



# Impact

MARCH 2007 COMPENSATION EMPLOYEES' UNION

## CEU public campaign now underway

At membership meetings and in past newsletters, we have told you about our public campaign on workers' compensation. The campaign is intended to:

- Prevent moves to privatize BC's publicly-run workers' compensation system, whether that's wholesale privatization, or contracting out pieces of it
- Prevent other changes that erode the balance between worker and employer interests embodied in the historic compromise
- Educate stakeholders and the public about the value of our publicly-run system

We don't think we should wait until it's too late to defend our public system. We're being proactive by taking steps to help create a climate in which attacks on our public system would not be acceptable.

### Public Compensation Coalition activities

We're pleased to report that the campaign is now underway under the name, Public Compensation Coalition (PCC). The coalition's steering committee consists of:

- Four CEU representatives
  - One BCGEU (BC Government and Services Employees' Union) representative
  - One BC Federation of Labour representative
  - One representative from a private sector union
- Since the late fall, activities we have undertaken to support the PCC and campaign include:
- Submitting a resolution to the BCGEU which they adopted at their November policy convention
  - Distributing campaign materials in December to all BC Federation of Labour convention delegates
  - Staffing PCC information booths at both conventions
  - Giving presentations to several unions and interested groups
  - Launching the web site, [www.publiccompensation.ca](http://www.publiccompensation.ca).

### Building support through "mini" campaigns

One way we will build support for public compensation is to run "mini" campaigns on particular issues. Our first campaign is on the reduction in pension benefits that resulted from the legislative and policy changes in 2002. We have produced "lotto" cards for supporters to sign to show their support. They illustrate how deep the pension cuts were in 2002. (See related story, "Campaign seeks to restore benefits", page 3.) Many look at these cuts as evidence that the balance intended by the historic compromise has tipped too far in favour of employers' interests.

The cutbacks have left many workers without enough to live or retire on. Such extreme swings also threaten our jobs as they cause injured workers and their advocates to question the historic compromise. They say: "Why keep the present system? Workers would be better off with a private system and the ability to sue employers."

Given the topic of our first mini campaign, labour is our natural ally. In April 2007, the BC Federation of Labour will be lobbying MLAs in Victoria. The signed lotto cards will be presented to the government during that lobby.

Inside this issue	
Pay equity progress continues .....	2
Campaign seeks to restore benefits .....	3
New initiatives will improve the safety of staff .....	3
What to do if the employer sends you a letter about discipline .....	4

### How can CEU members support the PCC campaign?

At every opportunity, we have been asking people to sign a card to indicate their support for the "Principles of a Fair and Comprehensive Compensation System", a document developed and adopted by unions representing WCB employees across the country. You can show your support for the campaign by visiting the PCC web site (from your home computer) to:

- Pledge your support for these principles
- Sign an online petition about restoring pension benefits
- Keep up-to-date on coalition activities

Send the PCC link to family and friends so that they can also show their support for our public system. If you would like to help out on the campaign, call Deborah Payment at the CEU office at 604 278-4050, or e-mail her at [deborahpayment@ceu.bc.ca](mailto:deborahpayment@ceu.bc.ca).

### Keeping the public on our side

Surveys which we conducted before starting the campaign told us that the public believe privatization of rehabilitation and injury evaluation will make people worse off.

Public opinion is on our side, but we need to reinforce these views. This will mean that in the event there is any move to contract out or privatize any part or all of the WCB, there would be a solid base of public support already in place to let the Board of Directors and government know that eroding or ending our public system is not acceptable.

### Is privatization on or off the agenda?

Recently, CEU President Sandra Wright met with WCB CEO, David Anderson, to inform him about the campaign. He did not convey concern with the fact that we were embarking on a public campaign. He did take issue with our views on privatization. His view is that privatization is off the government's agenda. Our view is that he may be right about that today, but he could be wrong tomorrow, given how quickly change occurs in the province. As we said earlier, we are going to be proactive about protecting the work you do and the rights of injured workers – some of whom could be our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sons, and daughters.

And what about the Claims Management Solutions (CMS) project? While replacing legacy computer systems and developing some new tools for processing and adjudicating claims makes sense, the system will make it easier to contract out parts of our work or move to an em-

ployer pay system.

We're also looking ahead to 2010. We have labour peace in the province now, but will that be the case after the Olympics? Privatization could be back on the agenda then. As your executive, we think it would be naive of us to take a "wait and see" approach.

### Pay equity progress continues

The pay equity project is moving forward, but the parties may not be able to complete it by April 1, 2007, as previously announced.

As of early March, we were still discussing about 100 of the 300 plus bargaining unit job classifications. We may end up in disputes over some of these jobs and they may have to be arbitrated. If that occurs, it is unlikely the project will be completed until the end of spring. The new pay grid will be implemented on April 1 even if we can't complete the project by then. Adjustments will be made when the project is complete. All changes are retroactive to April 1, 2006 so no one will lose any money if the project takes longer than expected.

As announced previously, the parties have agreed to release all of the results when the project is completed. That way everyone will get the information at the same time.

### Now for the good news...

In commenting on progress, Doug McCorquodale, CEU Business Agent and lead on the project said: "It looks like we are achieving good results and meeting the pay equity targets. This is based on the jobs that have been re-evaluated to date where both parties agree with the results. About 30 percent of the jobs agreed to will increase. Most of these are in the lower end female-dominated classifications, which is what we expected."

### Many people deserve our thanks

Over the past year, many of you participated in this project by filling out a questionnaire and/or by being interviewed about your job. We want to thank you for your efforts. Without your expertise, we couldn't have done this project. It's a project requiring much time by the Gender Neutrality Review Committee. The CEU members of this committee are: Frank Lanzarotta, Chris Lundquist, Doug McCorquodale, Stan Reese, Cheryl Rimer, and Carol Velon. They, too, deserve our thanks for their continuing efforts.

The PCC's first mini campaign is on cuts made to injured workers' benefits and pensions due to changes the BC government made to the *Workers Compensation Act* (WCA) in 2002.

The campaign on pensions uses two "lotto" cards with pull tabs to illustrate the differences between what an injured worker would receive in benefits and pensions before and after changes to the WCA.

One of the lotto cards uses this scenario:

- Susan is a 37 year-old personal care aide earning \$34,000 per year.
- While leaving the house of a client, Susan slips on an icy sidewalk, badly injuring a disc in her lower back.
- Susan is no longer able to handle the heavy lifting at her job.
- She secures another job as a light housekeeper that pays only \$20,000 per year.
- Susan lives to age 85.

The graphic below shows what readers see when they pull the tabs on this lotto card. Visit [www.publiccompensation.ca](http://www.publiccompensation.ca) (on your home computer) to see the second lotto card.

**injured workers pension pull tab**

**Name: SUSAN**  
**Profession: Personal Care Aide**

under the old legislation		TOTAL BENEFITS PAID TO AGE 85		\$504,000
Susan would have received a loss of earnings pension.	BENEFITS TO AGE 65 Loss of earnings pension \$875 / month	BENEFITS AFTER 65 Loss of earnings pension \$875 / month		
under the new legislation		TOTAL BENEFITS PAID TO AGE 85		\$32,613
Susan will not receive a loss of earnings pension. Her \$14,000 reduction in yearly income is not considered "significant".	BENEFITS TO AGE 65 5% Permanent Impairment Benefit \$94 / month	BENEFITS AFTER 65 One Time Payout \$1,553		

## New initiatives will improve the safety of staff

The CEU representatives on the Corporate Health and Safety Committee report that the committee is working well. Rachel Barbour, a shop steward from the Burnaby office and a CEU representative on the committee, told *Impact* that "Several initiatives are in the works that we think will improve the safety of workers at the WCB". Examples include:

- **Corporate Threats of Violence Program** – Management representatives, Dan Abel and Ray Roch, and CEU committee co-chair, David Farrell, developed a survey to help define the current issues relating to threats of violence. The survey has been distributed to staff. The program will be reviewed to ensure it is effective in dealing with the issues identified by the survey.
- **Threat Management System** – The Richmond Local Safety Committee noted that there isn't a method for different departments and divisions to know about threats that have occurred in other areas. The committee is working on developing a central repository for this information.
- **Local safety committee involvement with threats** – The Corporate Committee is reviewing some current threats to see how they were handled. The goal is to try to increase local safety committee involvement in threat management.

- **Local safety committee recognition** – The Corporate Committee is developing programs to support and recognize the local committees and their members.

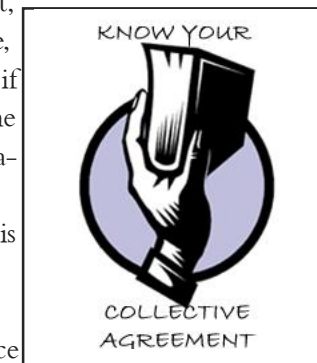
CEU Director Chris Lundquist, who is also a CEU representative on the committee, remarked: "I am pleased that both management and union representatives have shown a commitment to improving the safety of the workers at the WCB and have committed time and resources for this goal."

If you have safety issues, please approach your manager, steward, and a local safety committee representative (in that order). If you have questions about the Corporate Committee, the CEU representatives are Rachel Barbour, David Farrell (Chair), Chris Lundquist, and Brenda Matsalla.

## What to do if the employer sends you a letter about discipline

Article 23 of the Collective Agreement, Termination of Employment and Discipline, contains the process the Board must follow if it believes it has reason to discipline you. The first step in this process is to call an investigatory meeting. This column:

- Explains what an investigatory meeting is
- Outlines what you can expect if the Board decides to discipline you
- Tells you what to do if you receive notice of an investigatory or disciplinary meeting



### nary letter?

Immediately contact your shop steward. The union or shop steward will contact the employer to determine the nature of the inquiry the employer is proceeding with as the employer is always vague about the alleged offense in the letter. You are entitled to all statements or evidence relied upon by the Board in calling the meeting. A union representative and/or shop steward will meet with you before the meeting.

### What happens at the meeting?

Your manager and the HR Advisor responsible for your work area will represent the Board at the meeting. One or both of them will ask you questions as part of their investigation. Your union representative will restrict the employer's questions to only those allegations raised in the investigatory letter. Your union representative and you will have an opportunity to ask questions and/or make a statement.

### Will I know the outcome before the meeting is over?

No. A day or so later, the employer will:

- Reconvene the meeting with another notice to implement discipline, or
- Inform you that there will be no discipline

If the Board decides not to discipline you, the union will make sure that no information on the matter appears in your personnel file. If, on the other hand, the Board decides to discipline you following the investigatory meeting, the CEU will likely file a grievance.

### What is an investigatory meeting?

An investigatory meeting is called by the employer to question an employee implicated in a matter that could result in discipline. If the employer calls a disciplinary meeting it likely means that the employer is sure of the evidence and calls the meeting to institute discipline. However, if the employer calls for an investigatory meeting first, it generally means that the employer wants to confirm or gather more evidence before deciding whether or not to proceed with discipline.

### How is the investigatory meeting called?

The employer sends a letter to the CEU office and the member being investigated. The employer must give 24 hours notice to the union and the member before the meeting can be held. The letter must:

- Outline the purpose of the meeting and the matter under investigation
- State that a member has a right to union representation at the meeting

### What should I do if I get an investigatory or discipli-

