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# THE CUPE CONNECTION

Official Publication of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 38  
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## Retirement income insecurity crisis undeniable

The following letter, written by CUPE National President Paul Moist (<http://cupe.ca/about/paulmoist>), is a response to a recent opinion piece by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business in the Vancouver Province entitled “Mandatory CPP tax boost no solution for Canadians”. (<http://www.theprovince.com/business/Mandatory+boost+solution+Canadians/9222430/story.html>).

“Dear editor,

It is a simple fact—Canada is facing a retirement income security crisis. The evidence is so overwhelming that CFIB’s denials borders on the ridiculous.

Today, over 11 million Canadians are without a workplace pension plan. Only around 25 percent of Canadians contribute to RSPs, which have proven to be an ineffective way for most to save for a decent retirement income anyway.

Nearly half of Canadians born in the 1960’s will end up with a retirement income below 80 percent of what they earned while working, according to a recent report from the CIBC. Six in ten of Canadians born between 1985 and 1989 will have the same fate. In contrast, only a quarter of Canadians born during or shortly after World War II faced a similar income drop after retiring.

We need to build on the success of the CPP to address this obvious crisis. Canada’s CPP system is well run, fully portable and fully paid for by employees and employers. The CPP is funded sufficiently for the next 70 years.

There is not a shred of credible empirical evidence to support assertions that CPP contributions amount to a payroll tax and a job killer. Calling an employer’s pension contribution a payroll tax is disingenuous, and perpetuating

these myths is an outright deception.

Expanding CPP benefits through gradual increases to contributions is the most efficient, effective, and affordable way to ensure as many Canadians as possible can retire with dignity and a decent income.

Yours truly,

Paul Moist

National President,

Canadian Union of Public Employees”

We recently circulated a petition regarding the expansion of CPP through our steward system. This was in response to the Federal Government and Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty demanding delays to the other Finance Ministers’ requests to move forward with the matter.

Groups such as the CFIB are constantly attacking public sector pension plans as being too rich and beyond most Canadians. Expanding CPP will address this unfounded criticism and provide Canadians with securer retirements. Should the pension crisis not be fixed, future seniors will end up being dependent on government and the tax payer. Isn’t it better to have them pay a little bit now to look after themselves tomorrow.



## CUPE 38 Presents Hockey Night in Calgary



**Who:** Calgary Hitmen vs. Kamloops  
**Date:** Friday, February 28, 2014  
**Time:** 7:00 pm  
**Location:** Scotiabank Saddledome  
**Cost:** Subsidized by Local 38—tickets will be \$5.00 per ticket with a limit of four per member (Payment must be received by February 20th at the latest, provided tickets are still available)

**First Come - First Served: only 200 tickets available!**

Please contact the union office (403) 233-2700 if you are interested in this offer to reserve and pay for your ticket(s).

## Negotiation Update

Local 38 and the City are meeting on a frequent basis since the New Year to come up with a new collective agreement. As usual, both sides have agreed to deal with the less contentious issues and save the monetary issues until later. Part of the reasoning for this is the City needs to know all of the changes to the collective agreement, in order for them to establish the total cost the changes represent.

At this point the meetings are productive, cordial and progress is being made. We will keep you posted as things develop.

## Black History Month

February is a month to celebrate, share and promote the history, cultural heritage and contributions of the entire African Diaspora.

Besides all the history of blacks in Canada since 1603, the labour movement has been guided by the gains brought on by the African Canadians fight to be equal. Not only did black labour activists like Philip Randolph, Bromley Armstrong, and many others fight for improved working conditions and equal rights for African-Canadians and Americans and change the way we do things at work, they also paved the way on the broader issue of equality for all. In February we celebrate Black History Month. We should also pay homage to all ethnicities and minority groups that have benefitted by the work done by our ancestral friends to promote equality.

CUPE has a proud and successful track record of using collective agreements to promote human rights in the workplace before they were achieved through legislation.

March 21 is also another very important day where we honour the fight for equality by observing The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

For more information on Black History Month or The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and for links to other resources, visit <http://cupe.ca/anti-racism>



## You Can Refuse Unsafe Work!

The law in Alberta states that you shall refuse all unsafe work if you believe there is an imminent danger (that is not normal for the occupation or activity) to yourself or others caused by a tool, appliance, equipment or work procedure at the worksite, according to Section 35 of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act.



Here's how you can refuse unsafe work:

1. Notify your employer at the worksite that you are refusing work because you don't think it is safe, and state your reason for refusal.
2. The supervisor must investigate and take action to eliminate the danger. There must be a written record of your notification, the investigation, and action taken. A copy of the report must be provided to you.
3. If, in your opinion, a danger still exists, you can file a complaint with a government occupational health and safety officer.
4. The officer shall investigate the complaint, and document action taken in a written report. A copy of the report must be provided to you.
5. If you are not satisfied with the officer's report and recommendations, you must legally return to work, but may appeal the report within 30 days.

You cannot be disciplined or dismissed for complying with the legislation, according to Section 36 of the Act. You have the legal right to a healthy and safe workplace.

For more information or assistance, contact your local union health and safety representative, your union executive, your CUPE staff representative. You may also contact CUPE National Health and Safety Branch at 1375 St. Laurent Blvd., Ottawa, Ontario K1G 0Z7, or call them at (613) 237-1590. They can also be reached via fax at (613) 237-5508 or Email: [health\\_safety@cupe.ca](mailto:health_safety@cupe.ca)

## Vacation

We have received many calls regarding the process for establishing the order of preference for who gets to take vacation. Contributing to the concern is the staffing levels in many areas are such that only one or two members are able to be away at any given time. This has created a significant demand during prime time.

The collective agreement states that employees are entitled to have vacation in accordance with their years of service. It does not however, state who gets preference. As the collective agreement is silent, this matter falls under managements' rights. Management must exercise their rights in a manner that is consistent, fair and equitable. Typically this allows members up until a certain date to select vacation and then any conflicts are resolved. Any subsequent vacation is then approved on a first come basis.

Employment standards stipulates that employees are allowed to select their legislative minimums ie. 2 or 3 weeks, in one block or more.



### THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH



What comes easy won't last long, and what lasts long won't come easy.

# GENERAL MEETING



Tuesday, JANUARY 28, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Union Office

1439—9th Avenue South East

BUSINESS: Regular

1. Election of eighteen (18) eligible delegates to CUPE Alberta Convention—March 25-28, 2014 in Medicine Hat.
2. Election of two (2) eligible delegates to the Canadian Labour Congress Convention— May 5-9, 2014 in Montreal.