



SICK LEAVE

REPEATING THE SAME LIES DOES NOT MAKE THEM ANY LESS FALSE!

WHAT <u>BUDGET 2015</u> SAYS	WHAT IS ACTUALLY TRUE
About negotiations	
<p>"The Government continues to negotiate with bargaining agents to identify mutually acceptable design parameters for the new system and is prepared to consider reasonable improvements to its tabled proposals."</p> <p>"In the event that agreement cannot be reached, the Government will take the steps required to implement a modernized disability and sick leave management system within a reasonable timeframe."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NEWS ALERT!</p> <p>With the tabling of the <u>Budget implementation act</u>, the government changes, once again, the rules of negotiation.</p> <p>How can we believe the government's claims that it is prepared to negotiate when it indicates in the Budget that it will implement its system within a reasonable timeframe and it has already booked its savings?</p> <p>Remember that before the <u>Parliamentary Budget Officer</u> and <u>Statistics Canada</u> cited reliable facts and figures, Tony Clement and Maxime Bernier claimed in 2013 that public servants took 18.5 days of sick leave annually. So who is to be believed?</p>
About costs	
<p>"The expenditure outlook presented in this budget incorporates the estimated fiscal impact of the modernization of the disability and sick leave management system, based on the Government's latest proposal to federal public service bargaining agents."</p>	<p>The Conservatives have glossed over these facts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the vast majority of cases, absent employees are not replaced, so the replacement cost to the government is \$0. • Sick leave credits banked throughout the course of a career are not converted to cash when employees leave the public service. Since they have no residual monetary value, the cost of these sick leave credits to the employer and to Canadian taxpayers is \$0. They exist only on paper. • The system costs of the short term disability plan.
Who are impacted	
<p>OTHER STATEMENTS CONTAINED IN BUDGET 2015:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Over 60 per cent of employees in the core public administration do not have enough banked sick leave to cover a full period of short-term disability (13 weeks)." 2. "25 per cent of employees have fewer than 10 days of banked sick leave." 3. "Many employees, especially new and younger employees, have no banked sick days at all." 	<p>WHY THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS SOLVE NOTHING:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assuming this is true, of the 200,000 employees of the core public service, how many apply for disability leave each year? 50,000? 100,000? No. In fact, 3,000 to 4,000 applications are made each year and only 3,000 of those are approved. This represents <u>fewer than 2% of public servants</u>. That's right! Only 2% of public service workers really need this. So why should we upset the apple cart when other less expensive solutions are available? 2. The government's solution is to reduce the number of days of sick leave from 15 to 6 annually and to eliminate banked sick leave credits altogether. How will this benefit those who have fewer than 10 days of banked sick leave? 3. And they will never be able to accumulate any under the government's proposal. Currently, between 15% and 20% of the 4,000 disability claims filed each year are denied. What will happen to these employees? They will either have to stay home without a salary or come in to work sick. This is what the government refers to as a "modernized disability and sick leave management system."

Still don't believe us?

Refresh your memory by re-reading our [Nine Myths About Paid Sick Leave](#), and then validate our data by perusing the Budget documents as well as the reports and documents produced by the [Parliamentary Budget Officer](#) and [Statistics Canada](#).

Chilly weather fails to dampen solidarity on April 20

The weather was not the best for the public-service-wide day of mobilization on April 20. Nevertheless, in the National Capital and in several other regions, members of CAPE, PSAC and PIPSC got together to inform their fellow union members about the issues facing them in the workplace.

The theme for the day was spring cleaning. This was the eve of the 2015 federal budget, and members were encouraged to think about and express their opinions on key issues such as mental health, cutbacks in the public service and the importance of having a safe and healthy work environment. Discussions also revolved around sick leave and the federal budget.



CAPE President, Emmanuelle Tremblay, in a conversation during the activity held at 70 Crémazie in Gatineau on April 20.

For the April mobilization day, the organizing committee decided to set up information tables in a number of workplaces in Ottawa-Gatineau. The office complex at 70 Crémazie (which houses Translation Bureau and Passport Canada employees) was clearly the leading hot spot for discussion and exchanges between members and their elected representatives. Members here sampled maple taffy as they engaged in discussions and had the opportunity to meet with CAPE President Emmanuelle Tremblay.

International Workers' Day

A number of public service union members also participated in May Day marches and activities. More than 2,000 people took to the streets in Gatineau, and about 900 workers attended a rally in front of the Prime Minister's Office in Ottawa.

The federal public service unions are already working to organize activities for May 19, when the focus will be on scientific and analytic integrity, collective bargaining and access to the workplace. The day's activities will be listed on CAPE's website, and we urge our members to participate!



PSAC reaches an agreement with Treasury Board on the establishment of a joint task force on mental health

PSAC had tabled a proposal in January to ensure a more proactive approach to improving mental health. Following negotiations at the end of March with Treasury Board, the parties agreed on the makeup, responsibilities and timelines for the task force on mental health.

The parties have agreed to establish a steering committee and a technical committee by April 30, 2015. The technical committee will provide a report of recommendations to the steering committee by September 1st, 2015. This date may be extended by mutual agreement of the steering committee members.

The responsibilities of the task force include identifying ways to reduce and eliminate the stigma associated with mental health issues, improving communication on mental health challenges in the workplace, and implementing the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

CAPE and all other federal public service unions had been advised of PSAC's intention to spearhead this file. PSAC is a recognized leader when it comes to matters of occupational health and safety and mental health, so it is entirely logical for it to assume a central role in these discussions.

"We hope this task force will make recommendations that can subsequently be integrated in the collective agreements of the EC and TR groups," indicated CAPE President Emmanuelle Tremblay.

If we cave in on sick leave, what will the government hit next?

There are always major issues on the table in collective bargaining with Treasury Board. This year, the government is taking aim at our sick leave benefits. If it succeeds in making its proposed changes, what will be its next target?

2010 – Severance pay is abolished

2015 – Sick leave is threatened

2018?



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What kind of job action measures should CAPE members apply in the workplace?

Sometimes it can be difficult to reconcile one's work life, family life, rest and recreation. A federal public service worker who is a mobilized union member can feel torn between a desire to get involved in various causes that he or she considers important and the need for some "me" time. CAPE members are dedicated workers who are specialists in their fields. Their days are full, and each minute is accounted for.

Accordingly, CAPE is working to develop simple, inexpensive and effective tricks that will allow members to mobilize and become more involved with their union.

First, members should keep close tabs on the issues under discussion at the bargaining table. The Collective Bargaining section of the CAPE website is a prime source of information in this regard. More importantly, members should engage in discussions with their colleagues, attend Local meetings and ask questions of their elected Local representatives. Keeping informed will make it easier for members to tailor their job action measures to what is happening at the bargaining table. For example, when sick leave is being discussed at the EC or TR table, you and your co-workers might wear surgical masks or bandages when you arrive at work.

Group job action measures will raise your profile with your employer while broadcasting a message of solidarity. Other examples of such actions include wearing a particular colour of clothing (e.g., all workers dressed in black on Monday) and arriving at work en masse (i.e., gathering in front of the main entrance and entering the workplace all at once). The impact of such actions can be boosted by adopting a rallying cry or singing a theme song.

You may already be aware of the fact that several unions, among them CAPE, PSAC and PIPSC, are organizing mobilization activities on the 19th day of each month in order to make unionized public service workers more aware of collective bargaining issues. A broad range of activities is planned, such as information tables, marches and briefing sessions. The next mobilization day will be May 19, when PIPSC and CAPE will be highlighting scientific and analytic integrity and access to the workplace.

You can lend a hand to ensure that these activities have more impact. We are looking for volunteers to distribute leaflets, staff information tables, carry CAPE flags while marching, etc. For additional information or to obtain leaflets or mobilization material, contact your Local Leadership or CAPE's National Office (general@acep-cape.ca).

You should remember that the main thing is for you to get some enjoyment out of these job action measures and to make your voices heard.

The Labour Movement and the Fight for a Fairer Canada: An Historical Perspective

This article, the first in a two-part series, looks at the important historical role unions have played in creating a fairer, more equal Canada. A follow-up piece will look at public sector unions and the challenges they face today in defending a decent standard of living for all Canadians.

With inequality steadily on the rise, the importance of labour unions is once again becoming widely recognized. The majority of Canadians hold favourable views of unions, with 70 percent agreeing that they are still needed.* Even those not known for their pro-labour views have been forced to acknowledge, as one IMF study recently found, that high unionization rates provide a brake on inequality and ensure a fairer distribution of income.**

In Canada, the labour movement has always been a driving force behind the creation of a fairer and more equal society. But the rediscovery of the importance of labour unions has come on the heels of decades of attacks by federal and provincial governments. As public sector unions find themselves in the midst of a new round of collective bargaining, it is worth remembering what strong unions have meant for all Canadians in the past and what mobilizations have helped to achieve.

INDUSTRIALISATION

Labour unions initially formed to protect workers from the ravages of industrialization in the mid-nineteenth century, though they were not legally recognized until a wave of strikes in Ontario and Quebec prompted the federal government to pass the Trade Unions Act in 1872 (the mobilizations centred on the demand for a nine-hour work day). In the decades that followed, unions began to exert more influence as they established themselves in nearly all regions of Canada, formed new alliances and coalitions, and pressed for significant reforms, such as restrictions on child labour. By the late nineteenth century, labour unions began to organize across industrial sectors – often on a continental basis – and became increasingly difficult to ignore.

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Winnipeg general strike, 1919.



The majority of unions, however, continued to represent workers by craft rather than industry, a tendency that fragmented the labour movement and significantly reduced the bargaining power of workers. Governments also provided employers with armed-strike breakers upon request, and the federal government restricted the efficacy of collective action by requiring some groups of workers (like miners and railway workers) to go through a period of 'conciliation' before they could legally strike (this was done through the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act of 1907). Conciliation became the new model for many workers, even though employers were still free to ignore the unions. Living conditions for the vast majority of workers were appalling until the shock of the Great Depression led to a more militant, organized labour movement.

PROSPERITY

The labour struggles of the 1930s and the postwar economic expansion that followed ushered in a new period of social compromise and shared prosperity. A new wave of industrial unionism swept North America, and actions such as the Oshawa Strike in August 1937 helped secure the rights of workers. The unions also played a key role in supporting the demands of unemployed workers for employment insurance, a reform finally achieved in 1940. The 'industrial unionism' of the period began to merge with 'social unionism' as labour unions recognized the important role they had to play as a force for progressive social change. Perhaps the most significant mobilization of this period was the Ford strike in Windsor, Ontario, in 1945, which resulted in the landmark decision by Justice Ivan C. Rand, granting a compulsory check-off of union dues. The outcome of the strike also helped to secure the principle that workers should share in the profits associated with increased productivity. By 1948, the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act (1948) protected the workers' right to join a union and required employers to recognize unions chosen by their employees. The labour movement was further strengthened with the formation of the Canadian Labour Congress in 1956, which brought together the three main union federations of the time.



IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Yet workers in the public sector remained disorganized in the decades following the Second World War despite their growing importance to the economy and society. With the exception of Saskatchewan, which gave provincial employees union rights in 1944, public employees only gained collective bargaining rights similar to those of other workers in the mid-1960s. Following an illegal national strike by postal workers, the Public Service Staff Relations Act (1967) established a collective-bargaining regime in the federal public service for the first time. Most federal government employees would eventually become members of the 150 000-member Public Service Alliance of Canada. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers, for its part, would go on to play an important role in improving the lives of all Canadians, achieving collective-bargaining breakthroughs such as paid maternity leave, premium pay for weekend work and the right to bargain on technological change.

At the same time, however, workers in the federal public-sector were constrained by the provisions they could negotiate in their collective agreements. Important areas such as pensions, for example, were excluded from collective bargaining. The existence of multiple unions in the public sector (there are currently 18, including CAPE, which was created as the result of a merger of the former Social Science Employees Association and the Canadian Union of Professional and Technical Employees in 2003) further hampered coordinated, collective action, much in the manner of the craft unionism of an earlier period. Despite these weaknesses, the decades that followed saw a great expansion in public-sector programs and services that coincided with a tremendous upsurge in union membership in the federal and provincial public sectors. Decent working conditions in the public sector were closely tied to strong services for all Canadians.

The 1990s brought with it new challenges for Canadians as federal and provincial governments cut social services and laid off public sector workers. Changes in the global economy and the rise of neoliberal ideology have fuelled rising inequality. Anti-union legislation and concession-bargaining on the part of labour unions have further eroded wages as income gains have become increasingly concentrated. Reversing this situation will require the concerted action of all labour unions and their progressive allies. The second article in this series will look at the current challenge in greater depth, and the role that public sector unions have to play in stemming the tide.

**"Canada's Unions Still Have Majority Support, Poll Finds," The Huffington Post Canada (January 23, 2014).

**Florence Jaumotte and Carolina Osorio Buitron (IMF), "Power from the People," Finance and Development, Vol. 52, No. 1 (March 2015).