

Anti-Privatization Committee Report

To the Human Rights /Equity Committee of SGEU

And The Human Rights/Equity Conference in Saskatoon on September 13/14, 2018

July 6, 2018

Delegates, Observers and Guests:

Our Committee meets quarterly in Saskatoon and gets updates on privatization, contracting out/in and other forms of attacks on our valuable public services from the sector reps. The committee then works on strategies to counter these attacks, develops direction for education and publication to stop the erosion of Saskatchewan owned and operated services.

The last year and a half have been frustrating ones, as reports continue to pour in on attacks on public services. Some are blatant and shocking, like the shutdown of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company (STC), others quiet and sneaky, like having Compass group taking over the Regina Polytech cafeteria.

The elimination of the STC, a provincially owned bus company that provided service to rural and urban centers for over 70 years has cost 224 jobs. There was no consultation, no public discussion, no warning. The government claimed that the private Sector would fill the void, which to this date has not happened in most areas. Heart wrenching stories of people unable to get to medical appointments or being isolated without transportation, as well as practical difficulties, like parts transportation, library books transfers, medical and blood tests not being delivered on time or at vastly greater costs are common place.

Government office cleaners, including those at the Provincial Legislature, Ministries of Environment, Highways and Justice have been eliminated, resulting in 230 good paying jobs being lost. Some cleaners were offered their old jobs back at a far lower rate, sometimes at minimum wage and no benefits.

Another 132 jobs are expected to be lost over three years as the Saskatchewan Pastures program has been terminated. This program was vital to farmers by providing grazing lands, while balancing with grassland conservation. Hunters, researchers and other will also be restricted in accessing this land.

The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation is being sold along with 900 hopper cars, making farming costs higher. The Corporation made 2 million dollars profit last year.

Deputy Sheriff layoffs at the court houses is on hold due to an Occupational Health and Safety risk, but not cancelled.

Compass Group has quietly worked its way into the SaskPolytech in Regina to provide student food services. Quality, quantity and increased cost have frustrated students.

The amalgamation of the Saskatchewan Health Regions into one provincial region (Saskatchewan Health Authority) is worrying, as privatization and job loss is being anticipated.

The privatization of 40 liquor stores has been completed, with close to 200 positions eliminated. Farther reaching impacts include less government revenue, (30 million in the previous year) and the most expensive beer in Canada. Private stores have not increased hours, make alcohol cheaper or have proven any benefit over the public model, but all profits now go out of province and into private hands instead of benefiting Saskatchewan to pay for highways, education and health care.

SaskPolytech has seen a 15% reduction in staff, while increasing management by 400%. Reports of the closure of physical activity programs, cancellations of courses and budget freezes are rampant and are met with outrage.

The Sask. Party is driven by ideology and has not benefited the average people of this province. They have proven that over and over again. And they are not finished. Premier Moe and his Corporate loving Party will continue to wreak havoc on Saskatchewan assets. Over the last decade over 1.1 billion dollars in public assets have been sold. They squandered millions on the Regina bypass, smart meters, Lean and carbon capture that doesn't work. They have squandered unprecedented boom year income and created huge debts that they expect the Saskatchewan people to pay for. NO MORE!! The Anti-Privatization Committee is working hard with SGEU Communications and research team to develop awareness of the schemes the Sask. Party is deploying and stopping the erosion of public assets and services before they are nothing more than a memory.

SGEU has utilized TV, radio, billboards and social media to advertise the value of Public Services for all. A parody of a Privatization kit has played online. A pamphlet from the Saskatchewan office Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) called the "Wrong track" as well as a booklet "Selling Saskatchewan" has been published. A Privatization quiz was developed and distributed first at SGEU Convention in April and now on Social media, to heighten awareness on the pitfalls of Privatization, P3's, contracting out etc.

A new form of privatization is on the horizon. Social Impact Bonds. It offloads social responsibility from government to private investors by providing guaranteed returns for running programs, as long as progress is shown. Unions question the methods used to bring about "progress".

There are other groups fighting the same fight and we are partnering with SFL, CUPE, SEIU WEST, UNIFOR and others to continue the fight for fairness, good paying jobs, affordable and accessible education, healthcare and other public services for all Saskatchewan people.

Public Services are for service, not private profit!!

Committee members: Bob Stadnichuk – Chair (Retail/Regulatory), David Scott (Public Service), Sandra Martin (Health), Jeff Sedor (Crowns), Chris Isted (Education), Lorena Urquiza (Community Services), Bea Fecke (Human Rights/Equity) Susan Dusel (Staff), Evie Ruddy (Staff)

I have been honored to represent the Human Rights/Equity Committee as their Representative on the Anti-privatization Committee and thank you for this opportunity. I hope to be able to continue this important work for another term.

Respectfully submitted,

Bea Fecke

Human Rights/Equity Rep