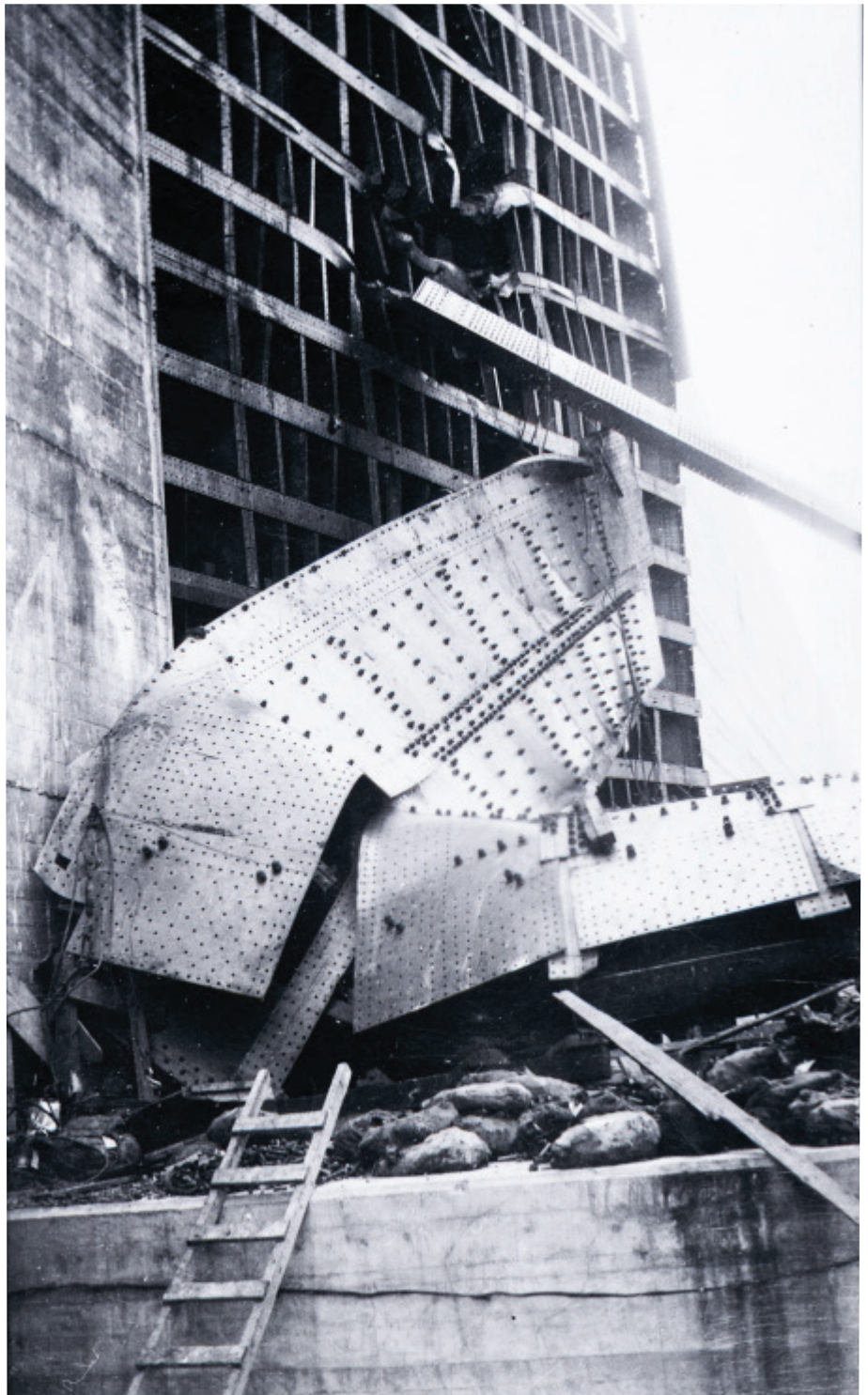
## DAY OF MOURNING

system of reporting workplace injuries and deaths.

In early 2013 the stories of death and loss during construction of the Welland Canal were published in the St. Catharines Standard and inspired more than 2,200 people from across Canada and the United States to sign a petition to support a memorial to honour these "fallen workers" for their sacrifices. Political representatives from Niagara's four canal cities (St. Catharines, Welland, Port Colborne and Thorold) came together with the labour community, local historians and community members to find an appropriate way to commemorate the workers and formed the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial Task Force to finance, design, and build a suitable memorial to honour these men. With support from the St. Catharines Museum and dedicated volunteers, the Task Force has identified each of the 137 men who will finally be honoured with a fitting memorial this year.

As the chair of the Task Force, St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik has commented about the significance of the Welland Canal and the fallen workers story in Niagara's history. "Our geography and development has been shaped by the construction of the Welland Canal – and not just the landscape and economy. Through this project we have seen how many lives and families were impacted by the loss of loved ones during construction. The memorial will be a place for all of us to remember them and reflect on the sacrifices made in construction of one of the most defining projects in our community's history," stated Mayor Sendzik.

Working together with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, the Task Force has secured land for the memorial next to



the canal at the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre at Lock 3. This location has created the opportunity to transform the memorial into a gathering place for the community and family members to remember the fallen workers.

*The Lock 6 Gate collapse was the single largest accident on the canal works. The accident occurred on August 1st, 1928. Ten men were killed when one of the lock gates fell as it was being raised into place. Photo courtesy of the St. Catharines Museum – Mrs Ken Dobbie.*



## The Memorial Design

The memorial is designed by Toronto-based Dereck Revington Studio Inc. Its four major elements reflect the canal within a contemplative grove-like setting. The Gates of Remembrance rise from the Lock bed of the site, their shape inspired by the lock gates of the canal. Their steel panels will be inscribed with the names of the fallen workers, their ages at death: 12 countries, 8 provinces, 137 men.

As the designer, Dereck Revington describes, “The memorial will carry its meaning with and without words, engaging and awakening the visitor, making them think and feel more deeply through the encounter. Who were these men whose lives were cut short so that the Great Lakes could be bridged?”

The Gates of Remembrance echo the lock gates of the canal and the book of the fallen. The Gates will include the name, dates, ages at death of each of the 137 men.

The Veil dips into a “lock bed” and reflects the surroundings, enticing people into the site to explore, learn and remember.

## The Labour Community's Role

The labour community has been integral in the development of the memorial both as members of the Task Force and as major donors towards the project.

Representing workers from across the Niagara region, the Niagara Regional Labour Council has contributed \$25,000 towards the project. President of the Labour Council and CUPW 614, Lou Ann Binning commented on the importance of the memorial. “While the building of the canal was a huge mechanical achievement in its time, it also came at a huge personal cost to many of the workers who helped build it, as well as their families,” said Binning. “The health and safety laws that we have today are the fruits

of those men and women who came many years before, and from their pain today we have laws that attempt to make our workplaces safer. We are happy to contribute to the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial Task Force on behalf of the Unions across Niagara and their over 14,000 workers represented by the Niagara Regional Labour Council.”

Current workers on the St. Lawrence Seaway, represented by UNIFOR local 4212 have also committed \$25,000 towards the memorial in honour of the Seaway employees who came before them.

The contributions from the labour community have highlighted a deeper importance of the memorial to the labour movement. As campaign chair Greg Wight noted, “Support from the labour community reminds us what this project is really about – properly honouring the people whose sacrifices helped build our community and our country.”

With a grant from the federal Department of Canadian Heritage,



## DAY OF MOURNING

strong support from the marine and shipping industry, construction companies, local businesses and service clubs, the Task Force has raised \$700,000 to date towards the \$1 million fundraising goal for the memorial and parkette. Once fundraising is complete the memorial will be unveiled in 2017 at a major community event which will include descendants of the fallen workers from across Canada, the United States, and beyond, an occasion also marking Canada's 150th anniversary.

*For more information or to make a donation to honour the fallen workers please visit [www.stcatharines.ca/CanalWorkers](http://www.stcatharines.ca/CanalWorkers) Memorial or contact the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre.*



### About the Task Force

The Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial Task Force is a volunteer group established to finance, design, build and install a memorial to recognize workers who died while building the Welland Ship Canal between 1914 and 1932. Members of the Task Force include representatives from all Welland Canal communities, Niagara Regional Council, the federal government, the marine industry, local historians, the labour community, and community partners from the Canadian Canal Society, the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre and the Welland Canals Foundation







**April 28th,  
2017**

# National Day of Mourning

## GET INVOLVED!

**On April 28, Day of Mourning, join one of the ceremonies across the country.** Learn more about the National Day of Mourning, April 28th and find where to participate in one of hundreds of ceremonies taking place across the country:

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS): Learn about The National Day of Mourning,

Canadian Labour Congress: Find out about National Day of Mourning events through the Regional CLC offices.

BRITISH COLUMBIA: WorkSafe BC. Place a flower in dedication of a worker at [dayofmourning.bc.ca](http://dayofmourning.bc.ca)

ALBERTA: Workers' Compensation Board of Alberta and the Alberta Construction Safety Association

SASKATCHEWAN: WorkSafe Saskatchewan

MANITOBA: Safe Work Manitoba

ONTARIO: Workers Health & Safety Centre (listing of ceremonies) and Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB): Mark the day by lighting a virtual candle to show your support

QUEBEC: CNESST

NOVA SCOTIA: Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia's [dayofmourning.ns.ca](http://dayofmourning.ns.ca). Stories from workers and families affected by a workplace tragedy

PEI: Worker's Compensation Board of PEI

NEW BRUNSWICK: WorkSafeNB (English | French)

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR: WorkplaceNL

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT: Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

YUKON: Yukon Federation of Labour.

## THE CANADIAN MERCHANT SERVICE GUILD

**The union representing thousands of ships' officers and marine pilots across the country. Our members focus on transportation safety and the protection of Canada's marine environment. Our Guild offices are located in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Visit us at [www.CMSG-GMMC.ca](http://www.CMSG-GMMC.ca)**



# Mark Hancock *of* CUPE



By: Danette Dooley

*"Workers did not join CUPE in order to move backwards, to lose wages or benefits, or lower their working conditions. They joined our union so they could move forward, with a better work life, more secure employment, and safe working conditions."*

Mark Hancock has gone from leading a local CUPE union of less than 300 employees to CUPE national president. The country's largest union, CUPE currently represents over 643,000 workers.

Hancock is a native of Swansea, Wales. Because of his father's job as a mining engineer, the family uprooted frequently. They made the move to Manitoba when Hancock was a baby.

Further family moves saw the Hancocks living in Africa,

Northwest Territories and British Columbia.

"I spent my teen years in Port Coquitlam (British Columbia)," Hancock said during a phone interview recently.

Like many Canadian youth, Hancock loved lacing up his skates and time playing hockey lead to a rink patrol job with the City of Port Coquitlam.

"I was hired by the city (in 1984) and became a member of Port Coquitlam municipal employees, CUPE Local 498."



Two years later, Hancock was successful in moving into a labourer position with the city.

During his early years working for the city, he said, he really didn't know a lot about his union – other than the fact that union dues were regularly deducted from his paycheck. When additional money was taken from his cheque to support other locals in the province who could likely end up on strike, Hancock decided to attend a union meeting.

He was elected CUPE BC president in April 2013 and elected the union's 6th National President in November 2015.

While president of his local CUPE union in the City of Coquitlam, Hancock became involved in the health and safety committee after an employee was suspended from the job following a workplace accident.

Hancock, and other union members, protested the suspension by walking off the job.

The employee was reinstated

As a result of the committee, Hancock said, in time, people were able to perform their jobs in a much safer environment.

“It was a real shift in attitude amongst both union members as well as the city management and city council,” Hancock said.

Hancock goes on to recall another incident where the union stepped up to the plate on behalf of an employee with more than 20 years of service who was fired because of an alcohol addiction.

“We went to arbitration... we

# An Obligation to Resist

“There was a national rep at the meeting who talked about why the levy was going to be added on to our regular dues. I asked questions and enjoyed the meeting so I started to attend others.”

It didn't take long for Hancock to put his name forward as a shop steward. He progressed to the position of chief shop steward before taking on the role of president of Local 498.

Hancock held the position for about 15 years before moving on to the position of CUPE BC secretary-treasurer in 2005.

*We can be a militant union but, more often than not, when I meet with members they are talking about the services that they provide.*

and numerous safety issues addressed, he said.

“We ended the wildcat when we agreed that the suspension would go through an expedited arbitration process but, more importantly, in some ways, was that a super safety committee was formed.”

were able to get her job back with a last chance agreement. She went on to work for the city for another ten years before she retired.”

For Hancock, standing up for and speaking out on behalf of workers is gratifying.

Paving the future for others took on an even greater meaning for Hancock after he had his own children. His son Kaden is now 14. His daughter Kiara is 12.

“Even before that I felt the calling but after that it brought it home more for me probably in a broader way. I'd seen the struggles that so many people face these

days. We all want to make the world a better place.”

Hancock doesn't take his job as CUPE national president lightly. It's not only a job, he said, it's his life.

“Getting to see our members in action across this country, the work that they do... and the fact that they care so much about the work. We can be a militant union but, more often than not, when I meet with members they are talking about the services that they provide. And the funding for those services is becoming more challenging,” Hancock said.

### CUPE sets plan to fight concessions and two-tier bargaining

CUPE's National Executive Board (NEB) is reaffirming the union's commitment to fighting concessions and two-tier contract provisions and defending the free

collective bargaining rights of its members.

In December 2016, the NEB approved a revised policy on collective bargaining that sets out a plan to ensure CUPE locals and

*“People, especially retirees on fixed incomes, are making choices about whether or not to buy meds or to put dinner on the table sometimes. That's not the Canada that I know. Not the Canada that I want to be part of.”*

members are fully prepared to fight back against attacks/concessions during bargaining.

“Like a lot of other unions, we've been struggling at the bargaining table. We are facing employers, we are facing governments provincially in most provinces that are really attacking our members' rights and benefits

and pensions,” Hancock said.

While CUPE has done well over the years pushing back on concessions, he said, the struggles become tougher.

“Workers did not join CUPE in order to move backwards, to lose wages or benefits, or lower their working conditions. They joined our union so they could move forward, with a better work life, more secure employment, and safe working conditions,” Hancock said in a release about the revised policy.

The union has an obligation to its members to resist concessions, two-tier contract provisions, and precarious work, Hancock said.

“If a contract provision is not good enough for our current members, it is not good enough for the next generation of workers either.”

As for precarious work, he said, when an employee retires, oftentimes their jobs aren't replaced with a full-time position, rather two part-time positions,





casual or temporary positions.

“What goes along with those new positions is that (employees in these positions) don't have the same rights or the same benefits or the abilities to enjoy the collective agreements that other workers do.”

Hancock said CUPE is asking local bargaining unit representatives to help make the lives of members that are in precarious jobs a little better – through the collective bargaining process.

“Whether that means

accept that violence is a part of your job. We've actually heard cases of employers telling new staff that they have hired, to expect that there may be some violence as part of their job... and we have people that have lost their houses because they haven't been able to



Quite often, he said, precarious workers aren't afforded the benefit of a set work schedule.

“And if you're a single mother working in a school and you're casual, you have no way to be able to schedule child care, for example, or after school care. But if you're a full-time worker with rights within our collective agreements, you have a pretty good idea when you're going to be working,” Hancock said as an example of a precarious work situation

converting some of those term positions and temporary jobs into permanent, full-time jobs, or whether it's adding some benefits to those precarious positions... there's a lot of different options and we are asking our members to put a focus on those jobs.”

Workplace violence also needs to be addressed, Hancock said, as there has been a huge increase in violence in the workplace throughout the country.

“If you work in a hospital that doesn't mean that you should

make mortgage payments because they've been assaulted in the workplace. That's not acceptable. We have to turn that around.”

Hancock said other challenges the union will face over the upcoming years is the large number of CUPE staff retirements.

Within three years, he said, 150 staff will take their well deserved retirements.

“There's a real generational shift going on right now so we needed to take a hard look at

where we are as a union," he said in commenting further on the revised collective bargaining policy.

Leading into the bargaining process, Hancock said, new members must be educated on what the process is all about and how – through the collective bargaining process - the union has been able to secure rights and benefits for its members.

Regional plans will be developed, he said, to address issues specific to the area. "We're not going to be dictating what these plans look like but we are going to make sure that our locals and our staff have the resources they need to implement things."

CUPE is now hosting ten divisional conventions across the country. Each convention is a little different, Hancock said.

"While there will be regional issues, you have to make sure that everybody is talking about the important issues."

Those issues are outlined in the revised policy, he said.

Although the union's

collective agreements are about ensuring the rights of workers, Hancock said, the country, as a whole, needs to have some serious discussions about its future.

"I think the trade union movement last year did a great job on the expansion of CPP... It wasn't nearly what we'd hoped for or wanted. But it was important to CUPE not only because some of our members will benefit. But most of our members have a really good pension plan already. But it was important to be part of improving the broader society and making sure that all Canadians can retire with dignity."

The country also needs to step in and help Canadians who can no longer afford the medical care they need, he said.

"People, especially retirees on fixed incomes, are making choices about whether or not to buy meds or to put dinner on the table sometimes. That's not the Canada that I know. Not the Canada that I want to be part of."

Hancock is now into the second year of his two-year term as national president. He doesn't hesitate about his future plans. He'll definitely be putting his name forward for another two-year term, he said.



### On the Mark

Source: [www.cupe.ca](http://www.cupe.ca)

Hancock chaired numerous CUPE BC committees prior to being elected as secretary-treasurer, including eight years as chair of the Political Action Committee.

Hancock also chaired the Municipal Committee, the Transportation Committee, the Universities Committee and the Young Workers Task Force.

Hancock was the first chair of the CUPE National Political Action Committee and also served on as the National Union's Liaison to the Global Justice Committee.







**Know  
Your**

**Rights**

**Responsibilities**

**as a Young Worker**

### **What is a Young Worker?**

**A**s a young worker or someone entering the workplace for the first time, are you aware of the potential hazards of the workplace? If you're working,

part-time or full-time, and you're between 15 and 24 years of age, then you are considered to be a young worker. You will need to be made aware of your rights and responsibilities right away, because at work, something tragic could happen, even on your first day.

As a means of offering some basic health and safety awareness

tips, so you can protect yourself and your fellow workers immediately, we are providing some information on your rights and your responsibilities as a young worker to help prevent the heartbreak of injury or even death.

The important ability to recognize all potential hazards in the workplace requires knowledge and understanding along with

## THE Young WORKERS' VOICE

knowing your rights and responsibilities along with observation, learning and experience.

If there is any doubt in your mind as to the safety of the materials you are handling or the duties of your employment, you have the right and the responsibility to bring your concerns to your supervisor's attention.

Ultimately, all employees, including students, have the right to refuse to do work that is unsafe, and employers cannot fire anyone for exercising this right.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) sets out the

rights and duties of all parties in the workplace. It establishes procedures for dealing with workplace hazards and it provides

**Ultimately, all employees, including students, have the right to refuse to do work that is unsafe, and employers cannot fire anyone for exercising this right.**

for enforcement of the law where compliance has not been achieved voluntarily.

Employment Standards Acts sets minimum standards for

things like pay, work hours and time off. Workplaces must follow this law and employee rights are the same whether you work full-time or part-time.

As a young worker you will bring energy and creative ideas to your employer, so don't be afraid to demand, in return, that they ensure that you and your co-workers can work safely while learning new skills and return safely home at the end of each shift.

Every day in Canada, young workers under age 25 sustain lost-time injuries or are killed on the job. Don't get hurt at work! Protect yourself!



## YOUNG WORKER SAFETY

**If you are a new employee**

**Ask your supervisor**

- What are the potential hazards of the job?
- Do I get safety training?
- What safety equipment do I need to do my job?
- Do I need to wear personal protective equipment?
- What do I do in case of fire or emergency?
- How do I get First Aid if I am injured?
- What are my responsibilities regarding the health and safety of my coworkers?
- If I notice something wrong, to whom should I report?





# Your Rights & Responsibilities



## Know your Rights

Even if it's your first day at your first job, you have rights that are the law.

You have the right to know

You have the right to participate

You have the right to refuse

# 1

## Right to Know

**Hazards, dangers at the workplace**

The employer is obligated to provide you with:

- Information
- Training
- Instruction
- Supervision

# 2

## Right to Participate

- You have the right and responsibility to participate in identifying and correcting related safety and health problems.
- On your first day of work find out who is responsible for health & safety
- Is there a health and safety committee/ or health and representative safety representative?
- Are there health and safety programs or courses?

# 3

## Right to Refuse Dangerous Work

You have the right to refuse any task which you believe may present an immediate danger to you or anyone else at the workplace

### Refusal Process

- Report to your immediate supervisor or employer
- Employer is responsible to take the necessary remedial action. If not: Report to the OH&S Committee/ Worker Representative
- If you're not satisfied:**
  - Report to the Department of Labour for an investigation and decision by an officer
  - The decision of the Department of Labour is binding by the employer and the employee
  - Appeal



## Your Employer's Responsibilities

### The Employer Must:

- Provide worker orientations
- Provide for the safety of all workers
- Provide a safe and healthy workplace
- Ensure all tasks are performed in a safe manner
- Ensure that all tools and equipment are in safe working order
- Provide health and safety training, instruction, and information and supervision including information about chemicals that could be harmful to the health & safety of workers

## Your Responsibilities As a Young Worker

- Inform your employer of any physical/learning disabilities
- You are required to perform the duties set out for you in the prescribed manner.
- You must wear the personal protective equipment required by your employer
- Take reasonable care to protect your own health and safety and that of other individuals
- You must co-operate with the OH&S Committee and others to protect yours and others health and safety
- Report all safety hazards and unsafe conditions to your employer or supervisor
- Use and follow safety instructions provided to you by the employer/supervisor
- You must not carry out a task where a danger exists to your or any one else's health and safety
- You must not operate a tool, appliance or equipment that will create a danger for your health or anyone else's at the workplace

### What Your Employer Expects From You:

- Participate in all training provided
- Report all accidents/incidents immediately to your supervisor
- Report any hazardous act and/or conditions to your supervisor
- Abide by all safety rules and regulations
- Wear all P.P.E. applicable

**If you're not sure, ASK QUESTIONS!!!**





# Young Worker, do you need a Union?

By Joanne Bartlette

A young person just starting a part-time job or seeking a position as a career in 2017 may ask, should I look for a workplace with union or should I desire to be part of a union, if I have that option?

To answer this question one should look at the history of the labour movement, the struggles of the past and then look at the benefits of being in a union today.

Unions were started by the efforts of people just like you, but they faced a different kind of adversity than most of us face today. Workers who came before us decided to stand up and fight for fair wages, safe workplaces and decent work hours. Many of the benefits and standards

available today to all workers were won by union members who fought and won yesterday.

According to the Canadian Labour Congress having a union on your side makes your job and

**Workers under age 25  
earned an extra 27%  
from jobs covered by a  
collective agreement.**

your workplace safer and fairer. You get paid better and are more likely to have benefits that help you balance work with life at home. Your health and ability to do your job become important and your right to fair treatment gets enforced.

Each year, just in time for Labour Day, the Canadian Labour Congress releases research to show the economic benefits of having unions at work – for workers and the communities where they live. The latest UNION ADVANTAGE report features information about how union membership made a

difference in the lives of workers in every province and territory, in 29 communities, for working women, young workers, landed immigrants and Aboriginal workers.

It shows that, on average, unionized workers across Canada earned \$5.28/hour more than non-union workers. Women with unions earned more too (\$7.10/hour) and got paid more fairly. Workers under age 25 earned an extra 27% from jobs covered by a collective agreement.

But this advantage doesn't just belong to union members. It benefits everyone.

Workers in unions are an important part of the local community and economy because that's where they spend their



## THE Young WORKERS' VOICE

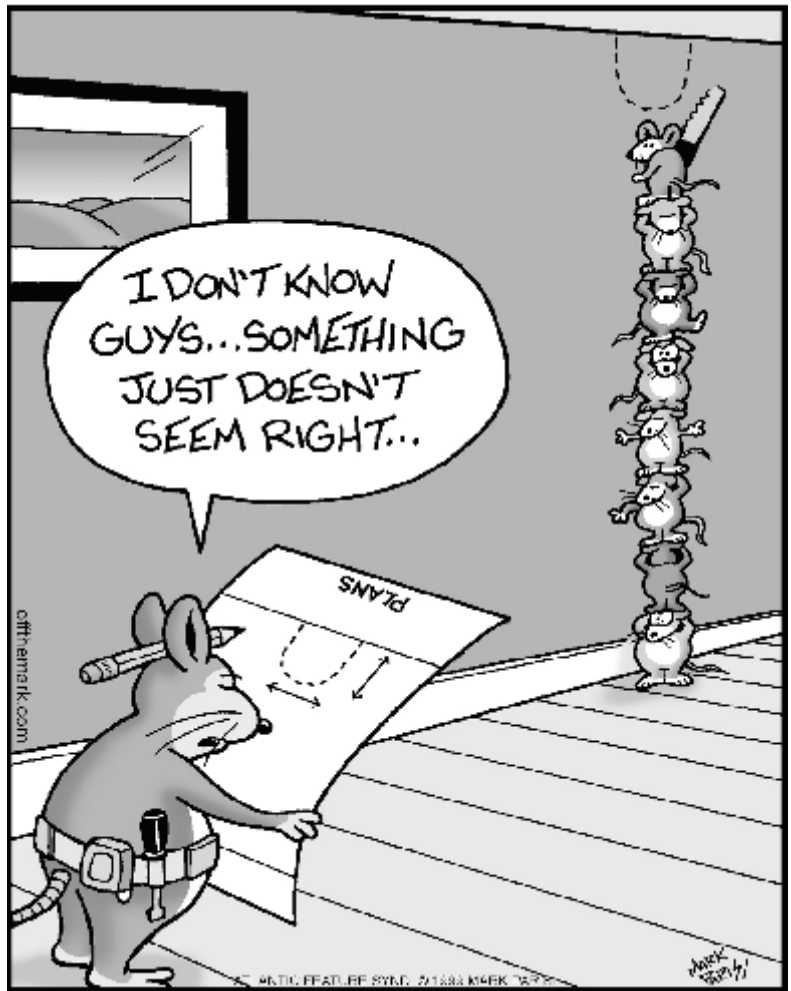
paycheques. Their incomes support local businesses (who create local jobs) and bolster the local tax base, which supports public works and community services that add to everyone's quality of life.

The benefits enjoyed by unionized workers (dental insurance, extended health care coverage and legal insurance, to name a few) attract and support dentists, opticians, chiropractors, therapists, health specialists, and family lawyers whose services are available to everyone in the community.

When they retire, the incomes earned from years of contributions into pension plans also provide money to spend in the community. More importantly, they provide income security, which means fewer seniors having to rely on their families or social programs to get by. Same goes for the health, drug and survivor benefits that many retirees enjoy because they had a union when they worked.

When unions stand up for fairness, they raise the bar for everyone. Many of the things first won by unions are enjoyed by all workers today – minimum wages, overtime pay, workplace safety standards, maternity and parental leave, vacation pay, and protection from discrimination and harassment.

So, unions for young workers... I say YES!





Where  
do we  
**grow?**  
from  
here

The New  
Workers'  
Voice is your  
voice.

Speak out  
and be  
heard.

Let's grow  
and build  
something  
big together.



SPRING 2017  
**NEW** **Workers'**  
independent. influential.  
relevant. balanced. **Voice**

# ALBERTA, IS SOLAR FOR YOU?

**Alberta Government  
incentives  
recently announced can  
reduce the cost of  
installed solar power  
systems by  
20% to 30%**

If a good portion of your roof has southern exposure you can use solar energy to cut your electrical energy cost including transmission and distribution charges?

Be part of the Solar Energy revolution, invest in a Solar System for your home or business. Your savings can pay for the whole system and afterwards you have free energy for life!

Demand for clean energy and savings is on the rise and home solar energy is one of the best investments you could possibly make. It is both cost effective and good for the overall environment. Your roof provides the absolute best opportunity to take advantage of solar power!



*A team approach to*

Review - Recommend  
Quotation - Installation - Warranty

**Alberta - Newfoundland  
Solar Connection Ltd.**

Edmonton, Alberta  
Phone 587-990-5747

*Friendly, Honest Advice - Residential - Commercial*

email: [abnlsolar@mail.com](mailto:abnlsolar@mail.com)

**About our company:** Alberta - Newfoundland Solar Connection started when the owner moved from Newfoundland to Edmonton to be with his grand-kids and saw the need for good, honest, advice for Solar customers. Offering the benefit of his connections with local suppliers he decided to help customers with friendly, downhome advice. Solar is not for everyone and he will be the first to advise against it unless it is a good investment for you.