



# report

**Component**

**Liquor and Cannabis**

**Representatives**

**Videoconference**

March 9, 2021

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is a family of 11 Component and 3 affiliate unions. Taken together, we are one of the largest unions in Canada. Most of our 390,000 members work to deliver public services of every kind to the citizens of their home provinces. We also have a large and growing number of members who work for private businesses.

The office of the National Union of Public and General Employees is situated on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

We recognize and acknowledge the crimes that have been committed and the harm that has been done.

And, we dedicate ourselves, as a union, to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous Peoples in a spirit of reconciliation and striving for justice.

Larry Brown, President

Bert Blundon, Secretary-Treasurer

**Liquor and Cannabis Representatives Videoconference**  
**March 9, 2021**  
**11 am EST**

## **PARTICIPANTS**

**BCGEU/NUPGE**

Kusam Doal

**SGEU/NUPGE**

Ralph Rathgeber  
Bob Stadnichuk

**MGEU/NUPGE**

Ray Piche  
Stephen Roznowsky

**OPSEU/NUPGE**

Jamie Kensley  
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Andy Pedersen  
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Rick Herritt  
Nicole Holland  
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**PEI UPSE/NUPGE**

Mark Barrett  
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Don Healey  
Grant Horan

**NUPGE**

Larry Brown, President  
Bert Blundon, Secretary-Treasurer  
Theresa Clemen, Administrative Representative  
Andrew McNeill, National Representative

## **1. Welcome, land acknowledgments, and anti-harassment statement**

Andrew McNeill, National Representative welcomed people to the call and shared the land acknowledgment, which says that both NUPGE's office and the location from where he was joining the meeting are on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people. He also read out NUPGE's anti-harassment statement.

Participants introduced themselves.

## **2. Report from the National Union—Speakers: Larry Brown, President, and Bert Blundon, Secretary-Treasurer**

Larry Brown, President of NUPGE, spoke of how the fight against the privatization of liquor sales has been going. Other than Alberta, where privatization was largely snuck in, there are still viable public liquor retailing systems in most parts of the country. However, the fight against privatization is continuing. The attempt by 7-Eleven to get restaurant permits for its stores in Ontario, Bill 40 in Manitoba, and the efforts of the New Brunswick government to sell its cannabis stores now that they are profitable are the most recent examples.

While recent announcements on the vaccine rollout are largely positive, there are still issues. These issues include who gets vaccinated first, whether vaccines can be made mandatory, and if not, whether not getting a vaccine will result in people being moved to other jobs.

There is also the problem that allowing drug companies to use their patents to charge high prices for vaccines will make them unaffordable for poorer countries. If that happens, it will mean low vaccination rates in poorer countries, increases in new variants of COVID-19 to everyone in the world, even those living in places with high vaccination rates.

The National Union is involved in the push for a public, universal, and accessible child care and to make long-term care a full part of the Medicare system in Canada.

The need for a national child care program was highlighted during the pandemic when many people were still having to work, even though many child care centres had closed down. A Canada-wide child care program would include national standards, with details being left up to the provinces.

After the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, politicians said they would fix long-term care, but instead, there were even more deaths in long-term care facilities during the second wave. Seniors were let down badly.

Brother Brown also spoke of the union's work on climate change and racism, and the relevance of that work to young workers. While young workers share the union's

perspective on these issues, they often aren't aware that these issues were important to their union. With both climate change and racism, there is a need to make sure workers feel they can turn to their union.

Bert Blundon, Secretary-Treasurer of NUPGE, reminded people that members of the Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers (CUBGW), a NUPGE Component, are locked out at the Molson Coors brewery in Toronto. The main reason they are being locked out is the employer is trying to do away with the defined benefit pension plan. What is happening with both the lockout and attempts to privatize liquor stores is an attack on workers aimed at lowering wages and doing away with pension plans.

As we emerge from the pandemic, it is expected that governments will be using the impact of the pandemic to justify cutbacks. What will be useful is a report that CCPA recently released, with support from NUPGE, showing that most funding for pandemic measures came from the federal government and that provinces didn't manage to spend all of the funding they received.

There is also a danger that governments that are only concerned with the short term will try to use privatization and the one-time revenues it can produce to finance pre-election spending. As the privatization of Connaught Laboratories, and the resulting loss of vaccine manufacturing capacity in Canada showed, this can have long-term consequences.

In the case of liquor stores, what is lost is a service that benefits the entire community. In addition to sharing expertise, liquor store workers are responsible for protecting public safety. In contrast, private stores have been shown not to have the same commitment to refusing to sell to minors or people who are intoxicated.

This is similar to long-term care where many of the problems can be traced back to the private sector putting profit before the needs of seniors.

Brother Blundon concluded by flagging the threat of *right to work* as another attack on workers that people need to be prepared to fight.

### **3. COVID-19 and Health and Safety**

There was discussion of the impact of COVID-19, including the measures being taken when workers are exposed to, or contract it, leave and pay provisions, PPE and barriers, and store hours. Details are in Component reports.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, stores in areas in Alert Level 5 are moving to ordering and pick-up service only, with customers not permitted access to the shelves. Under this system, people submit orders by phone or online, and then get a call with a time to pick up their orders.

The possibility that some workers may not want to be tested for COVID-19 was raised. But an instance where this was an issue was when an employer wanted routine testing (and it was not in a liquor store), not instances of when people were being tested after being exposed to COVID-19.

There was also some discussion of the term *deep cleaning* and what it means in practice, with a request that people share information they find.

In Ontario, when stores close for deep cleaning after cases are detected, people do get paid, but there have only been a couple of cases of stores being closed for more than one shift. Restrictions on how many people are allowed in stores vary, depending on the region in which the store is located.

People who have medical exemptions to mask rules are permitted in stores in Ontario, while private retailers are requiring people with medical exemptions to use curbside pick-up. When someone without a mask is in the store, workers are required to wear goggles and a medical mask. A security bell is rung 4 times to warn people when someone comes into a store without a face mask.

In Manitoba, while urban stores have controlled entrances, rural stores do not. This means that it is easier for workers in urban areas to insist that people without masks use curbside pickup. Another safety issue is that there have been robberies at stores in rural and northern communities, so there are concerns that controlled entrances may be needed in all stores.

Workers on the regulatory side in Manitoba have been kept busy even during the pandemic. They are receiving PPE for their vehicles and follow protocols when meeting with people.

In Saskatchewan, only people wearing masks are allowed in stores. For people without masks, curbside pickup is the only option. There have been no cases among workers, but that took effort, given the high per capita infection rate in Saskatchewan.

In British Columbia, stores are having to provide service for people who are unable to wear masks. It has been suggested that safer ways need to be found to provide service for people who can't wear masks. "Call and collect" is being piloted at 4 stores.

Safety protocols are supposed to be in place for the collection of empties in British Columbia, but there are fears that they are not being followed. In Saskatchewan, bottle collection has been suspended and cans are done separately.

#### **4. Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)**

While publicly owned facilities and services are ineligible to receive the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), many companies operating privatized services are receiving it. Those receiving CEWS include companies operating private liquor and cannabis stores. A list of some liquor and cannabis stores, along with the criteria to be eligible for CEWS, will be sent out.

#### **5. Tax dodging by companies involved in the privatization of alcoholic beverage sales—Speaker: Toby Sanger, Director of Canadians for Tax Fairness**

Toby Sanger, Director of Canadians for Tax Fairness, gave a presentation on the role tax cuts and tax dodging play in the privatization of public services, particularly liquor and cannabis retailing, and distribution.

While cuts to corporate taxes were supposed to encourage business investment, that hasn't happened. Instead, businesses have been sitting on large pools of capital and looking for places to invest. Because attacks on workers' wages and benefits have reduced demand for products and services, investments in the private economy have become less attractive. This in turn has led to corporations pushing to be able to buy public assets.

At the same time, the use of tax havens by corporations is costing Canadians governments billions of dollars a year in lost revenues. Among the corporations using tax havens are Walmart, Loblaws, and DHL, which are involved in privatized liquor retailing and distribution services.

The Cameco case, where the CRA lost 3 times in a row and then had the Supreme Court refuse to hear an appeal, shows that a major reason companies are able to use tax havens is Canadian tax laws are too weak.

#### **6. Privatization**

In Ontario, 7-Eleven has applied for liquor licences to allow in-store sales of beer and wine at 61 of its stores in Ontario. OPSEU is mobilizing people to submit objections to the proposal. The attempt of 7-Eleven to have its stores licenced as restaurants is seen as an attempt to get a foot in the door for beer and wine sales in convenience stores.

The British Columbia government has announced that restaurants and bars will be allowed to purchase alcoholic beverages at wholesale prices. It is very worrying, particularly coming from an NDP government. The number of public cannabis stores is increasing slowly, with the high real estate costs in the Lower Mainland and the ability of municipalities to refuse to allow cannabis stores slowing the increase in the number of

stores. The BCGEU has negotiated language in the collective agreement to maintain 192 of 197 public liquor stores.

Costco has opened liquor stores in major cities in Saskatchewan. It is not clear whether they will be a major problem. There is concern that the Saskatchewan government will allow third-party warehouses, which will undermine the public facility. The Saskatchewan government has been lobbied by 7-Eleven.

In Saskatchewan, revenue lost due to liquor store privatization appears to be greater than estimated in the report [Down the Drain, The Saskatchewan Government's Costly Proposal for Liquor Retailing](#), prepared by David Campanella. One reason the cost is so high is that the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority (SGLA) is subsidizing transportation costs for private retailers. What has made it impossible to get the exact cost is that the government has been able to hide information on sales to private retailers, claiming it is "proprietary."

In Saskatchewan, when MADD was contacted a few years ago about putting out a statement on the impact of privatization on drinking and driving, MADD refused because the organization was receiving provincial government funding.

Cannabis stores in Manitoba were originally owned by 4 large companies. As of last fall, smaller operators have started to receive permits, and the number of stores has doubled. There are now over 60 cannabis stores. In some communities, there are more cannabis stores than liquor stores. Brandon, for example, has 6 cannabis stores, but only 3 Liquor Marts and one Liquor Mart Express.

The main issue is Bill 40, which will allow private stores to directly compete with public stores. It is expected this will reduce profits by \$300 million. The Manitoba government is claiming that the \$300 million in lost revenue will be offset by what's collected in tax revenues.

The MGEU is running a campaign against Bill 40 that included a town hall with the members where Bob Stadnichuk discussed the situation in Saskatchewan, as well as town hall meetings with the opposition. The campaign is called [Keeping Liquor Public](#).

In PEI, while the Atlantic Convenience Store Association is lobbying for alcoholic beverages to be sold in convenience stores, police are reporting that incidents of impaired driving have more than doubled in the last 2 years. PEI UPSE is hoping to point out that there is a link between increasing the availability of alcohol and impaired driving.

There is a new premier in Nova Scotia, and it isn't clear if his position on liquor store privatization is weaker than that of his predecessor. Restaurants and bars selling alcohol with takeout or delivery orders don't get a discount. Alcohol must be prepackaged, the value of alcohol orders can't be more than 3 times the cost of the accompanying food, and deliveries must be done by restaurant employees.



Additional information on what is occurring with respect to privatization can be found in the Component reports.

## **7. Component Reports**

Written reports from NAPE, PEI UPSE, the NSGEU, OPSEU, the MGEU, and the BCGEU are in the appendix. These reports were previously sent to participants.

There was some discussion of essential workers' benefits. Where it was offered, relatively few people qualified, and it did not last for long.

The NSGEU membership has increased by roughly 200 due to cannabis retailing.

The structure-based organizing approach being used by OPSEU to prepare for bargaining comes out of the United States. It involves taking site structures—in this case stores—and seeing who has power at each site. In some cases, new people will have to be identified when there are no leaders on a shift. Part of this approach includes organizing mini-actions called “structure tests.”

In Manitoba, a recent problem has been that, since the merger with lotteries and gaming, managers don't have the same experience with liquor retailing.

## FOLLOW-UPS

ISSUE	NUPGE Responsibility	Component Responsibility	Task Completed
Share Toby Sanger's presentation, Corporate Tax Cuts and International Tax Dodging: Drivers of Privatization	✓		✓
Provide update on DHL ownership of companies involved in privatization of liquor warehousing and distribution in Alberta and British Columbia.	✓		✓
Information on liquor and cannabis retailers receiving the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)	✓		
For provinces where stores are supposed to receive deep cleaning in some circumstances, how is this defined and who does it?		✓	



## Component Report

Component Reporting: BCGEU

Number of members: 4800

1. **Government/political climate:** After 3 ½ years of being a minority government, the NDP won a solid majority last October.
2. **Collective bargaining update:** Our contract expires end of next March.
3. **Significant grievance arbitration decisions:** None
4. **COVID-19:**

**a) What measures are taken to protect workers when someone in a workplace test positive for COVID-19?**

It seems every time this happens it is deemed to be low risk to the workers, so no additional measures are taken. Members are concerned because they are not always being informed when someone has tested positive at their worksite. They are told if you are at risk, the health authorities will contact you so if they have not heard from them, you can assume “no new is good news.” This does not put our members at ease. In most cases, the Union is not being informed when a worker tests positive, so we do not actually know the number of workers who have tested positive.

**b) Have there been changes to pay or leave related to the pandemic?**

No

**c) Has there been any move to return to the pre-pandemic length of shifts, number of hours for workers, or store hours?**

Most of our stores went back to regular hours/shifts some time ago.

**d) Have there been any changes to protective barriers in stores or PPE that is being provided by the employer (either improvements or reductions)?**

The only additional barrier since we last met is the requirement to wear masks which is the result of a mask mandate ordered by our Provincial Health officer last November.

**e) Have there been changes to the number of people allowed in stores, distancing requirements or rules around bagging purchases?**

No changes but some stores are becoming increasingly lax when it comes to adhering to safety protocols.

**5. COVID-19 and privatization:**

**Where bars and restaurants are permitted to sell alcoholic beverages with takeout/delivery orders, has there been any move to allow them to purchase alcohol at wholesale prices?**

They have been allowed to purchase at wholesale prices on a temporary basis. However, it was announced last week that this change would now be permanent.

**6. Privatization:**

**Since the last meeting, have any new privatization schemes related to liquor or cannabis warehousing, distribution or retailing been announced or implemented?**

No

**7. Major campaigns and communications:**

We are currently running an “essential pay for essential work” campaign. Members at the stores and distribution centers have been wearing buttons since December. We are continuing to put pressure on both the General Manager and the Finance Minister, to release the funds necessary to properly compensate members in the stores and distribution centers.

**8. Any other major activities to report:** Not at this time.



## Component Report

**Component Reporting:** MGEU

**Number of members:** Approximately 1,365 MBLL members

1. **Government/political climate:** Conservative provincial government. Ideologically determined to move towards privatization. Introduced Bill 40 - THE MANITOBA LIQUOR AND LOTTERIES CORPORATION AMENDMENT AND LIQUOR, GAMING AND CANNABIS CONTROL AMENDMENT ACT that would allow for more private liquor sales to occur in the province. Expecting to have 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the bill this spring prior to moving it forward to the legislative committee.
2. **Collective bargaining update:** Current agreement expires March of 2022. Spring elections for future local executives taking place over the next couple of months will determine who will be sitting on the bargaining committee for the Union.
3. **Significant grievance arbitration decisions:** None
4. **COVID-19:**
  - a) **What measures are taken to protect workers when someone in a workplace test positive for COVID-19?** The MBLL shuts the store down for extensive cleaning / disinfection protocols. They advise all other employees of the shifts dates and times of potential exposure and provide guidance if isolation is necessary.

- b) Have there been changes to pay or leave related to the pandemic?** Small increase of pay for rural retail employees during the specific hours they are required to do additional cleaning the store as part of COVID procedures.
- c) Has there been any move to return to the pre-pandemic length of shifts, number of hours for workers, or store hours?** The shifts have gone back to normal as the traffic demands. Summer hours will be in effect in around Easter time determined by neighboring business and Malls.
- d) Have there been any changes to protective barriers in stores or PPE that is being provided by the employer (either improvements or reductions)?** No upgrades to the PPE equipment or barriers. The employer is quite compliant with the provincial health orders.
- e) Have there been changes to the number of people allowed in stores, distancing requirements or rules around bagging purchases?** No changes to previously reported scenarios. Customer does have to bag own purchases. City stores have controlled entrances and customer counts are monitored.

## **5. COVID-19 and privatization:**

**Where bars and restaurants are permitted to sell alcoholic beverages with takeout/delivery orders, has there been any move to allow them to purchase alcohol at wholesale prices?** No change yet but there has been some lobbying to allow more access to the liquor retailing.

## **6. Privatization:**

**Since the last meeting, have any new privatization schemes related to liquor or cannabis warehousing, distribution or retailing been announced or implemented?** As mentioned previously in the report, the government is introducing legislation with Bill 40 that will allow the MBLL to provide license to private establishments to sell any specific type of alcohol as opposed to the current restriction only specific types of alcohol that could allow for direct competition with MBLL owned stores.

- 7. Major campaigns and communications:** The Keeping Liquor Public campaign is still fully engaged. Recently a Telephone Town Hall was held on Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> for MGEU liquor members to provide additional information and opportunity to ask questions on the subject of Bill 40 and its potential negative impacts.
  
- 8. Any other major activities to report:** The rollout of controlled entrances has stopped outside major cities in Manitoba but the rural locations such as Flin Flon just experienced an armed robbery. Installation and staffing of the controlled entrances may deter some of these incidents.



Component Report

Component Reporting: NAPE

Local 7501 (Retail stores in St. John's , Distribution Centre , Rock Spirits  
Production Facility , Head Office Clerical Staff , Enforcement)

Local 1501 (Retail stores Corner Brook)

Local 5501 (Retail stores Bay Roberts/Carbonear)

Composite Locals (Retail stores remainder of province)

Number of members:      Local 7501 - 378  
   Local 1501 – 27  
   Local 5501 – 24  
   Composite Locals – 110 (approximately)

1. Government/political climate:

Currently in the middle of a provincial election. Original February 13<sup>th</sup> election date extended due to a return to Covid Alert Level 5, which didn't permit polling stations to be open. Due to voting by mail in ballot only, all ballots not expected to be received and counted until March 31<sup>st</sup> at earliest.

2. Collective bargaining update:

Collective agreement expired on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020. At that time a 2 year contract extension was ratified which included a 4% wage increase over an 18 month period. Contract expires March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022.



**3. Significant grievance arbitration decisions:**

Grievance set for arbitration, settled with employer days before arbitration date. Grievance involved termination of part time employee for refusing shifts. Collective agreement gave employer right to take seniority but not to terminate. Union argued under said clause and was successful in having employee reinstated with new seniority date from date of termination as well as compensated for lost shifts.

**4. COVID-19:**

- a) What measures are taken to protect workers when someone in a workplace test positive for COVID-19?

To date there have been no positive cases of NLC employees in any department. There have been instances of potential exposure (ie: employee may have come in contact with person who tested positive). In these cases, employees required to self-isolate and be tested. If employee tests positive, they would proceed on sick leave. If negative but required by employer to stay off, special leave with pay.

- b) Have there been changes to pay or leave related to the pandemic?

Only at Alert Level 5 (highest alert level). Employees in receipt of pay for full time hours, but work hours reduced.

- c) Has there been any move to return to the pre-pandemic length of shifts, number of hours for workers, or store hours?

The Corporation has slowly increased hours of operation as we have moved through the various alert levels. Currently however, we have returned to Alert Level 5 in the metro region due to the new variant. Off the Avalon, retail stores are at Alert Level 4. Although permitted to be open at 50% capacity, the Corporation has decided to open at 25% capacity.

- d) Have there been any changes to protective barriers in stores or PPE that is being provided by the employer (either improvements or reductions)?

No changes since last component report. Plexi-glass barriers still in place, masks and gloves provided, directional arrows on floor.

- e) **Have there been changes to the number of people allowed in stores, distancing requirements or rules around bagging purchases?**

**Since Covid numbers have increased in the metro region due to new variant, stores have reverted to call in and online orders only. Distribution Centre and Production Facility have gone to a two shift schedule with half hour between shifts to allow for sanitation, and reduced hours for staff.**

**5. COVID-19 and privatization:**

**Where bars and restaurants are permitted to sell alcoholic beverages with takeout/delivery orders, has there been any move to allow them to purchase alcohol at wholesale prices?**

**No change**

**6. Privatization:**

**Since the last meeting, have any new privatization schemes related to liquor or cannabis warehousing, distribution or retailing been announced or implemented?**

**No, but this is something NAPE will be monitoring closely after provincial election, especially if political power changes hands.**

**7. Major campaigns and communications:**

**Nothing as it relates to NLC.**

**8. Any other major activities to report:**

**None at the moment**



## **Component Report**

**Component Reporting:** NSGEU  
Local 470 (Retail & Distribution Centre)  
Local 470E (Head Office Clerical)  
Local 1670 (Store Managers)

**Number of members:** Local 470 (Casual, RPT, RFT) – 1432  
Local 470E – 28  
Local 1670 - 188

### **1. Government/political climate:**

Due to Premier Stephen McNeil stepping down, the NS Liberal party elected Iain Rankin as party leader on February 5, 2021. He officially became Premier on February 23, 2021. We do not yet know his position on matters relating to the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation or privatization in general, but don't expect any significant changes to the Liquor Control Act or expansion of agency stores.

### **2. Collective bargaining update:**

All three Collective Agreements will expire on March 31, 2021. Arrangements are being made to get bargaining committees in place.

### **3. Significant grievance arbitration decisions:**

Nothing of note.

### **4. COVID-19:**

#### **a) What measures are taken to protect workers when someone in a workplace test positive for COVID-19?**

We have only had three cases of NSLC workers testing positive for Covid-19, to date. There have been some instances of potential exposure by a customer. In all cases, the Employer has closed the facility for deep cleaning and involved Public Health. Any employee deemed to be moderate or high risk of exposure has been directed to get tested and self-isolate, with pay. Should an employee test positive, they are required to use sick leave. In the most recent cases involving staff in the Distribution Centre, the Department of Labour conducted an investigation and determined that the safety measures in place are adequate.

#### **b) Have there been changes to pay or leave related to the pandemic?**

As previously reported, the Employer initially paid a \$1.50 per hour premium, but removed it last summer, despite committing to keep it in place for the duration of the pandemic. The Employer continues to allow employees identifying as being high risk to take an unpaid leave of absence, which is not covered under the Collective Agreement.

#### **c) Has there been any move to return to the pre-pandemic length of shifts, number of hours for workers, or store hours?**

Stores continue to be open from 10am to 9pm. There is no plan currently, to return to a 10pm closing time. Members working in the Distribution Centre have a half hour gap between shifts, as to allow minimal cross-over in shift staff. This results in members working roughly seven hours per day but are being compensated for eight. This measure was briefly removed after Christmas, but re-instated since the latest cases in the DC.

#### **d) Have there been any changes to protective barriers in stores or PPE that is being provided by the employer (either improvements or reductions)?**

There have been no changes since the last report. Safety measures in place include mandatory masks, hand sanitizer for staff and customers, Plexiglas at

cash, disinfectant cleaning supplies, store signage (distancing, direction and self-symptom check) and there are no customer tastings.

**e) Have there been changes to the number of people allowed in stores, distancing requirements or rules around bagging purchases?**

There have been no changes to this. The number of customers in the store is determined by the size of the individual store and the ability to maintain a two metre distance from others. Staff can control the number of customers allowed in the store.

**5. COVID-19 and privatization:**

**Where bars and restaurants are permitted to sell alcoholic beverages with takeout/delivery orders, has there been any move to allow them to purchase alcohol at wholesale prices?**

No, they continue to purchase alcohol at the regular retail price. For the most part, alcohol delivery and take-out has been largely unsuccessful. This is likely due to the accessibility of NSLC stores and restrictions associated with selling alcohol with take-out and delivery orders (must be delivered by an employee of the restaurant, the value cannot exceed three times the value of the food, alcohol must be pre-packaged and is therefore limited to wine, beer and cider and be sold at their regular prices).

**6. Privatization:**

**Since the last meeting, have any new privatization schemes related to liquor or cannabis warehousing, distribution or retailing been announced or implemented?**

No.

**7. Major campaigns and communications:**

None relating directly to the NSLC.

**8. Any other major activities to report:**

None.



## **Component Report**

**Component Reporting:** Liquor Board Employees Division (LBED)/ Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation (OCRC)

**Number of members:** LBED: Casual: 5315; Permanent Full-time: 2574 for around 8,000 members.

Membership numbers are closer to 10,000 in the December holiday period and during the late spring and summer when Fixed-Terms come into the stores.

The collective agreement requires the LCBO to ensure that the percentage of Casual employees does not exceed 70% of the LCBO's retail PFT workforce. As a result, the LCBO just posted 245 PFT positions.

OCRC: 50 members.

- 1. Government/political climate:** The Conservative majority government has been in power since June 2018. The next election will be on or before June 2, 2022.
- 2. Collective bargaining update:** LBED: March 31, 2021 expiry of the collective agreement. Bargaining starts last week of March.  
OCRC: First contract negotiations probably to begin late spring, early summer.
- 3. Significant grievance arbitration decisions:** None.

#### 4. COVID-19:

a) **What measures are taken to protect workers when someone in a workplace test positive for COVID-19?** LBED: They are paid for their scheduled shifts.

b) **Have there been changes to pay or leave related to the pandemic?** LBED: No change to pay. Members got 4 paid sick days which expired Sept. 1, 2020 and was not renewed. Members at Head Office were redeployed to avoid layoff. Otherwise members are required to access legislative entitlements. Attendance management program was put on hold for leave issues related to the pandemic.

c) **Has there been any move to return to the pre-pandemic length of shifts, number of hours for workers, or store hours?** LBED: Stores re-opened province-wide on Mondays as of March 1, 2021. Previously, during the December holiday season, the employer opened Mondays to the public in select locations and other locations had members working while the stores were closed to the public. This was the employer's effort to meet the collective agreement entitlement for members to have a minimum of 17 Saturdays off in a contract year.

Store hours vary. They have returned to 9 p.m. but haven't gone back to the 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. close

d) **Have there been any changes to protective barriers in stores or PPE that is being provided by the employer (either improvements or reductions)?**

LBED: Goggles have been added. It is required that if a customer says they have an exemption to wearing a mask, members can't interact with that customer unless the members are wearing goggles and face mask or face shields and face masks, while standing behind plexiglass.

Public health mandated active screening prior to shift commencing for workers, visitors, vendors.

e) **Have there been changes to the number of people allowed in stores, distancing requirements or rules around bagging purchases?** LBED: Based on public health regions, customers are to bag own purchases if using their own bag, and the physical distance requirements remain in place. Customers can return product for a refund, as of March 1, 2021.

## **5. COVID-19 and privatization:**

**Where bars and restaurants are permitted to sell alcoholic beverages with takeout/delivery orders, has there been any move to allow them to purchase alcohol at wholesale prices?** LBED: Bars and restaurants are lobbying hard for wholesale prices.

## **6. Privatization:**

**Since the last meeting, have any new privatization schemes related to liquor or cannabis warehousing, distribution or retailing been announced or implemented?**

LBED: The regulation allowing bars and restaurants to sell liquor with food takeout/delivery was made permanent in December 2020. In February 2021, 7-Eleven applied for liquor licenses at 61 stores in 31 communities in the province. The public has until March 11, 2021, to comment on the applications. The contract for home delivery of alcohol has been given to Purolator in addition to Canada Post. The LCBO's e-commerce business has been formally contracted out to DHL.

Cannabis: the warehouse is run by a third-party, they control distribution of the product throughout the province. The government has significantly opened up the authorization process for new private retail stores – many more stores are being authorized. In December 2020, the regulator, (the AGCO), announced it was doubling the number of stores being authorized per month from 40 to 80. In February 2021, the AGCO said it is now authorizing 20 to 30 stores per week. As of February 16, 2021, there were 430 authorized cannabis private retail stores in the province.

## **7. Major campaigns and communications:**

LBED: Mobilized our members to pressure the government to have the LCBO open stores on Mondays once again.

Engaging and mobilizing members and allies to oppose 7-Eleven liquor license applications for 61 stores in 31 communities.

## **8. Any other major activities to report:**

LBED: We'll start mobilizing soon for bargaining – using a new method called structure-based organizing in order to build participation at every worksite.





## **Component Report**

**Component Reporting: PEIUPSE**

**Number of members: 5000**

(LCC stores: 127; Cannabis stores: 35)

### **1. Government/political climate:**

PEI has a Progressive Conservative “majority government” upon a recent by-election won by the PCs. There are 14 PCs, 8 Greens and 5 Liberals. Nonetheless, the PCS do not have a working majority as the Speaker is a PC. As a result, many important decisions are made by consensus or consultation. Government committees are not dominated by the PCs as has been traditional for the party with the majority.

The government, in cooperation with the Chief Health Officer, has done a great job of managing the COVID pandemic. The PEI government responded well to the economic challenges brought on by virus. As a result, the PCs have increased their popularity.

## **2. Collective bargaining update:**

The recently organized Atlantic Tourism and Hospitality Institute bargaining unit is working on their first collective agreement. Conciliation is set for March 10, 2021.

Bargaining is set to begin for UPSE Holland College Faculty members in October 2021. The parties exchanged packages in October 2020 but bargaining has been delayed due to the pandemic.

UPSE Grain Elevators members began negotiations in February and are currently waiting for the employer to respond with further dates.

UPSE Community Connections members exchanged proposals in late 2020 and are currently waiting for the employer to confirm bargaining dates.

UPSE Strait Crossing Bridge members are currently scheduling bargaining dates for later in March 2021.

UPSE City of Charlottetown members are waiting to hear back from the employer on bargaining dates.

UPSE Health PEI members are in negotiations next on March 11 and 12, 2021.

UPES Garden Home members began negotiations in February and are looking at further dates in March/April.

UPSE Holland College Admin and Support members are forming a bargaining team in April and proposal forms will be sent out before the end of March.

## **3. Significant grievance arbitration decisions:**

## **4. COVID-19:**

### **a) What measures are taken to protect workers when someone in a workplace test positive for COVID-19?**

There has not been a positive result for any liquor or cannabis worker.

If there is a potential exposure the store is closed, all workers are tested, the workplace is thoroughly cleaned and the store is re-opened.

### **b) Have there been changes to pay or leave related to the pandemic?**

Government has instituted a COVID code – employees are paid when they are off pending testing and awaiting results.

- c) Has there been any move to return to the pre-pandemic length of shifts, number of hours for workers, or store hours?**

PEI returned to normal hours as of Summer 2020.

- d) Have there been any changes to protective barriers in stores or PPE that is being provided by the employer (either improvements or reductions)?**

All cash registers are shielded by plexiglass, staff cleans between customers, thorough cleaning every day, staff wears masks and PPE at all times, customers maintain a required distance.

- e) Have there been changes to the number of people allowed in stores, distancing requirements or rules around bagging purchases?**

At times when COVID restrictions are increased the capacity of the store is reduced 50% (2 different periods)

**5. COVID-19 and privatization:**

**Where bars and restaurants are permitted to sell alcoholic beverages with takeout/delivery orders, has there been any move to allow them to purchase alcohol at wholesale prices?**

No

**6. Privatization:**

**Since the last meeting, have any new privatization schemes related to liquor or cannabis warehousing, distribution or retailing been announced or implemented?**

No, though a rural grocery store stated to the government that they would like to begin selling alcohol.

**7. Major campaigns and communications:**

UPSE is currently working on a new website and hopes to launch in the spring of 2021.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation has been publishing articles in The Guardian as of late attacking public service workers in regard to their wages and pension benefits. UPSE has responded as well as CUPE and Canadians for Tax Fairness.

**8. Any other major activities to report:**



Component Report

Component Reporting: SGEU

Number of members: 620

1. **Government/political climate:** *Saskatchewan continues to be directed by a more conservative government that is focused on business and privatization. Under this government our Sector, Retail/Regulatory, has lost more than 400 members in ten years*
  
2. **Collective bargaining update:** *Ratification of a three year deal was done in 2020. 5.5 % wage increase with an additional .50 % increase to pension and employer match is 8.0% up from 7.75*
  
3. **Significant grievance arbitration decisions:** *None*
  
4. **COVID-19:**
  - a) **What measures are taken to protect workers when someone in a workplace test positive for COVID-19?** *The protocol has evolved over the past year. Currently if a worker tests positive the workplace will be temporarily closed and a deep cleaning/fogging is to be done. Workers are asked to monitor symptoms.*

- b) Have there been changes to pay or leave related to the pandemic?** *Leave will be granted if a worker feels their health may be compromised. No access to sick pay unless positive.*
- c) Has there been any move to return to the pre-pandemic length of shifts, number of hours for workers, or store hours?** *No change to operating hours based on covid. Some stores reduced Friday by one hour at night but this was operational not covid related.*
- d) Have there been any changes to protective barriers in stores or PPE that is being provided by the employer (either improvements or reductions)?** *No changes, we continue to use sneeze guards and wear masks. Sanitizing material and PPE is provided without question.*
- e) Have there been changes to the number of people allowed in stores, distancing requirements or rules around bagging purchases?** *Following provincial guidelines many stores have actually increased the number of customers allowed at any time. Before Christmas some larger stores went from an allowable 30 customers to 40. Bagging is suggested to be done by customers only. Some stores are doing curbside pickup.*

#### **5. COVID-19 and privatization:**

**Where bars and restaurants are permitted to sell alcoholic beverages with takeout/delivery orders, has there been any move to allow them to purchase alcohol at wholesale prices?** *No change to ordering for bars and restaurants but they are allowed to sell off sale in some instances.*

#### **6. Privatization:**

**Since the last meeting, have any new privatization schemes related to liquor or cannabis warehousing, distribution or retailing been announced or implemented?** *We are currently monitoring the change to legislation to allow for a third party warehouse to be established in the province. This has passed the third reading and was passed by a vote.*

- 7. Major campaigns and communications:** *Last Christmas season we launched a buy local campaign to promote public liquor. As well an update to our SaskLiquorPricing app was done to allow for ads from SaskLiquor to be placed within.*
  
- 8. Any other major activities to report:** *One of our stores in Saskatoon will be closing at some point due to the sale of the land the mall is on being sold and a new Saskatoon Public Library being built in the next year or two.*



## NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES

- B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia (HSABC)
- Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA)
- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU)
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU)
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers (CUBGW)
- New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees (NBU)
- Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU)
- PEI Union of Public Sector Employees (PEI UPSE)
- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE)

The National Union of Public and General Employees is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and a member of Public Services International.

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