



PRESIDENT REBECK JOINS WITH IBEW 2034 MEMBERS ON THE PICKET LINE AT THE MANITOBA HYDRO STATION ON CHEVRIER IN WINNIPEG

Sisters, Brothers and Friends,

This spring, I joined Canadians in horror after unmarked graves of 215 Indigenous children were identified at the Kamloops Indian Residential School site in Kamloops, BC. The remains were identified by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation. In June, it was announced that the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation is working with universities, including Brandon University, to identify the remains of 104 children buried at the former residential school site in Brandon.

Canada's residential schools were deliberate acts of genocide, carried out by Canada in an attempt to eliminate Indigenous cultures, societies and lives.

These graves remind us that Canada was built

on colonialization. And colonization efforts are still underway: in the actions and inactions of governments, and in our society. As we mourn these young lives that were taken at, let us also recommit to doing what we can as union activists to heed the 94 calls to action set out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and push to have them implemented, and also to implement the recommendations of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Around the same time, in London, Ontario the Afzaal family were out for an evening walk when they were deliberately hit by a lone driver, resulting in the deaths of four family members and serious injury to a nine-year-old boy. This was an act of hate, committed because the family was Muslim. Racism and Islamophobia

are incompatible with core union values of solidarity, democracy and social justice. Everyone deserves to feel safe. Let us work as trade unionists to stamp out racism and white supremacy from our communities.

THIRD WAVE MADE WORSE BY PALLISTER'S CUTS AND INACTION

The pandemic has taken a lot from working families, including the lives over 1,000 Manitobans. As I write this, we are experiencing a crushing third wave, made much worse by the foolish decisions of the Pallister government to ignore the advice of health care professionals, combined with their decisions to underfund and understaff health care and cut ICU beds since they were elected in 2016.

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While Manitobans continue to get vaccinated and we look ahead to some sense of normalcy, we know that the Pallister Conservatives will continue to attack the public services that we all count on.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BEA BRUSKE, NEW PRESIDENT OF THE CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

I want to congratulate Sister Bea Bruske on her election as the new President of the Canadian Labour Congress after serving for many years as the Secretary Treasurer of UFCW 832. President Bruske will serve our movement well, and I look forward to working with her to make life better for working people in Manitoba and throughout the country.

IBEW 2034 STRIKE ENDS

After two months on picket lines throughout Manitoba, the IBEW 2034 members who work at Manitoba Hydro are heading to a binding arbitration hearing at the beginning of July. We support these hardworking Manitobans and their fight for a fair deal.

GOVERNMENT APPEALS MANITOBA'S UNIONS WIN IN WAGE FREEZE DECISION

Last summer, Manitoba's unions won a major victory for workers and their right to collective bargaining when the Pallister government's wage freeze law was struck



NEW CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS PRESIDENT BEA BRUSKE (PHOTO CREDIT: BUILD FILMS)

down in court. Calling the law Draconian, Manitoba's Court of Queen's Bench sent the government a clear signal that their wage freeze law was illegal.

But being the stubborn anti-worker politician that he is, Brian Pallister just won't let it go. So Manitoba's unions were back in court at the beginning of June as the Court of Appeal heard the government's appeal of the decision.

Collective bargaining is a Charter-protected right, and we will continue to defend it against attacks by this government. A decision by the Manitoba Court of Appeal is expected later this year.

PALLISTER PLAN TO PRIVATIZE WINNIPEG'S WASTEWATER SERVICES

This spring, I joined CUPE 500 President Gord Delbridge and Winnipeg Labour Council President Melissa Dvorak in speaking to the Mayor's Executive Policy Committee against the Pallister government's plan to bully the City of Winnipeg into pursuing a plan to privatize the city's wastewater treatment services. Privatization would mean the loss of good jobs and put the health of Lake Winnipeg at risk. Unfortunately, the mayor's inner circle refused to shut the door completely on privatization.

In Solidarity,

Kevin Rebeck
PRESIDENT OF THE MANITOBA FEDERATION OF LABOUR

MFL welcomes the Manitoba Teachers' Society to our federation

In May, The Manitoba Teachers' Society voted overwhelmingly in favour of joining the MFL. The decision will add 16,000 members to our federation, and it will formalize the great partnership that the MFL and MTS have always had.

This is the first time that MTS has voted to affiliate to the MFL. Manitoba's teachers do incredibly work, and they have gone above and beyond for students this year. Our federation and our labour movement are stronger as a result of this affiliation decision.

The MTS will formally join the MFL this fall, will have seats at the MFL's executive council table - the central decision making body of the MFL between conventions.

By affiliating, Manitoba's teachers will play a formal role in guiding the direction of our federation and our work on behalf of Manitoba workers. We look forward to working with the MTS as a strong, united labour movement.

Hope and risks on the horizon for child care

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” – this famous Charles Dickens quote captures perfectly how many unions and other child care advocates are feeling about the future of child care in Manitoba.

Why “the best of times”?

After years of lobbying by early childhood educators (ECEs), women’s organizations, the labour movement, and others, plus a big push by Jagmeet Singh and Canada’s New Democrats as part of their work in the current minority parliament, this spring’s federal budget included a major new commitment to invest up to \$30 billion over the next five years to “transform” Canada’s current child care “patchwork”, into a “high quality, affordable, Canada-wide early learning and child care system”.

This was a very welcomed announcement, albeit overdue, with the pandemic having highlighted what unions have always advocated: child care is essential social infrastructure and essential economic infrastructure. It’s now widely accepted that our COVID-19 recovery depends on building a better funded and more secure, greatly expanded, high quality (with fairly compensated workers) and universally accessible and affordable child care system.

Why “the worst of times”?

Because it’s clear that the Pallister government wants to take child care in the opposite direction. In freezing grants for four years, Pallister effectively cut child care, when taking inflation into account, at a time of growing need.

Their recently passed Bill 47 allows private, for-profit child care providers to receive – for the first time in Manitoba – scarce taxpayer-funded grants, despite a body of evidence showing that quality suffers under a for-profit model. They’ve also opened the door to using public funds to give parents cash for babysitting in the gray market of unlicensed childcare, rather than enhancing Manitoba’s well-established, cash-starved, not-for-profit, regulated system.

Where do we go from here?

If new federal investments are going to have their desired effects, it’s clear that there are going to have to be strict “strings attached”. Provinces like Manitoba should not be allowed to use federal funds to backfill for existing provincial dollars, or direct them outside of licensed and regulated non-profit services (including on consumer-side programs, like Stephen Harper-inspired ‘cash for care’).

We urge the federal government to establish mandatory national standards to ensure a child care system built on the principles of universality, greater affordability for parents, and high quality services provided by well-educated and much better compensated ECEs, providing culturally appropriate and inclusive programming.

Canada has finally come through with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build the child care system we need and deserve – let’s not let Pallister mess it up.



MFL hosts webinar on the importance of Manitoba's binding arbitration rules

The MFL's campaign against the Pallister government's legislation to tilt the scales against workers and unions (Bill 16) is in full swing, with radio, social, and billboard ads throughout the province.

As part of our campaign, the MFL is providing opportunities for union activists to learn more about what is at stake with this bill. One of the biggest changes in Bill 16 is the removal of our made-in-Manitoba solution to endless strikes and lockouts, known as binding arbitration or alternative dispute resolution (ADR). These rules have been in place for two decades, and have led to Manitobans losing the fewer days to strikes and lockouts than any other province in the last decade.

Since 2000, the Labour Relations Act has contained rules that allow employees or employers to request binding arbitration after a strike or lockout has lasted 60 days. Brought in by the Gary Doer NDP government, these rules ensure that there is an end in sight when workers are out on the picket line, but they also prevent strikes and lockouts from happening. Because workers or employers might not want to leave the settling of an agreement up to an independent arbitrator that they might not like, these rules put pressure on both sides to reach a fair agreement that works for both sides. In fact, Manitoba has seen the fewer days lost to labour disputes than any other province in Canada over the last decade. Simply put, these rules work for workers, for employers and for our economy.

In June we hosted a webinar on the importance of these binding arbitration rules and how they have meant fair deals are settled sooner, benefitting workers, employers and our economy. I was pleased to be joined by UFCW 832 President Jeff Traeger, who has a lot of experience with the binding arbitration process. We were also joined by two workers with recent experience in having binding arbitration end their strike action: Name and Name.

The webinar was well-attended by union activists and really focused on the heart of this bill's attacks on unions and working people: the stripping away of the binding arbitration rules which have served our province well for over 20 years.

It was especially important to hear from workers who have direct experience with how the binding arbitration rules impacted their collective bargaining strategies and how they impacted morale on the picket line. No one wants to be on a picket line with no end in sight and we all appreciated their perspective about how the 60 day timeline helped to reinforce the resolve of workers to get a fair deal.

We also appreciated President Traeger's expertise on the subject, as UFCW 832 has been involved in using the binding arbitration process outlined in the Labour Relations Act many times. It was clear from the webinar discussion that these rules were put in place for good reasons, and that they benefit workers but also employers. It provides a clear and consistent end to labour disputes and a strong measure that has prevented many strikes and lockouts in the first place.

Add in information about Darlene Jackson and Mike Espenell if they join

We Need You to Raise your voice against Bill 16!

As we continue to campaign against Bill 16 this summer and into the fall, we are calling on union activists who are interested in joining with the MFL to lobby their MLA to stop the bill to get in touch with us at 204-947-1400 / admin@mfl.mb.ca. This will be a team effort and will include MFL resources to aid with the lobbying effort.

Politicians care what their constituents think, so the more pressure we can put on local Conservative MLAs, the more we can make them think twice about their support for this bill. Lobbying meetings are also good ways to practice political advocacy.

Finally, we need as many union activists as possible to sign up to speak against Bill 16 when it goes to legislative committee this fall. We want to make the committee hearings as painful as possible for the Pallister government, and we need to fill these meetings with hours and hours of opposition to their anti-worker, anti-union agenda. If you have signed up, we thank you. Please try and encourage a friend to sign up with you.

If you haven't had the opportunity to sign up, please do so now. Even though the meetings won't happen until sometime this fall, you can call and register today at 204-945-3636. Every Manitoba is eligible to speak at legislative committee, and all you need to do is provide your name and contact information and let them know you are presenting as a private citizen (unless you are formally presenting on behalf of your union).

Union Centre shows its Pride



PRESIDENT REBECK, UNION CENTRE PRESIDENT MONICA GIROUARD AND MFL VP FOR PRIDE & SOLIDARITY JILL STOCKWELL.

Unfortunately, Pride Month was impacted once again by the pandemic for a second straight year.

Manitoba's labour movement is looking forward to participating in the Pride Parade next year but we did mark Pride Month by raising a Pride flag at the Union Centre.

Due to public health restrictions, we were unable to hold a large gathering but I was glad to be joined at the flag raising by Union Centre President Monica Girouard and by MFL VP for Pride & Solidarity Jill Stockwell.

SAVE THE DATE

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MOVEMENT**

Manitoba
Federation
of Labour

2022 MFL CONVENTION
MAY 5-7 BRANDON

MFL marks Day of Mourning with online ceremony

Although we could not gather in person this year, the MFL hosted an online candlelight ceremony to mark the National Day of Mourning on April 28. The day provides an opportunity to remember those who have been killed or seriously injured on the job, and to recommit ourselves to making workplace safe and healthy for all.

This year, we mourned 14 Manitoba workers who died on the job over the last year. This included four workers who were killed by acute hazards in the workplace, nine more who died from occupational diseases, and one who died from workplace exposure to COVID-19.

CUPE Local 204 President Debbie Boissoneault gave this year's Day of Mourning keynote address, and she highlighted the vital role that health care workers have played throughout this past year, but also the work that unions have had to do to keep workers safe during the pandemic.

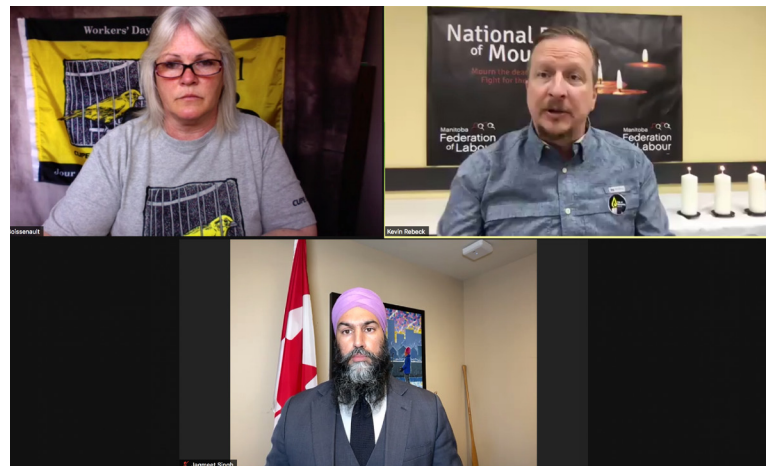
From fighting for the right personal protective equipment for all workers to the need for adequate paid sick days to ensure workers aren't forced to choose between their paycheques and staying home to protect public health when they're sick, President Boissoneault's talk highlighted just how much workers have had to fight to get this government to do anything to protect them from COVID-19.

We were also joined by federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, who brought greetings and a national perspective on workplace

safety and health.

I want to recognize the work and commitment of the essential workers on the front-lines and behind the scenes who have continued to provide services, care and essential goods throughout the last year and continue to do so now. As union members, we fight for safer workplaces and this last year has reminded us just how important workplace safety and health is.

I want to thank Manitoba's unions for all of their advocacy on behalf of their members and all workers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Having a union in their corner has made a world of difference for thousands of Manitobans, and we will continue to pushed for safer workplaces for all.



PRESIDENT BOISSONEAULT, PRESIDENT REBECK AND FEDERAL NDP LEADER JAGMEET SINGH

Welcome Place lockout

Shamefully, the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC) has locked out the workers who provide support services for newcomers at Welcome Place. These dedicated workers, who are members of CUPE 2348, have been there to provide essential services for newcomers, and the MIIC has demonstrated shameful behaviour by locking them out. The MIIC had already demanded pay cuts from these employees over the last year but they continue to demand workers accept further concessions.

I have been proud to join with the workers of Welcome Place on the picket line and even though we have been unable to gather in large numbers because of the pandemic, I know that the entire labour movement stands behind them and their fight for fair treatment by their employer.



PRESIDENT REBECK JOINS MEMBERS OF CUPE 2348 AT THE WELCOME PLACE PICKET LINE.

Data obtained by the MFL shows workplaces accounted for at least 1,200 cases of COVID-19 in pandemic's first year

In April, the MFL released an internal report by the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) that revealed that there were over 1,200 confirmed cases of COVID-19 transmissions at Manitoba workplaces from March 2020 to February 28, 2021. The report, obtained through a freedom of information request, was the first tangible data released on the rate of workplace transmissions and showed the desperate need for permanent paid sick days in Manitoba.

Far too many workers face the impossible choice between putting food on the table and protecting public health by staying home when they are sick because they don't have paid sick days on the job. With new and more contagious variants of COVID-19 spreading throughout Canada, there is an urgent need for government to put paid sick days in place for all workers.

Despite repeated denials from the Pallister government that workplace transmissions were occurring, the data released by the MFL clearly demonstrated that over the pandemic's first year, the WCB accepted 1,227 COVID-19 claims. These numbers did not include any eligible workers who were unaware that they could submit a WCB claim and did not include occupations that are not covered by the WCB, such as teachers. They also do not include numbers from Manitoba's crushing third wave. In May, government finally started to admit that workplaces have been significant sources of COVID-19 transmission.

Paid sick days would help to protect public health by allowing sick workers to stay home without leaving them out of pocket. The need to protect public health and paycheques, during this pandemic and

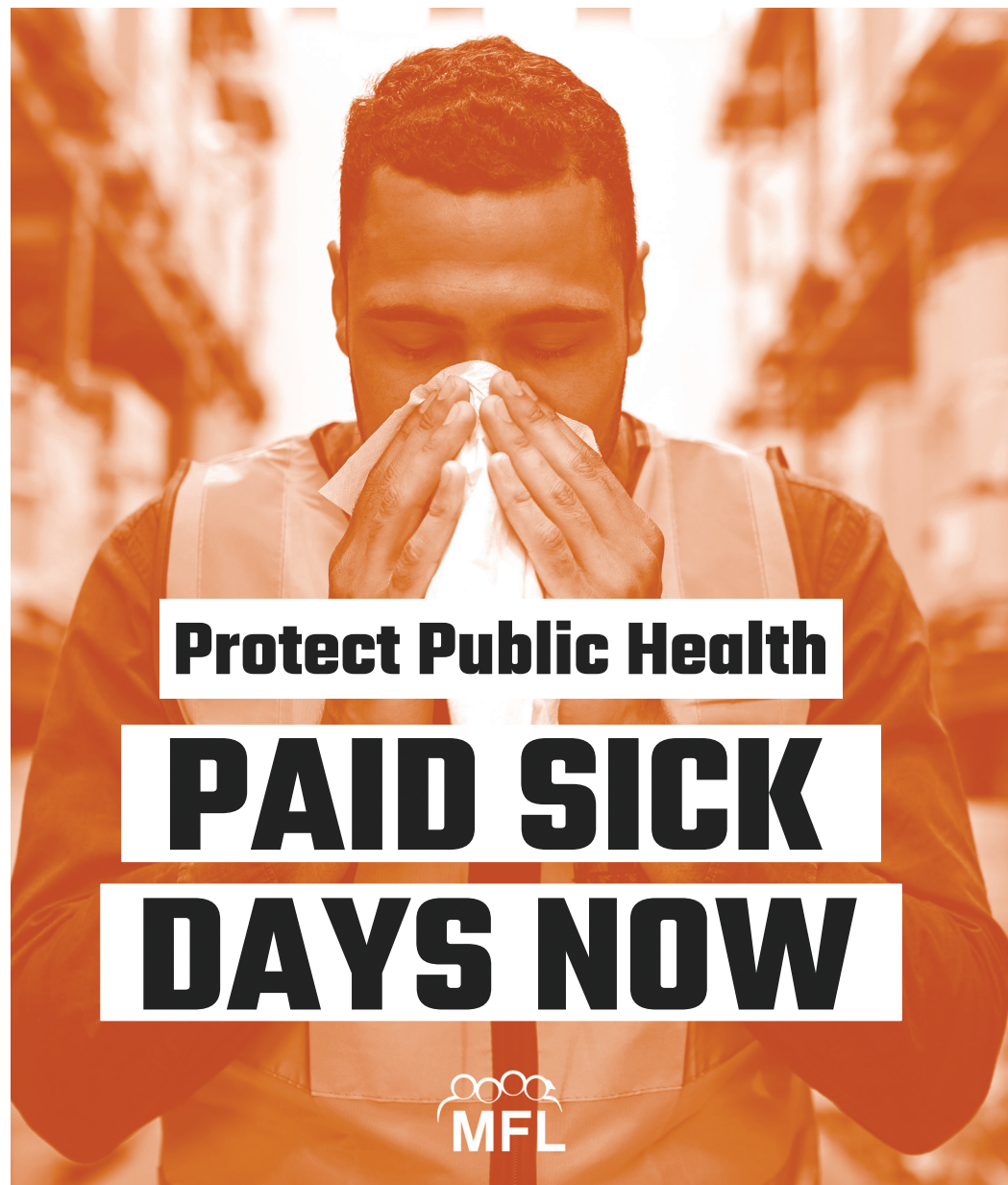
beyond, is simply too great for government to ignore.

The Pallister government introduced a wholly insufficient, temporary and voluntary program to rebate employers who do offer up to five paid sick days for workers.

This falls far short of what is needed: mandatory and permanent paid sick days. With the potential for another COVID-19

wave in the fall, an inadequate and voluntary program does not meet the needs of Manitoban workers.

As experts see a potential for a fourth wave of COVID-19 this fall, the need for adequate paid sick days for all workers continues to be clear. The MFL will continue to fight for paid, permanent sick days for all Manitoba workers.



Protect Public Health

PAID SICK

DAYS NOW



CREATING A CULTURE OF CONSENT IN THE WORKPLACE

FREE WORKSHOP

Workplace sexual harassment is a harmful pattern of behaviour that negatively impacts individual staff as well as larger workplace units and teams.

This workshop will focus on such topics as:

- Identifying and discussing the underlying issues that may lead to sexual harassment
- Increasing supportive approaches toward staff who have disclosed their experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace
- Developing a language of consent that encourages respect and understanding in the workplace
- Highlighting effective by-stander skills for intervention

Due to the limitations around Covid-19 and distancing safety protocols, this 6 hour in-person workshop is currently on hold and a shorter online version will be available of the main themes of the original workshop to aid in preparing the workplace to begin these conversations.



To book this workshop, fill out this form: bit.ly/consentABC

To ask questions, call or email:

Lauren Babara Checkley: (204) 982-7804 • laurenc@serc.mb.ca

Richard McCrae: (204) 926-7907 • rmccrae@mflohc.mb.ca

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