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YEU NEWS

All About YEU – Your Union

Oct 2007



Posted on www.yeu.ca Oct. 22

Yukoners hear of trade pact dangers, threat to self-determination

TILMA matters to you

In April, 2006, the BC and Alberta governments signed controversial trade pacts called Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreements (TILMA).

TILMA is a bad deal for Yukoners. It threatens the ability of elected officials to carry out the wishes of the voters by granting corporations

trade, investment or labour mobility, unless such measures are exempt under the scheme.

Legal analysts note that it is difficult to conceive of a government action, legislative or regulatory, that would *not* violate this broad constraint. In reality, the net cast by TILMA is larger than that of

the framework of democratic institutions. TILMA places our democratic decision-making ability under the thumb of corporate interests.

TILMA defines ‘government’ to include all aspects of provincial and territorial government, including agencies and Crown corporations. It also covers municipalities, school boards and other publicly funded academic, health and social service entities.

Unless clearly exempt, all actions taken by these public bodies must comply with the sweeping restrictions imposed by the regime. Any organization failing to comply is subject to damage claims up to \$5,000,000 per ‘violation’.

The Yukon government is examining these agreements, and considering establishing such a regime. All the while, Canadians across the country are organizing to fight this to threat to self-determination.



A panel of specialists knowledgeable about the ramifications of TILMA informed Yukoners at a news conference and Town Hall meeting on October 16-17. Left to right: Larry Hubich - Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, Alex Furlong - Yukon Federation of Labour, Carleen Pickard - Council of Canadians, Erin Weir - Canadian Labour Congress, and Laurie Butterworth - YEU President.

and businesses the right to sue if their interests are not fully met.

TILMA imposes a blanket prohibition on all government measures that “operate to restrict or impair”

NAFTA and the GATS combined.

Larry Hubich, President of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, points out that trade pacts are intended to exist within

Children’s Receiving Home crisis continues – see page 3

Supreme Court decision a landmark

Supreme Court says Collective Bargaining Right Protected by Charter

The decision by the Supreme Court of Canada to strike down legislation aimed directly at removing the rights of working people was a landmark.

“This is a great day for workers because this decision means that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms *does* protect workers’ rights including the process of collective bargaining,” said Ken Georgetti, President of the Canadian Labour Congress.

In a six to one decision, the Court ruled that the Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement

Act, passed by the British Columbia government in 2002 trampled on the rights of health care workers in that province – in particular their right to freedom of association as guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In Georgetti’s words, “Today’s ruling takes Canada in the right direction. Finally, workers’ freedom of association includes the right to bargain a collective agreement that cannot be ripped apart at the government’s convenience.”

Unions argued that the BC legislation amounted to a denial of the rights of their workers to bargain collectively across the health and social services sector. Once in

place, the law effectively re-wrote collective agreements to facilitate the government’s plan to contract out union jobs – and pay contract workers less for the same work.

The Canadian Labour Congress, represented by the law firm Sack Goldblatt Mitchell, was an intervener in the case.

The Canadian Labour Congress, the national voice of the labour movement, represents 3.2 million Canadian workers. The CLC brings together Canada’s national and international unions along with the provincial and territorial federations of labour and 136 district labour councils. Web site: www.canadianlabour.ca

Credit: Jeff Atkinson, CLC

YEU organizations

Association of Public Service Alliance Retirees



APSAR is an Association whose goal is to help and inform former PSAC members who are retired. It also groups together all the members over 50 years old, as well as spouses and partners of retired members, in order to make as many individuals as possible aware of the retirement challenge.

APSAR is managed and governed entirely by retired volunteers who are former members of PSAC. The organization counts on the collective expertise of people in the fields of Union business, labour-management relations, public relations, and worksite relationships.

APSAR is there to advise you and guide you in potential difficulties in regards to the Pension Plan, the complexity of Insurance regulations, disablement Insurance, hard-

ship dealing with mortality and other social inconveniences that can overwhelm the life of a retiree. Currently there are 139 APSAR members for the Yukon from YEU.

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YEU from the President



The Yukon government is considering signing on to the Trade Investment

and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA).

This trade pact amounts to little more than a corporate bill of rights – one that directly assaults on our right as a society to make decisions democratically on a local level.

YEU is supporting the efforts of the Yukon Federation of Labour to raise awareness about the meaning and impact of this agreement. I urge our members to take the time to become informed about TILMA, and join our fight to defend our democratic institutions.

Children's Receiving Home

We continue to lobby the Yukon government to take action to resolve the situation faced by the children and the workers at the Children's Receiving Home.

Issues of workplace safety and the health of children in care deserve

PSAC Yukon Area Council Annual General Meeting

November 15, 2007

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Yukon Federation of Labour Boardroom

102-106 Strickland St.
Whitehorse

to be given the highest priority by government.

Health & Safety Leadership Committee

Our concerns about the Children's Receiving Home aside, the work to ensure the health and safety of employees in Yukon government workplaces is advancing.

In September, the government formed a Health & Safety Leadership Committee (HSLC) to steer the corporate review of all health and safety programming within the government. The creation of this committee was in response to an order from the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board.

I represent YEU on this committee, which is also comprised of a representatives from the YWCH&SB and the Yukon government. A Request for Proposals on how to conduct and take action on the review has been developed. We expect vendor selection to be made in January.

Union Youth

On the weekend of October 21-22 I attended a pilot training program developed to advance youth leadership within the PSAC.

The first day was devoted to helping young members gain an understanding about unions, worker rights and how they are protected.

The second day addressed succession planning and mentoring. My thanks to all our youth members who attended.

Children's Receiving Home problems

Responding to his government's report identifying problems at the Children's Receiving Home, Minister Cathers committed to relocating the children and staff asap. That was 3 months ago.

Yet they remain in a facility known to contain mould and asbestos – a structure with a design that invites assaults because of blind corners and tight hallways; a place where staff shortages and the negative impact on programming further expose the workers to physical harm.

Mr. Cathers' tardy response to a YEU letter about the situation points to the secondary problem – his unwillingness to acknowledge the seriousness of the matter and commit to prompt action.

His letter of September 28 offered nothing new. His response amounted to little more than 'we're looking at it'. Instead of acting as he promised, his government commissioned a study.

Cathers states that this *life-cycle plan* "will be used to decide whether to remediate or rebuild the facility". But, we already know he will **not** direct his department to rebuild. On July 20, he is quoted in the Yukon News stating unequivocally that "the government will not build a new facility".

The Minister must stop the smoke and mirrors. Yukon children and workers are *at risk* – relocate the children and staff, and build an appropriate facility now.

YEU bursaries

The 2007 Yukon Employees' Union Bursary Award recipients have been announced.

Each year YEU selects recipients for eight bursaries of \$1000 each. The awards are intended to further the recipient's education. The award winners are selected from among applicants who are YEU members, or members of their immediate families.

Applicants are asked to explain how their proposed course of study will contribute to their ability to make a contribution to the Yukon. They must also explain how their studies relate to the goals and objectives of the labour movement.

This year's recipients are:

Shari Lynn MacLellan (*Don Galbraith Award*)

Angela Jackson

Deborah Wren

Brandie Fuder

Dillon MacPherson

Cort Carpenter

William Merchant

Graham Putland, and

Sean Speiss.

The last two recipients listed share the *John Irving Trade Award* in an amount of \$500 each.

Congratulations to this year's recipients.



Vice President Loreale Kesler presents a cheque for \$10,000 to Dan Curtis, Executive Director of Skills Canada. YEU's contributes \$5,000 yearly to Skills Canada. This payment fulfills the Union's commitment for 2006-2007.

YEU calendar

Local Y023 Special General Meeting

Tues. Oct. 30, 5:35 p.m. YFL meeting room, 106 Strickland St., Whitehorse

Local Y010 Annual General Meeting

Wed., Nov. 14, 6:00 p.m., YFL boardroom.

PSAC Yukon Area Council AGM

Thurs., November 15, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. YFL boardroom, 102-106 Strickland St.

CLC Courses (offered in Whitehorse)

Shop Steward Training Level I & II, Presented by YFL. Call 667-6676.

Workers' Compensation Courses

Presented by YFL. Three courses are being offered. Contact YFL: 667-6676.

Shop Steward Round Tables

Monthly, every first Wednesday. 9:00 a.m. until noon, YEU Hall.

YEU Monthly Executive Meeting

2nd Thurs., 6:30 p.m., YEU Hall

Local Y010 Monthly Meeting

2nd Wed., 5:00 p.m., YEU Hall

Local Y017 Monthly Meeting

4th Wed., 7:30 p.m., YEU Hall

Local Y025 Monthly Meeting

2nd Tues., 4:30 p.m., YEU Hall

Local Y026 Monthly Meeting

3rd Thurs., 7:00 p.m., YTG Property Management building, Dawson City.



YEU News is published by the Yukon Employees' Union.

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