

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND AGENCIES

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS HELP CENTRE

We are pleased to be able to present our 22nd annual written report to the SFL Convention. The support of the Saskatchewan Labour Movement continues to impress all those who are assisted by our offices, as well as the Saskatchewan community as a whole. Nationally, this partnership we have, of labour and a community-based organization advocating for unemployed workers dealing with the Employment Insurance Commission, is recognized as a classic example of social unionism working for the broader good.

On the advocacy work side of things, the change in government has continued to benefit claimants with improved services for claimants and improved access for those of us who represent and assist EI claimants. We have become a more active partner again, in working to get the EI program and claims processing working better for the unemployed. Again this year, that has been demonstrated by the number of meetings and consultations we continue to have with the government. We have attended meetings in Ottawa with senior EI management, as well as with the Worker Commissioner, deputy and associate deputy ministers, Director Generals and the Minister. We have been financially supported to attend these meetings by payment of travel costs by the CLC and the office of the Worker Commissioner, Pierre LaLiberte.

In last year's report we described our involvement in a review of the EI appeal system, the Social Security Tribunal (SST), which was being done by KPMG as a result of Parliamentary Reports of the HUMA Committee and Service Quality Report. The final report by KPMG, published in November 2017, identified significant issues with the Social Security Tribunal appeal system.

The SST and the required reconsideration process prior to registering an EI appeal to the SST pose significant barriers to claimants/appellants getting their claims allowed. We have recently been appointed to a working group of advocates, lawyers and union leaders which will be meeting in Ottawa in October to work on proposals to improve the appeal system. We will be recommending that the appeal process return to a tripartite model similar to the Board of Referees which would again include representatives of employers and employees. The Worker Commissioner and the Employer Commissioner are facilitating and supporting this initiative. The Prime Minister actually had to sign off on this process/consultation so we are hoping that that is an indication the process is being taken seriously and significant changes may result. That is our hope, anyway.

We continue to have a high success rate with reconsiderations we file. Approximately 75% of our requests for reconsideration are being allowed. Overall, nationally, 48% of reconsiderations are being allowed. We also continue to raise the issue of the high rate of reconsiderations being allowed. This rate indicates that there are a high ration of claims being denied at first application because of arbitrary and poorly fact found decisions by EI agents. We continue to make this issue a primary one for our office in discussions with EI management and the government.

We continue to receive strong financial support from Saskatchewan unions as indicated by the donor list attached to this report. Your support in cash donations in kind provide almost half the budget funding for the UWHC. The CLC provides the Regina office and all support services at no cost to us, and the Saskatoon office, which is located in the RWDSU Saskatoon office, continues to support us in keeping our costs down in Saskatoon.

Most community based organizations, including ours, have seen the continuation of the funding freeze on service contracts and grants again this year. So we hope that our regular donors will continue to support us and that unions and locals who have not donated in the past will consider doing so this year. Our fund raising starts in February. Your financial support is critical to the Unemployed Workers Help Centre maintaining our level of service.

In conclusion, I can say that, operationally, this has been another successful year for the UWHC and that we continue to work hard to fulfill our mandate of ensuring that Saskatchewan unemployed workers get paid for their EI benefits.

Unemployed Workers Help Centre – Donor List 2018

Boilermakers-Local 555	500
Unifor-Local 649, Regina	1000
Unifor-Local 1-S, Regina	250
Unifor-Local 2-S, Saskatoon	800
COPE-Local 397, Saskatchewan	1000
Unifor- Local 609, Saskatoon	150
Construction and General Workers-Local 180	2000
CUPE Sask	1500
CUPE-Local 4784, Pelly	100
CUPE-Local 287, North Battleford	100
CUPE-Local 600-3, Moose Jaw	200
CUPE-Local 3287, Saskatoon	1000
CUPE-Local 3766, Regina	500
CUPE-Saskatchewan	1500
Grain Service Union	1550
HSAS	300
Heat and Frost Insulators-Local 119	750
IBEW-Local 2038, Regina	5000
Ironworkers-Local 771	2400
Moose Jaw and District Labour Council	400
Operating Engineers-Local 870	1000
Regina and District Labour Council	500

RWDSU-Local 496, Prince Albert	1500
RWDSU Joint Board	4000
RWDSU-Local 454, Regina	200
RWDSU-Local 568, Regina	200
RWDSU-Local 480, Saskatoon	1000
RWDSU-Local 544, Saskatoon	1000
RWDSU-Local 955, Yorkton	2000
RWDSU-S 635	200
Saskatchewan Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council	7500
Saskatchewan Federation of Labour	7500
Saskatoon and District Labour Council	2500
SEIU West	500
SGEU-Public Service Sector	5000
SGEU, Local 1110, Moose Jaw	250
SGEU-Education Sector	250
SGEU- Provincial	2000
Sheet Metal Workers-Local 296	1000
SUN- Saskatchewan	3500
Teamsters-Local 395	1233
Teamsters Canada Rail Conference-Local 764	1000
UFCW-Local 1400	3000
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners-Local 1985	1500
United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters-Local 179	2500
USW-Local 7458, Saskatoon	200
USW-Local 7689	500
USW-Local 8933, Saskatoon	50
USW-Local 189, Saskatoon	150
USW-Local 5917, Regina	500
TOTAL	\$73,233.00

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COUNCIL

Our Council is meeting regularly and much of our discussions have included legalization of marijuana and the conversation is focused on impairment and the impact on OH&S and the workplace. Another high priority topic is the high fatality rate for workers, particularly young workers. It is important that this discussion continues. We have also identified that public awareness on many of these issues is important and we continue to encourage the government to highlight all fines and court appearances.

There have been a few changes to the Saskatchewan.ca website and that, specifically, is where you find information regarding OH&S in Saskatchewan. While it is easy for employers to navigate, employee co-chairs cannot access it at this time. We see this as a problem and have asked for changes to be made so that it is equal access for both workers and employers.

Other topics we are including in our workplan are: SOT's for minutes, Fit for Work, (cannabis/ prescribed medication), Age Restrictions, Prescribed Place of Employment and Violence in the Workplace, Fatalities, and Education and Training.

Injuries and lost time claims are trending upwards once again. This is alarming. While the number of reported lost time injuries is down slightly, the length of time for lost time injuries is up, suggesting that injuries are more severe. There has also been a substantial increase in random inspections in response to push back from workers and their organizations. We are seeing employers that have graduated from the Targeted Intervention Program and are reporting a substantial reduction in total injury claims in these workplaces.

Finally, the Mines Regulations review is now complete and will be implemented April 2019. There is concern about needing additional inspections in the mining industry. Officers request prior knowledge before going onto the site. Since there is no requirement for meetings and minutes, therefore information is not tracked and not communicated effectively.

Because we are now meeting quarterly we feel that we have a more consistent voice and ability to provide feedback to the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of

Lori Johb –SFL (SEIU)
Roy Howell – SFL (USW)
Judy Henley – SFL (CUPE)
Gunnar Passmore –Sask Building Trades

SASKATCHEWAN APPRENTICESHIP AND TRADES CERTIFICATION COMMISSION (SATCC) (Production and Maintenance Sector)

Sisters, Brothers, Friends, Colleagues and Comrades,

I have served the SATCC Board of Directors on your behalf for a bit more than a year now, a steep learning curve included. Having a trades background was all I originally envisioned the role requiring (after all, I had progressed through the apprenticeship system myself, had I not) but the experience thus far has been anything but what I expected it to be.

The Commission Board's responsibilities include most of the heavy lifting where it comes to data collection for all registered tradespeople in the province, regardless of sector, and organization of credentials / training for everyone registered within the framework of Apprenticeship. I have likely missed an enormous list of other 'things' but if you could imagine everything on the certification side short of the actual training and associated developmental material (and teaching of the same). It's a big animal that requires constant tweaking and attention - technology having had as much, and a continuing impact on everything we do from the tools to the processes we use. Safety has also become a far larger piece of the overall picture as workers everywhere search for safer ways to accomplish their day-to-day tasks and/or ply their respective crafts. Further evidence of the shifting paradigm has been a slow but steady influx of women, and an ever expanding list of Trades Qualifier (TQ) regions – via traditional immigration process and labour market sourced. The SATCC is currently the official body responsible for examination and evaluation of non-Canadian 'Red Seal' credentials as well; a role that I expect will evolve radically in the approaching years.

I am adding a link* to the official ([Click](#)) 2018 / 2019 Business Plan as adopted by the Commission Board. It explains much of the operational mandate and current operating parameters / situation / goals / objectives. Being a consensus board means we work on the premise that we all should agree, and if we don't, then further discussion must occur that leads to consensus. This makes for a less adversarial discussion forum but can also foster some islanding at the individual level where there might be far reaching implication wrapped up in a very short time span. This isn't to be too critical of the process either - sometimes the only option is to sink or swim – and in the writer's opinion, we are still swimming. Overall, there has been a steady decline in the number of registering and completing Apprentices. This is directly affected by the Saskatchewan economy and a number of other factors including, but not limited to, investment and commodity pricing in all markets. Construction is likely the best indicator of this on a number of metrics, and probably the quickest to show signs of short term loss and growth. Also affecting work opportunities are extra-provincial companies (also based in slow economies) importing extra-provincial workforces - often at bargain basement prices. It's tough to compete in a market that is searching for a floor. Add a panicked workforce and you have the perfect conditions for corporate subterfuge. Beyond that, Red Seal qualifiers (persons attaining 'Journeyed' status) will remain somewhat steady as the training cycle completes itself but, based on the number of Apprentices leaving their respective craft or trade for other work opportunities, it is unlikely that we will keep up with the long term demand for skilled trades workers - barring a sudden and enormous uptick in construction starts.

I hope this doesn't sound too gloomy to this point but, if it has, I'll offer up my personal opinion on the broader subject: I look forward to continuing to be a part of the solution to our apprenticeship problems (and successes) as they make themselves apparent. I expect growing pains - but they won't be unfixable,

and humans (trades people more specifically) don't give up often - try telling an engineer they can't do something or a hair stylist that they can't use that colour or cut!

I thank both the affiliate members and Executive Council for their support thus far, and invite your questions and input in the future.

Thanking you, in Solidarity
Aaron Laughlin (RSE – Electrician)
Rep to the SATCC

* link to Plan can be accessed via SFL website www.sfl.sk.ca

LABOUR REP VICE-PRESIDENT – NDP

The role of Labour Vice President on the NDP Provincial Executive is to help build the relationship between Labour and the Party. A strong partnership between the party and the labour movement will play a key role in the next election. It's this partnership that gives our members a political voice that can shape public policy.

It's been a busy year for the party with the election of Dr. Ryan Meili as party Leader and we just saw our 13th MLA Yens Pederson elected in the Regina NE by-election.

The momentum is building as more and more people are feeling the effects of the Sask Party budget and are letting their voices be heard.

As your Labour VP, I work with the SFL and CLC to increase communication on labour's issues and messages with the party. As part of my reports to Provincial Council I provide an update on any disputes or bargaining issues that our affiliates are dealing with and provide information on ongoing affiliate issues and campaigns. With the election of the new leader several meetings have been held between the leader, members of the SFL and staff.

The fourth annual Labour Reception with the Leader will be held on Wednesday, November 7th at the Delta in Regina. This is a good opportunity for our affiliates to meet with the Leader and other MLA's, to discuss issues of importance to their members. For more information please contact John Tzupa at 306-525-1322 or jtzupa@saskndp.ca

The Sask NDP annual convention will be held in Saskatoon October 12-14. Elections will be held for the provincial executive including both the President and Treasurer, as Dave McGrane and Mitchell Anderson have both indicated they are not seeking re- election. On behalf of the Labour Caucus I would like to extend our thanks to both for the work they've done and their ongoing commitment to the NDP.

Submitted by
Wanda Bartlett, Labour Vice President
NDP Provincial Executive



The WCB Board's Labour Representative Report

Board Governance

In June of last year, in response to recommendations made in the 2015 Committee of Review (COR) report, stakeholders were asked to submit their input to the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety. To date, there has been no feedback as to what the government is planning going forward. Don Morgan remains the minister in charge of WCB.

Improving Customer Service

One of the biggest challenges facing the WCB relates to customer service. The WCB surveys injured workers (as well as employers), and consistently receives positive customer satisfaction ratings that hover around 80 per cent. The WCB Board feels there is room for improvement, which will require a cultural shift in the workforce at WCB.

Customers' expectations of excellent service have shifted over the years from what it once was. Employees also expect and deserve a dynamic and engaging workplace that cares about their well-being and their personal and professional development and that provides effective systems and processes to work within. The WCB began the continuous process improvement (CPI) journey several years ago to work toward better meeting the customers' expectations and deliver what they need, when it is needed. The WCB is building a culture that empowers our people to contribute to solving the process problems that get in the way of this and that allows everyone to maximize their potential as people and employees. The WCB is embarking on the next phase of our CPI journey and has engaged KPMG to assist us in further developing a culture of CPI. It is our anticipation that CPI will help WCB achieve the cultural shift required to improve customer service.

Board Appeals Tribunal

The Board Appeals Tribunal, of which I am a member, has rendered over 1,000 decisions since new board members were appointed in August 2015. Since that time, the waiting period for an injured worker waiting for a decision has improved dramatically. Previously, the wait time from an appeal being registered by an injured worker to receiving a decision was 14 months. At the time of this writing, injured workers can expect a decision within 90 to 120 days. Within this time frame, written decisions for in-person appeals are completed within 30 days after a hearing, unless further information is required to make a decision. This is among the fastest, if not the fastest, turnaround time for WCB appellants in Canada.

Currently the percentage of accepted appeals for 2018 thus far stands at 46 per cent.

It is also useful to know that the cost per board appeal is \$5,105 per decision. This is the 4th lowest in Canada, and the lowest of the three Prairie Provinces. This also compares very favourably with SGI's system, which runs \$17,192 per appeal decision and has a 2.6 year backlog.

In serving injured workers and employers, we excel in the development and delivery of workers' compensation programs and services. In serving all workers and employers, we deliver injury prevention programs and services that move Saskatchewan quickly to zero work place injuries.



Garry Hamblin
Board Member

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Compensation Board
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Psychological Injuries

Bill 39, an amendment to The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013, became law on December 20, 2016. The amendment establishes a rebuttable presumption for all forms of psychological injuries, which means that if a worker has experienced a traumatic event or a number of events in the course of their work and has been diagnosed as having a psychological injury, it is presumed that the injury is the result of their employment.

In 2017, the WCB received 556 psychological injury claims, a 23 per cent increase over what we received in 2016. However, the accepted claims increased by 68 percent from 137 in 2016 to 230 in 2017.

WCB Initiatives

WorkSafe Regional Workshop

Every fall, WorkSafe Saskatchewan hosts a regional workshop in smaller communities throughout the province to promote workplace safety and injury prevention, and to provide our customers with information on the Saskatchewan WCB. This year's event will take place in Humboldt on Tuesday, October 30, at the Humboldt Uniplex Convention Centre. To register visit: www.worksafesask.ca/workshop.

WorkSafe Online Courses

WorkSafe offers many training courses online, many of which are offered at no cost, which is unique to Saskatchewan. This means workers can work on them at their own pace and when it's convenient. It also makes it easier to have more workers trained in WHMIS, Inspections and Investigations. Courses include: Online WHMIS Training, Psychological Health and Safety, Young Worker Readiness Certificate Course, Workplace Incident Investigation and Inspection Training. To learn more visit: www.worksafesask.ca/training/online-courses.

WorkSafe Violence In the Workplace Working Group

The Violence in the Workplace working group that the Saskatchewan Association for Safe Workplaces in Health (SASWH) supported through most of 2016 and 2017 was created to provide input and guidance on the creation of resources and tools to assess and prevent violence in the health care industry. SASWH researched various tools and ultimately settled on a very robust package created by the Ontario Public Service Commission Safety Association. Input was provided by a multi-stakeholder working group. In late 2017, SASWH provided a report on their activities and looked for support from the working group to adopt the resources and tools for health care. SASWH continues to market and provide these resources for use across the province.



Gary Hamblin, Labour Representative WCB Board

