

THE STORY OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE), which today represents more than 70,000 people throughout Alberta, had a much more modest beginning. AUPE began as the Civil Service Association of Alberta (CSAA) in 1919. It was incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act by 400 founding members and remained the voice of government employees in Alberta for almost half a century. In 1968, the CSAA Act severely restricted the CSAA, its structure and its ability to act on behalf of its members. After eight years of lobbying by members, this Act was repealed in 1976 and the AUPE was immediately formed as a successor organization. AUPE took over all rights, responsibilities and assets of the CSAA. At a historic convention a year later, in November 1977, the restrictions imposed by the previous legislation were finally removed and a new constitution was approved that established AUPE as an autonomous, unincorporated union. However, AUPE has continued to operate under restrictive legislation. The Public Service Employee Relations Act (PSERA), introduced in 1977, denied full collective bargaining rights to public sector employees and placed them under a paternalistic and restrictive regime. From the beginning, AUPE has been forced to take an aggressive political stance to win bargaining rights for its members. (Taken from the AUPE web page www.aupe.org)

What does the story of the labour movement mean to working people and to the community?

Winning respect and protection through collective action:

- Against arbitrary treatment
- Job security and seniority
- A grievance procedure (management must listen to labour's side)

Alberta's Workers Compensation Act 1918:

- Universal
- Employer-paid
- No-fault
- Income replacement
- Rehabilitation services
- Job counselling/adjustment

Unemployment Insurance Act 1941 (became Employment Insurance in 1990):

- Full employment income security
- Insurance plan funded from labour income
- National Employment Service

Family Allowance Act 1944:

- Canada's first universal welfare program
- Support for Canadian children
- Recognition of child-bearing function
- Regardless of income (until 1989)

Canada Pension Plan Act 1966 (Old Age Security Act 1952, originally 1927):

- Universal employment-based pension
- Transferable from job to job
- Death, survivor, disability benefits

Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Act 1976:

- The right to know, participate, refuse, resolution

Canada Health Act 1984 – Medicare means:

- Universal
- Accessible
- Comprehensive
- Transferable
- Public-administered health insurance
- All residents have access to hospitals and physicians

Most of the jobs within the Employment Standards Code were a result of collective bargaining:

- Hours of work (8-hour day, 35-hour week, weekends off)
- Vacations and statutory holidays
- Notice of termination
- Maternity and paternity rights
- Freedom from discrimination

From Stats Canada:

- The hourly rate for permanent, full-time workers is \$4.00 per hour more for unionized workers; an even greater differential for part-time and temporary workers.
- 83% of unionized workers versus only 31% for non-unionized have benefits such as retirement or pension plan and medical, illness/special leave, training, clothing, etc.

This information was supplied by Winston Gereluk and the Alberta Labour History Institute (ALHI). The ALHI is dedicated to:

- ***Collecting, restoring, protecting and archiving material relating to the history of working people in Alberta***
- ***Telling the story of individuals, organizations and cultural communities.***
- ***Making this history accessible to students and the media***

Alberta Labour History Institute – 1-888-205-8143