

August 19, 2020

Free Collective Bargaining and Our Right to Strike

The new Collective Agreements imposed by Arbitrator MacPherson address some of our concerns, but also leave some major issues unresolved. This award is a great example of how we cannot resolve our issues with compulsory arbitration. We need free collective bargaining and the right to strike. These rights have always been the power behind our major contractual gains.

Bill C-89 – Back-to-work legislation (2018)

When the chips are down, federal government after federal government has stepped in with heavy-handed legislation. Governments and employers know that denying free collective bargaining and the right to strike is not a good tool for healthy labour relations. They know that real advances and real labour peace come from freely negotiated agreements. For governments and employers, denying the right to strike makes an immediate problem seem to go away.

That is how the Trudeau government sold Bill C-89 in November 2018. This bill was supposed to restore postal service immediately and have new arbitrated contracts in place within 90 days of the government appointing an arbitrator. Instead, it took over 400 days for CUPW to achieve new collective agreements for both the Urban Operations and RSMC bargaining units.

Workers pay the price for back-to-work legislation. CUPW members worked two and a half years without new contracts, with the same old problems we were trying to solve through bargaining back in 2018.

Arbitrators and mediators can award pay, benefits, and other working conditions, but we know from bitter experience they are not able to resolve our workplace problems. This is especially true with regard to work methods and health and safety.

We continue to fight in court to regain the right to strike. The unconstitutionality of

the 2011 back-to-work legislation gave us a moral victory, but we need to continue the fight to restore some of the benefits that were interfered with during the 2011 strike and lockout.

Arbitration is not the way to go for achieving any lasting progress – we need negotiated contracts, and for that we need to exert our labour power from a rock-solid foundation.

The New Collective Agreements expire at the beginning of 2022:

We need to prepare for this fight now!

It is essential that we start talking to each other about how we need free collective bargaining and the right to strike in 2022.

Canada Post needs to know that in 2022, we are determined to bargain collective agreements that address and resolve our real issues. We need to start mobilizing now so we are ready when the new round of bargaining begins. We need to be committed and ready to strike, if necessary, in 2022. Canada Post Corporation has to take our demands and our proposals seriously.

More than ever, we must exert our labour power. The removal of our fundamental right to bargain freely and to strike, is not only a threat to CUPW, but to all workers.

In solidarity,



Jan Simpson
National President

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