



## Labour 'Top Ten'



### **1. Auto Certification / Card Check**

**The NDP reinstated Automatic Certification for workers wanting to join a union**, soon after the 1999 election. Auto cert, or card check as it's known, is an essential right of working people that maintains fairness. It helps prevent employers from using intimidation and scare tactics in the lead up to a secret ballot vote. Manitoba is one of the few provinces that recognizes workers' right to vote by signing a union card and doesn't require a second secret ballot vote if 65% card check is achieved. Manitoba's system isn't perfect – the labour movement continues to believe strongly that the threshold for auto cert should be reduced to a simple majority (50% plus 1) – but re-establishing card check remains an important gain for organized labour and working people in our province.

### **2. Alternative Dispute Resolution**

**The NDP created a law allowing an employer or a union to file for binding arbitration after a 60-day work stoppage.** While this legislation hasn't been widely used, its very existence has served as a powerful incentive for both sides of a dispute to try and work out a deal before a third party is brought in to make a ruling. While other provinces have strikes and lockouts that can last for years in some cases, alternative dispute resolution supports a more constructive labour relations climate.

### **3. Annual Minimum Wage Increases**

**The NDP increased Manitoba's minimum wage every year, for 16 years straight.** From a low of only \$6.00/hour in 2000, the minimum wage has been raised by 80% to \$11.00/hour today, more than double the rate of inflation. The result of this progressive government policy has been an increase in the real purchasing power of the lowest paid workers. The experience of the last 16 years contrasts sharply with what happened during the 1990s under the last PC government, when minimum wage did not even keep up with inflation, resulting in workers losing purchasing power. There is still a long way to go to ensure the minimum wage becomes a living wage, but we have achieved real gains.

#### **4. Pensions**

**The NDP has been a strong voice on the national stage championing universal expansion of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP)**, beating back the right-wing anti-pension rhetoric of the previous Harper government, and helping to build a growing consensus from coast to coast that urgent action is required to improve retirement security. Manitoba has also acted as a responsible employer on the pension file, restoring adequate funding for provincial pension liabilities, in sharp contrast to the 1990s when Manitoba's Auditor General repeatedly criticized the PC government for failing to adequately fund government's own pension liability, allowing a major unfunded liability to build up, and putting the pensions of public sector workers at risk.

#### **5. Workplace Health and Safety**

**The NDP worked to make workplaces safer with tougher, more comprehensive workplace health and safety rules.** Some key gains include: a 5 year plan for workplace injury and illness prevention; a requirement that more and smaller workplaces have joint H&S committees and worker representatives; more workplace inspections; long-term funding for Safe Workers of Tomorrow to educate young workers about their rights; the enshrinement in law of workers' rights to refuse dangerous work and be protected from discrimination; a resourced action plan for enforcement of the Westray law (criminal prosecution of negligent employers); significant increases in administrative fines and penalties for employers who break the law; new rules against violence, harassment and bullying in the workplace; tougher protections for road workers in construction zones; and protection of the 1:1 ratio for journeyperson-apprentice training.

#### **6. WCB Claim Suppression**

**The NDP took action to help reduce claim suppression.** For years, employers have used many different underhanded and illegal tactics to prevent workers from accurately reporting workplace injuries: intimidation, threats, reward programs for non-reporting, paying full wages to prevent a reported claim and other tactics have been used to game the system and keep employer premiums artificially low. The NDP has actively worked to address claim suppression including by recently establishing a dedicated prevention arm of WCB (SAFE Work Manitoba) that rewards good behavior and investments in prevention, and by phasing-in significant changes to the WCB rate model to reduce financial incentives to suppress claims.

## **7. Project Labour Agreements**

**The NDP has used Project Labour Agreements to facilitate the construction of large infrastructure projects.** The Building Trades in Manitoba have signed project labour agreements to ensure large projects get the right skills, at the right time, in the right place, and at the right cost. Establishing fair deals for all workers on a project and leveling the playing field on staff costs ensures efficient labour management relations and eliminates risks of work disruptions. On time, on budget delivery of a major project is in all our interests.

## **8. Infrastructure**

**The NDP protected good jobs through the recession by saying no to austerity and cuts and investing in infrastructure.** Investments in roads, bridges and other infrastructure have stimulated Manitoba's economy and created good jobs. Today, more people are working in Manitoba, we have one of the best performing economies and one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada.

## **9. Public Services**

**The NDP protected public services and has not sacrificed and starved the public sector.** While collective bargaining has been challenging at times, it has resulted in negotiated agreements we can live with and that have moved wages and benefits forward. We have not experienced the cutbacks of services other provinces have seen. Instead, Manitobans have been able to rely on quality public services to support their families. Now, more than ever, we need this investment to continue.

## **10. First-in-Canada legislation: Paid Domestic Violence Leave and Presumptive PTSD Coverage**

**The NDP has not shied away from breaking new ground to address labour's needs through the introduction of first-in-Canada legislation.** Two recent examples include: (1) passing the first bill in the country to provide paid employment leave to victims of domestic violence so they can take time away from work to escape abusive situations, without having to worry about their job security or losing out on their wages; and (2) legislating PTSD presumptive coverage for all workers, regardless of their occupation.