

USW@Work

A close-up photograph of a Black man with a beard, wearing a blue button-down shirt, speaking into a microphone. He is looking upwards and to the right with a determined expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing trees and what appears to be a banner with the word 'WINNER' partially visible. The overall lighting is bright, suggesting an outdoor setting during the day.

**Steelworkers Rally
Against Systemic Racism**

USW Takes On COVID

**Métallos Legend
Remembered**

Historic Upheaval Heroes

USW@Work
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COVER PHOTO: Mark Austin, USW Local 1998, speaks at a community rally to pressure police to do more to respond to a violent and racist attack Mark and his partner experienced while walking their dog in a local park.



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OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS, Canadians have confronted a period of historic social and economic upheaval, and in far too many cases, of profound tragedy.

Thousands of Canadian families are grieving the deaths of loved ones from COVID-19. It has become clear that many of these deaths could have been prevented, had our federal and provincial governments been prepared to immediately implement the type of comprehensive pandemic response programs that have been effective in numerous other countries.

In this edition of our national magazine, you will read about the pandemic's impact on working people and of the spirit and solidarity of Steelworkers responding to the formidable challenges of the last several months. I

have been truly inspired by these Steelworkers' stories, particularly of the determination, courage and selflessness of our frontline and essential workers.

From the pandemic's beginning, Steelworkers and our labour and political allies have demanded our governments adopt and improve a number of emergency support programs. Our activism produced tangible results to help workers, businesses and the most vulnerable in our society.



upheaval, ic Solidarity

Still, the pandemic cost millions of working people, including tens of thousands of Steelworkers, their jobs. While most layoffs have been temporary, far too many job losses will be permanent.

The pandemic has further exposed the failings of our economy and the desperate need for a far-reaching, progressive economic recovery based on long-term job creation and addressing the appalling inequalities embedded in our system. There can be no “going back to normal.”

As of the date this magazine went to press, U.S. President Donald Trump had just announced the imposition of bogus tariffs on Canadian aluminum exports to the U.S., a discredited tactic he deployed in the past. The USW responded swiftly, demanding aggressive and sweeping countermeasures from the Canadian government, which subsequently pledged to take such action.

Trump’s baseless “national security” tariffs threaten thousands of Canadian jobs, particularly among Quebec Steelworkers, who produce the world’s highest-quality aluminum – through fair-trade practices. Our international union immediately launched intense political action, on both sides of the border, to get rid of these ridiculous tariffs, as we did previously with our successful campaign to end earlier tariffs in 2019.

The USW recently paid tribute to one of the great pioneers of our union and a giant of the Quebec labour movement – Jean Gérin-Lajoie, who passed away in July at age 92.

As Steelworkers’ Quebec Director from 1965 to 1981, Gérin-Lajoie led the union through a period of tremendous growth. He also was a leader of an advisory council that led several Quebec governments to enact historic legislation on labour law reforms, minimum wages, workplace health and safety and the province’s anti-scab ban.

Friends, I am proud of the solidarity and resolve of our members in confronting these unprecedented times and our continuing fight for a better future.

Ken Neumann
National Director

First-Hand USW COVID Experiences

Steelworkers tell their stories
pp. 4-5



Job One: Health and Safety

The union fights for PPE
p. 9



Not ‘Back to Normal’

We can do better in recovery
pp. 10-13



USW Fights Anti-Black Racism

Steelworkers stand up to racism
pp. 14-15



Court Supports Union Rights

Manitoba ruling a warning for Ontario
p. 16



NDP Improves COVID Measures

Pushing Libs every step of the way
p. 18



Passing of Quebec USW Legend

Jean Gérin-Lajoie’s great legacy
p. 19



McIntyre Powder Victory

Parkinson’s connection recognized
p. 20



Humanity Fund During COVID

Need for USW help increases
pp. 22-23



Virtual Lobbying

Steel, forestry activism go online
pp. 25-27



Bargaining Successes

Steelworkers make gains
pp. 28-29



Thank You Poster

Essential and Frontline Workers
p. 30



Worklife During a Pandemic

Audra Nixon USW Local 9211

Maxville Manor, Maxville, Ont.

"We had a false positive [COVID-19 test of a resident]. That whole unit [of 40 residents] was shut down. Staff had to eat in their own area. No one was allowed to enter that area. Seclusion was very hard on the residents," said Audra, a Personal Support Worker (PSW) in a long-term care home east of Ottawa. Audra is President of the District 6 Health Care Workers' Council and Unit Chair of her local.

Everyone working in that unit wore gowns, face shields, or goggles and a mask, and gloves – equipment the staff don't ordinarily wear. Fortunately, the resident came back with two negative tests for COVID-19.

Audra's tips for coping during coronavirus: "Take one step at a time. We will get through this."

Steelworkers union member Audra Nixon is staying positive at Maxville Manor



Audra says the staff appreciate the USW's pandemic information. The USW local purchased face masks for the members, supplementing employer supplies. "It's good to know that the union has your back. The priority is the members.

It was awesome."

"This pandemic has shone a light on the staffing shortages in long-term care. The USW and the Health Care Coalition have been fighting for the last few years – we're starting being heard now."

Chad's pandemic tip: "Be with your family. Leave work at work."

Steelworker Chad Lindsey with his three kids, Marshall, Isabel and Hazel



Chad Lindsey, USW Local 7619

Highland Valley Copper (Teck), Logan Lake, B.C.

Over 1,100 USW members work at Highland Valley Copper in two main operations – an open pit mine and

a mill, where the ore is processed.

When the pandemic hit, "we had multiple phases which got the workforce down to 50% and then adjusted it in the next phase to be at about 75% of operating capacity.

"The USW worked extremely hard with Teck to make sure our members continued to get paid in some capacity during the time that they were told to stay home. Everyone is now back full-time," says Chad, who is the local's Health and Safety Chair and serves on the District 3 Health, Safety and Environment Committee.

Deemed essential, operations weren't shut down. But work changed.

"We staggered crew start-and-stop times and break times to reduce interaction."

Chad emphasized the importance of physical distancing at daily crew talks. "We were constantly updating our COVID-19 policies as new information came out."

Members of the Steelworkers union share their experiences

Jerry McIntyre
USW Local 4614

**General Smelting of Canada,
Montreal**

“When the shutdown was announced on March 24, we

were concerned. I met with management with a view to negotiating acceptable conditions in the event of a plant closure. The employer reassured us that they didn’t want to leave anyone financially worse off. From March 25 to 31,

workers stayed home with pay.

“When our plant was deemed an essential workplace, we started working in rotations, three days a week – without loss of pay, even though we didn’t qualify for the emergency wage subsidy. Later we returned to working full-time and in compliance with health measures. As workers at a lead smelter who have to comply with strict hygiene rules and where the vast majority wear respiratory protection, it was fairly easy to enforce compliance.

“We also agreed with the employer to increase plant cleaning, to extend break periods and the end-of-shift shower period to allow for physical distancing.

There is still work to be done in terms of awareness and vigilance and maintaining the rules of distancing, but we know we can do it as a team!

Jerry McIntyre is helping Steelworkers maintain distancing and work as a team at General Smelting in Montreal.



Susan Cao and Sadia Naji
USW Local 1976

Garda, Ottawa Airport

“Initially we didn’t have masks, or any extra personal protective equipment (PPE). The union played a huge role in getting us the masks and the face shields,” said Sadia, who is a security screener and a steward with the local.

“The employer was opposed initially. The union had to fight an uphill battle with Garda. Now the masks are mandatory, so we’ve come a long way.”

About 65 screeners were laid off in April, out of almost 300. Over 52 people took voluntary leave because of child- or family-care responsibilities, including Susan, the

unit’s recording secretary, who took time off without pay to care for her parents. Twenty-seven people were recalled at the end of June.

“If there was no union, if we didn’t have a negotiated contract and

seniority, a lot of people would have been let go,” Susan said.

“I would like the federal government to acknowledge and appreciate those who work during this time. We are the frontline workers,” Sadia said. ■

**Susan and Sadia’s
tips for the
pandemic:
Stay safe.
Stay positive.
Wear your PPE.**

Sadia Naji in the PPE the union helped obtain for members working for Garda at the Ottawa Airport.





Workers' Comp Is a National Disgrace

Fatal flaws in provincial systems

The Workers Monument outside Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board offices. Deeply entrenched flaws at the WSIB and other workers' compensation boards across Canada are ruining lives and exacerbating the opioid crisis.

STEELWORKERS are demanding that Canada's provincial governments finally rectify deeply entrenched flaws in workers' compensation systems that continue to ruin lives and exacerbate the opioid crisis.

The USW's long-standing calls for meaningful reforms to workers' compensation have been reinforced by a national media exposé documenting the disastrous human toll wrought by the system's failings in several Canadian provinces.

"Sadly, these tragic revelations are not surprising to unions and others who advocate for injured workers, nor to workers and families who have been devastated by the system's failings," USW National Director Ken Neumann said of the investigative report in the *Globe and Mail* newspaper.

"For years, unions have demanded reforms to a broken system that fuels addiction and leads to ruined lives, fatal overdoses and suicides. Those demands have largely been ignored."

Systemic issues documented by the *Globe and Mail* report include:

- Injured workers are often forced back to work before they have healed or received medical treatment and procedures they need.
- Injured workers are often prescribed opioids – covered by the compensation board – to cope with their pain and many have become

addicted. Workers who have been forced back to work, then had their benefits cut, have resorted to cheap street drugs, with deadly consequences.

- Recommended treatments and surgeries for many injured workers are denied, limited or delayed, sometimes for years.

"These are not new issues. Compensation boards use what they call 'early and safe return to work' to get injured workers back to work and cut off their benefits. In practice, the 'early' part of the equation takes precedence over the 'safe' aspect," Neumann said.

Some key reforms advocated by the USW already exist in certain jurisdictions, particularly within Quebec's workers' compensation system, which recognizes the primacy of an injured worker's attending physician.

Unlike other provincial compensation boards, Quebec's system protects workers from being forced to return to work too early under threat of their benefits being cut off. The system also protects employers from paying higher premiums if they don't force injured workers back to work.

The USW is calling on governments in other provinces to mandate their compensation boards to recognize the primacy of workers' attending medical practitioners, particularly regarding suitability to return to work and treatment regimes.



USW Chaplains Fighting for Prisoners' Rights and a Fair Contract

Other reforms must include:

- Ending the practice of sending injured workers back to work while they are still being treated with drugs such as opioids.
- Considering alternative methods of pain management aside from drugs, including extended physiotherapy and psychological care such as cognitive behavioral therapy.
- Ensuring better contact with workers who have been placed on drug treatment programs, as well as with their attending medical practitioners. Greater supports must be put in place for injured workers experiencing addiction and mental health issues.
- Prioritizing and expediting the claims process and the approval process for treatments and surgeries.
- Requiring compensation boards to track and publish data on addiction cases as well as fatalities resulting from workplace injuries and related addictions.

"Immediate reforms are needed, otherwise the workers' compensation system will continue to devalue workers' health and workers' lives," Neumann said.

"It's time for provincial governments to take meaningful action to tackle this national disgrace." ■

CANADA'S FEDERAL PRISON CHAPLAINS

have been waging a dual struggle during the COVID-19 pandemic – trying to negotiate their first collective agreement, while also defending inmates' rights.

One of the USW's newest bargaining units, 180 prison chaplains from various faiths and spiritual practices began contract negotiations with Bridges of Canada in February 2020.

The chaplains have seen no improvements in wages or working conditions since 2016, when the federal government awarded a private contract for prison chaplaincy services to Bridges of Canada, a subsidiary of U.S.-based Bridges International.

Making matter worse, Bridges laid off all chaplains due to the pandemic in March – at the government's direction. Chaplains were forced to turn to government assistance programs and by late-summer more than half were still off work.

Throughout their struggle for a return to work and a first contract, the chaplains have also advocated for prison inmates who have been denied their Charter rights to practise their religion.

"Our union is working hard with our new members and supporting them every step of the way to ensure they achieve a fair contract with the improvements they need," said USW National Director Ken Neumann. ■

Make Long-Term Care Public!

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

has exposed the shameful and often horrific reality of Canada's long-term care system that is dominated by for-profit corporations.

The horror stories are not new to unions and frontline caregivers, including many Steelworkers working in long-term care, who have long demanded meaningful reforms, only to be ignored by government.

However, the pandemic has laid bare the cruel failings of the largely for-profit system, USW National Director Ken Neumann told the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Finance.

"The pandemic has exposed the shameful treatment of frail Canadians in long-term care as well as the extreme undervaluing of care providers," Neumann said.

The federal government must work with provinces to eliminate for-profit operators and bring the system under the Canada Health Act, as proposed by long-term care experts and the New Democratic Party, Neumann said. Public funding must go strictly to provide quality care, not to corporate profits, he added.

With some 7,000 deaths, the proportion of COVID-related deaths occurring in Canada's long-term care facilities is a whopping 100% higher than the average rate in other developed

countries, the Canadian Institute for Health Information reported.

The disturbing finding came on the heels of damning reports by the Canadian military, after troops were deployed to help care for residents in long-term care facilities in Ontario and Quebec.

The military reported shocking cases of abuse and neglect: residents left in soiled diapers, residents going hungry and thirsty, some left alone crying for help for hours, blatant disregard for infection control, rotten food, insect infestations and gross understaffing leaving workers overwhelmed.

The toll on caregivers coping with impossible circumstances during the pandemic has been devastating.

In many homes, after comforting dying residents in their final moments, caregivers have been charged with the task of placing deceased residents into body bags and removing them from the building.

"At the end of your shift, you hear a colleague say, 'I had to bag three bodies today.' It's heartbreaking. There will be PTSD when this is over, I have no doubt," said a USW member who is a caregiver at a for-profit nursing home in Ontario.

"The failings of our long-term care system is a national shame," Neumann said. "The Government of Canada must provide leadership to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again." ■



The pandemic has taken a huge toll on long-term care workers, including Steelworkers such as Lori Tellier, USW Local 9329 Unit Chair in Windsor, Ont.

JOB ONE: Health and Safety

WORK NEVER STOPPED for essential services workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, but it did change, particularly regarding health and safety.

Back in March, many employers were not providing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), making work unsafe for USW members, including airport screeners, across the country. There were even PPE shortages for health-care and long-term care workers.

Strong advocacy from USW members, district health and safety co-ordinators and staff representatives helped obtain PPE for members – a role that should have been the employers’ responsibility.

This is what unions do.

“Thanks to union advocacy in the 1960s, all workers in Canada have important health and safety rights: the right to know, the right to participate and the right to refuse unsafe

work,” said Gerry LeBlanc, USW National Health and Safety Department Leader.

During COVID-19, the right to refuse unsafe work has been exposed as insufficient in practice, with governments accepting only a tiny fraction of work refusals initiated by workers. Our union is fighting to make work refusals a meaningful reality.

Unionized workers have better protections than non-union workers. Health and safety language in union contracts is likely to be stronger than minimum standards. Union health and safety representatives have access to ongoing training to build their expertise.

It’s the employers’ responsibility to keep workers safe, but workers need to know and exercise our rights. Know your stewards and health and safety

representatives. Ask questions. Ensure your employer does everything possible to keep workers safe. ■

Governments Foresake Security Guards

As COVID-19’s first wave draws to a close, Steelworkers continue to demand pandemic pay for security guards who have been risking their health on a daily basis.

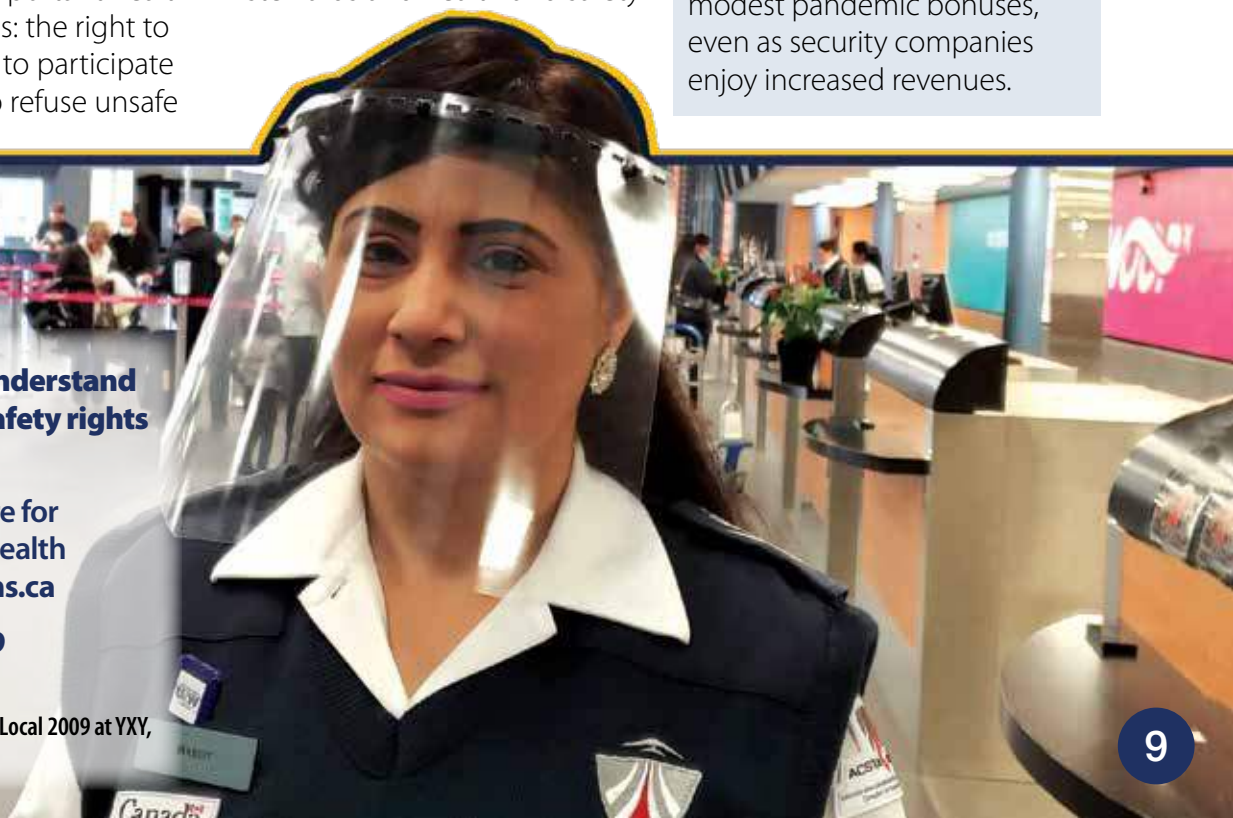
In Quebec and Ontario, where USW represents thousands of security guards, Steelworkers-led campaigns have received public support for demands that these essential workers be recognized with government-mandated wage top-ups.

The campaigns expose the hypocrisy of right-wing governments and employers that praise frontline workers as “heroes” while denying them modest pandemic bonuses, even as security companies enjoy increased revenues.

Learn more and understand your health and safety rights at work:

- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety ccohs.ca](http://CanadianCentreforOccupationalHealthandSafety.ccohs.ca)
- usw.ca/covid19

Hardy Gill, Unit Chair of USW Local 2009 at YXY, Abbotsford Airport in B.C.



“Back to Normal” Not Good Enough – What’s Possible in a Recovery

THE CRISIS OF THE PANDEMIC has exposed so many gaps and weaknesses in our country and economy.

As an example, we knew before COVID-19 that Employment Insurance (EI) was failing workers. It doesn’t pay enough and too many people are excluded or ineligible. The failures of EI were further exposed by the crisis of the pandemic, and the government had to bring in emergency supports for workers like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).

COVID-19 has not affected people equally. Women, low-income and racialized people are over-represented in the care sector, which has been hardest hit by the virus itself. Women and people of colour have also suffered a higher

proportion of job losses during the pandemic because these groups are over-represented in the low-wage service sector, where most layoffs happened.

More than three million Canadians were out of work due to the pandemic in April and our unemployment rate officially hit 13.7%, the highest rate since 1976. The Centre for Future Work, through the work of economist Jim Sanford, has calculated that the actual unemployment rate during the pandemic was a staggering 33%.

“At the height of the economic slowdowns, about 15% of our entire membership was on a layoff of some type, including about 20% in manufacturing,”

USW National Director Ken Neumann said in testimony to the federal Standing Committee on International Trade in July. Our union members in Quebec experienced a higher proportion of layoffs, as major industries where our members work were closed for several months. We have also seen layoffs in the forestry sector in District 3. In all areas, our union is working hard to secure supports and help get our members recalled to work where there have been layoffs.

USW Demands to Governments

Our union, the USW, was quick to call on the government for needed changes to the emergency support programs to ensure more workers could get support for lost income.

Neumann put pressure on the government directly by making a presentation (virtually) to the Standing Committee on Finance in May.

“Our union’s members work in every sector of the economy, from frontline health care workers to industrial and manufacturing workers, miners, security guards and university workers. Each of these sectors have been affected in different ways – from mass layoffs for some, to a desperate scramble for necessary PPE for our members on the front lines,” said Neumann.



Members of the Steelworkers helped build momentum for improvements to the emergency programs by signing on to our USW action and emailing our demands to federal and provincial politicians.

As the government listened closely to what corporations wanted, workers' and unions' voices were loud and important in the early days of the crisis. Our work paid off. Some of the government supports have been improved or extended.

The wage subsidy support that was initially proposed at just 10% was increased to 75%. Our union and our members can take credit for this enhancement – it was our collective voice that pushed to get this done to reduce layoffs and keep people working where possible.

Manufacturing Strategy Needed

As Neumann called for in the USW's parliamentary submission, it's time for a manufacturing strategy as part of the recovery.

Emerging from the current crisis will require a reversal of a manufacturing policy continued under consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments that has largely consisted of signing as many free-trade agreements as possible to secure markets for Canadian goods, while simultaneously looking to import the cheapest products available and outsource supply chains.

"This has not only left us unable to manufacture critical medical supplies during this pandemic,

it has left us with a weakened domestic manufacturing base and very precarious supply lines," Neumann said.

When it comes to planning and promoting manufacturing jobs here at home – Canadian governments have had no long-term vision.

As Mark Rowlinson, Assistant to the USW National Director, has argued in an article published by the Broadbent Institute, "It is long past time that Canada should address this problem. By focusing on an industrial growth strategy, governments can help to ensure that the economic recovery that follows the pandemic will be more durable, will create better jobs and, if we do it right, will help us meet our climate change targets."

In the recovery that is to come, government stimulus spending should come with conditions – immediate job creation, economic productivity and medium- and long-term investment.

Secondly, governments at all levels need to use the power of infrastructure spending and procurement to support

Canadian industry and maximize job creation in Canada.

"It is time to put a long-term industrial job creation strategy back on the domestic agenda," said Neumann



Better is Possible

As we reopen and look towards recovery, let's commit to doing better than "back to normal." If the government could support workers in a crisis, and extend those supports, why can't we make permanent progress?

"Temporary fixes must be changed into longer-term reforms, such as income supports to supplement EI, dramatic reforms to elder care, universal public pharmacare and universal, public child care," said Neumann.

In May, District 3 (Western Canada) issued a recovery plan

Illustrations by Corrina Keeling, @lovelettersforeverybody on Instagram, for JustRecoveryForAll.ca



calling for a focus on workers and communities first, and ensuring worker health and safety is a priority in the recovery. Read more at usw.ca/covidrecoveryd3.

The pandemic response has shown that governments do have the ability to invest in important social programs like income supports, wage subsidies, strengthening our health-care and long-term care systems, and ramping up public health.

As we plan for a recovery, we must take this opportunity to address persistent inequalities. We know that women, low-income and racialized workers have suffered job losses disproportionately. Emerging analysis is showing higher impacts in lower-income neighbourhoods that tend to be racialized. Unions and workers must use our collective strength to insist on fairness and equality

in the days ahead.

In a recovery, the USW is insisting on government action to produce permanent change so that we don't just go back to "normal", which is clearly not good enough. Here are some of the policies the USW will insist that governments implement to ensure workers benefit and have more stable protections in a recovery.

- Establish a National Manufacturing Strategy.
- Revise labour law to make it easier to join a union.
- Completely reform Employment Insurance.
- \$15 Minimum Wage with cost of living adjustment.
- Implement promise of 10 paid sick days.
- Invest in social infrastructure based in "caring economy."
- Resist austerity as the

economic response.

- Make long-term care public, while protecting worker security.
- Implement universal pharmacare.
- Implement accessible universal national child care.
- Guarantee status for migrant workers.
- Uphold Indigenous rights in partnership with Indigenous communities.
- Integrate climate change action into the recovery.
- Codify workers first in bankruptcy.
- Shift the tax burden by ending tax avoidance and bringing in a wealth tax.

This pandemic has shown that government can act to support economic security and social needs in a crisis. Government must now prove it can also deliver outside of a crisis. The jury's out on whether governments did enough, fast enough. But let's not retrench in recovery. Because better is possible for workers.

Focus on the Caring Economy

If we didn't know it before, we do now: our society does not place enough value on caring. Women and racialized workers are over-represented in paid caring work, at jobs that are lower-paid – as personal support workers, child-care workers and early-childhood educators, workers in long-term care and more. In recovery,

we must reform and improve the caring economy as well as education and housing.

Statistics Canada's June Labour Force Survey (LFS) reported that, "The labour market shock resulting from the COVID-19 economic shutdown has had an unequal impact on different groups of Canadians. In March and April, a disproportionate share of job loss was felt by youth, women and low-paid workers." The survey also noted that these same groups face a longer path to labour market recovery than others.

In recovery, governments turn to "shovel-ready" projects to stimulate the economy – which tend to be male-dominated construction jobs. That won't cut it for women or the caring economy. We can do better.

Child Care Essential to Return to Work

"There can be no recovery without a she-covey; and there can be no she-covey without child care," said economist Armine Yalnizyan, the Atkinson Fellow on the Future of Workers. "Without a nation-wide strategy for safe protocols for reopening schools and child-care facilities, we cannot fully redeploy our economic potential."

Steelworkers can help. Endorse the plan to save child care at childcareforall.ca.

Reform Long-term Care and Elder Care

Workers in long-term care – and there are thousands of members of the Steelworkers who work in this sector – have been raising the alarm about underfunding and staff shortages for years.

Our union is active in pushing for long-term care reform through our USW Health Care Council and in our work with the Canadian Health Coalition. Reforms must include increasing workers' wages in this sector so they aren't forced to work multiple jobs to make ends meet.

USW supports the NDP's leadership in calling for an end to for-profit long-term care homes. Let's raise the quality of care: make long-term care services public and bring them under the Canada Health Act.

Invest in Education

Controversy continues over reopening plans for schools this fall. Students need to be in class for learning and for social development, but also so parents can return to work. We need to invest more in education; teachers and parents are calling for funding for health and safety, PPE and additional educators so physically distanced classes can keep everyone safe.

Build Affordable Housing

We have fallen behind and lost decades of building affordable housing because Conservative and Liberal governments in the 1980s and '90s cut and cancelled funding for social housing. A true national housing strategy that includes affordable and supportive housing can be part of our infrastructure investments that support the she-recovery and the caring economy recovery that we need now. ■



Solidarity Against Racism

THIS SUMMER WAS A MOMENT OF PAIN AND ANGER, as racist incidents are killing Black and Indigenous people in Canada, as well as in the U.S. and around the world.

George Floyd was murdered at the hands of police in Minneapolis, Minn., in late May. Here in Canada, we are angered and heartbroken by the tragic deaths of Regis Korchinski-Paquet, D'Andre Campbell, Chantel Moore and Ejaz Choudry during encounters with police in their homes in Toronto; Brampton, Ont.; Edmundston, N.B.; and Mississauga, Ont.

Our union spoke out, condemning racism and police brutality. "Make no mistake, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism is systemic in Canada – it dates back hundreds of years and continues to influence every part of society – from the health care one receives at birth to schooling to access to employment to policing. It is very real and it is urgent that we work together to end it," said Ken Neumann, USW National Director.

Things we can do to end racism:

- Create a Human Rights Committee in your local or unit by using the mandate in the USW Constitution's Article VII, Section 12.
- Encourage your employer to commit to hiring more Black, Indigenous and people of colour.
- Work with and support organizations such as the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU).
- Stand up and speak out on your own against racist comments and jokes in our communities and workplaces.
- Be an ally to Black, Indigenous and workers of colour in your workplace.
- As a local union, contact your District Education Co-ordinator to find out how to hold online workshops on anti-racism. ■

In July, the USW held a solidarity rally for Steelworker Mark Austin and his partner Candace Zinkweg, who experienced a violent and racist attack while walking their dog in a Toronto park.

Mark, Recording Secretary for USW Local 1998, reached out to his union for support after police failed to press charges against the assailants who hurled racist attacks at Mark and kicked Candace in the head, causing a concussion.

The Steelworkers Toronto Area Council worked with local community groups and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) to pull together a physically distanced rally outside the local police division. We rallied the community around Mark to call for justice. Following the rally, the police reversed themselves and decided to press charges against the assailants.

The United Steelworkers stands for collective voice and action. There are things we can do – as a union and as individual union members – to work to end racism.





Lives Matter
#USWUnity

THE VERDICT IS IN: Unconstitutional Attacks on Unions Must End

STEELWORKERS HAVE PLAYED A KEY ROLE in a court challenge leading to the latest victory against unconstitutional attacks on workers' collective bargaining rights in Canada.

The USW is a member of the Partnership to Defend Public Services, representing 110,000 workers, that challenged legislation put forward by Manitoba's Conservative government to suppress public-sector workers' rights. The Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench ruled in June that the government's legislation was "a draconian measure" that violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. "The Steelworkers union is proud to be part of this important victory for the rights and freedoms of all

workers and for our democracy," said Stephen Hunt, USW Western Canada Director.

"Our union will continue to fight these bad, unconstitutional laws that infringe on workers' basic rights. Protecting the right to collective bargaining is crucial to defending good jobs and improving the working and living standards of all Canadians," Hunt said.

"The latest court ruling must finally signal the end of government attacks on workers' collective bargaining rights everywhere in our country," said USW National Director Ken Neumann.

"Over many years, our nation's courts – including the Supreme Court of Canada – have repeatedly struck down legislative efforts

by Liberal and Conservative governments to suppress the fundamental rights of Canadians to freedom of association and meaningful collective bargaining," Neumann said.

Steelworkers are now challenging Bill 124, anti-worker legislation imposed by Premier Doug Ford's Conservative government in Ontario. The USW is among more than 40 unions, representing 270,000 workers, that are pursuing the constitutional challenge.

"Bill 124 clearly violates collective bargaining rights and freedom of association that are guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms," said Marty Warren, USW Director for Ontario and Atlantic Canada.

"The Manitoba court ruling – and all the previous rulings that have upheld these fundamental rights – send a clear message to the Ford government that it should immediately repeal its own unconstitutional legislation," Warren said.

Previous court rulings should prompt governments across the country to change course and collaborate with the labour movement on a post-pandemic economic recovery program, said USW Quebec Director Dominic Lemieux.

"Governments must stop their anti-union attacks and instead work with labour organizations on measures to revive the economy," Lemieux said. ■



Myles Sullivan, Assistant to District 6 Director Marty Warren, speaking at a March 4 press conference on the Bill 124 court challenge at Queen's Park.

Got Your Back During COVID-19

Jagmeet Singh and the NDP

THE NDP DESERVES CREDIT for the many improvements made to our country's COVID-19 emergency response.

Jagmeet Singh and the NDP successfully pushed for the \$2,000-a-month Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) when the government was planning to rely on an inadequate Employment Insurance (EI) system that already leaves out 60% of our country's unemployed workers.

The NDP also pushed for a student benefit at the end of April as summer was approaching. Singh won an expansion of that benefit for students who are parents or for those with disabilities.

"In every moment of this crisis, the Liberal government's first impulse or first reaction was to leave people behind," said Singh. "Now they wanted to leave students behind, and we pushed them, and they've come some of the way."

Since before the pandemic, too many workers in Canada do not have access to any paid sick days at all.

To address this national failure, especially during a pandemic when working while sick can spread a fatal illness, Singh and the NDP won a key commitment from Prime Minister Justin

Trudeau to work towards 10 paid sick days a year for all workers. The NDP is continuing to push Trudeau to implement his commitment.

After rolling out CERB payments to workers in April, the government turned around and tried to bring in heavy-handed legislation that would impose fines and jail time on those assumed to be taking advantage of the CERB. The opposition parties, including the NDP, were united in opposing the legislation and Bill C-17 failed to get fast-tracked.

The NDP has exposed the Liberal government for its refusal to exclude companies with offshore tax havens – companies

that are avoiding paying taxes in Canada – from receiving emergency funding.

The NDP also deserves credit for achieving a \$300 one-time payment to seniors receiving Old Age Security, to help cover pandemic-related costs such as grocery delivery and drug dispensing fees that multiplied when pharmacies limited prescriptions to a 30-day supply.

Jagmeet Singh and the NDP caucus are punching above their weight by putting workers first during COVID-19. The NDP deserves recognition for making the minority government work for people during this ongoing crisis. ■





Steelworker André Desjardins Retires After 67 Years on the Job

André Desjardins recently walked through the doors of the CCR refinery in Montreal for the last time, 67 years after he first set foot in the plant as a wide-eyed teenager.

DURING A CAREER THAT BEGAN IN 1952 and spanned nearly seven decades, Steelworker André Desjardins saw his workplace and his union change dramatically. He witnessed the emergence of USW Local 6887, the advent of historic occupational health and safety legislation and the benefits of a union job.

At age 85, André recently walked through the doors of the CCR metal refinery in Montreal for the last time – 67 years after he first set foot in the massive plant as a wide-eyed teenager.

The Steelworkers are here!

In the early days, the refinery's workers belonged to a company union, with correspondingly poor working conditions. Things

changed in the mid-1960s, when workers sought real representation from the United Steelworkers, André recalls.

"Workers began to sign cards to bring in the Steelworkers. A vote was held under government supervision," he says. USW Local 6887 was born.

"When the Steelworkers came in, things started to change," says André.

Health and safety activist

In 1975, a tragic incident of arsenic poisoning in the refinery killed two workers and injured many others. The tragedy occurred after a laboratory engineer had asked the plant manager to implement a process to prevent arsenic

fumes from escaping into the plant. The request was rejected as too expensive, André remembers. The company was criminally charged, but the case was abandoned after the plant manager died.

The tragedy prompted André to become a health and safety activist, a role he would embrace for decades. During those early days he witnessed the creation of Quebec's Occupational Health and Safety Act – legislation that he would strictly enforce in the plant to protect his co-workers.

As a USW health and safety prevention officer, he inspected the refinery and spoke directly with workers on a daily basis. He implemented an official process for complaints to be filed and



addressed with management.

"I went to see the plant manager and I put my cards on the table: if you respect the laws and regulations, you won't have a problem with me," he says. "We made a lot of changes."

The union: always a need

As he leaves the only job he ever had, André is certain of one thing – workers need unions as much as they did back in the day.

"It's quieter and safer than it was in the old days, but make no mistake – the union must absolutely be there. It's what allows the wealth that we create to be shared."

At 85, André is leaving those battles to younger generations. After decades of work and union activism, he plans to enjoy retirement in the country with his partner. ■

Jean Gérin-Lajoie

Pioneer of Quebec's Labour Movement

JEAN GÉRIN-LAJOIE, one of the great pioneers of Quebec trade unionism and the first Quebec director of the United Steelworkers to be elected by members, passed away in July at age 92.

Gérin-Lajoie served as Steelworkers Quebec Director from 1965 to 1981 and Quebec Federation of Labour Vice-President from 1959 to 1981. His union activism began as a 19-year-old worker at Montreal Cottons in Valleyfield, Que. As well as ascending to the highest echelons of Quebec's labour movement, he was a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford and earned a PhD in economics from McGill University.

"He greatly helped to build and bring structure to our union, the labour movement and the world of work as a whole. He has left us an immense legacy," said USW Quebec Director Dominic Lemieux.

"The Steelworkers union is extremely privileged to have been able to count on a man of such great skill and humanity over so many years," Lemieux said.

For more than two decades, Gérin-Lajoie was the labour movement's lead representative on a high-profile council that advised the Quebec government on labour relations policy. He contributed to legislation introduced by five different governments, including Quebec's first meaningful labour laws, the creation of its labour board, implementation of a minimum wage law, anti-discrimination legislation, occupational health and safety legislation and labour reforms which facilitated union certification and produced anti-scab legislation.

He published two books on Quebec Steelworkers history and in 1985 he was made a Knight of the National Order of Quebec, one of only four trade unionists to receive the province's highest honour. ■





McIntyre Powder A Breakthrough for Victims

Janice Martell (McIntyre Powder Project founder), Heather Potvin, Linda O'Neill, Trevor Schell, Cheryl Rook, Dave Wilken (all with OHCOW) and Sylvia Boyce (USW District 6 Health, Safety and Environment Co-ordinator).

I am incredibly grateful to everyone who stood up for this fight, and my deepest thanks go to the USW for their consummate support and solidarity.

- Janice Hobbs Martell

YEARS OF ADVOCACY by the USW and trailblazing activist Janice Hobbs Martell have achieved a breakthrough for workers and families victimized by the devastating health effects of the use of McIntyre Powder in industrial workplaces.

In June, Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) finally recognized that Parkinson's Disease is a direct result of exposure to McIntyre Powder. The aluminum-based inhalant was used between 1943 and 1979 in mines and

other industries. The theory, eventually proved false, was that inhaling the powder would protect workers' lungs from silica dust.

"This a victory we have been fighting to win for many years," USW District 6 Director Marty Warren said of the WSIB's recognition that McIntyre Powder resulted in occupational disease.

"This means workers' claims for compensation may finally be met," Warren said. "It's a significant step toward justice for elderly and sick retirees.

However, for some families this news comes too late, as many afflicted workers have passed away. For these families, the victim's Estate can file claims on behalf of their loved ones."

The USW and Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) have long supported the McIntyre Powder Project, founded and led by Martell. Martell has spent years gathering evidence on the health of exposed miners, including her father, Jim Hobbs, who died with Parkinson's Disease in 2017.

"Every worker is somebody's Jim Hobbs. Every worker has a family who loves them. Every time the WSIB makes a decision on another worker's claim, I want them to remember my dad's name," Martell said following the WSIB decision in June.

"I am incredibly grateful to everyone who stood up for this fight, and my deepest thanks go to the USW for their consummate support and solidarity," she said.

Martell and the USW are continuing the McIntyre Powder Project's activism, calling on workers' compensation boards across Canada to recognize the link between Parkinson's and McIntyre Powder. The project also is advocating for greater research into the association between McIntyre Powder and lung diseases, cancers and cardiovascular conditions.

"There is unfinished business in this fight for justice," Warren said. ■

USW Efforts Help Women's Shelter Open Doors

JESSIE'S HOUSE has finally opened its doors. The domestic violence shelter and resource centre in Morinville, Alta. – the first emergency shelter built in Alberta in 22 years – wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and fundraising of USW members.

Jessica Martel was murdered by her domestic partner in 2009, in part because there were no shelter beds available when she wanted to leave her abusive relationship.

Ray White, President of USW Local 1-207 in Edmonton, started raising funds for the Jessica Martel Foundation at District 3's 2016 Edmonton conference. Steelworkers have been raising funds and securing materials and furniture for the project ever since.

The local's Women of Steel committee played a pivotal role in getting the shelter off the ground, including tireless fundraising and advocacy by USW 1-207's Ivana Niblett.



Steelworkers toured Jessie's House in the final stages of construction in 2019.

USW District 3 and Local 1944 also raised thousands of dollars for the cause over the years.

"This was truly a team effort," said White. "I have never been prouder to be a Steelworker"

Jessie's House includes a room dedicated to the union for its many contributions called the United Steelworkers Women of Steel Suite. ■

Cruel Lockout at Black Cat Wear Parts

USW LOCAL 9074-12 members were shut out of the Black Cat Wear Parts plant in Selkirk, Man., on June 19, after the company rejected the union's proposal for a two-year wage freeze. USW members make blades and shovels for excavators, earthmovers and snow clearing.

"We made a very reasonable offer and showed clearly that the union was at the table to bargain, but Black Cat decided to lock us out instead of negotiating," said USW Area Co-ordinator Tony Sproule.

The Black Cat lockout was a "slap in the face," after the company praised workers for their commitment during COVID-19. ■



Members of USW Local 9074-12, cruelly locked out by Black Cat Wear Parts in Selkirk, Man.

Saskatchewan Votes: Oct. 26

THE SASKATCHEWAN ELECTION is Monday, Oct. 26. Ryan Mieli's NDP hopes to unseat Scott Moe's Saskatchewan Party by putting people first.

Two Steelworkers are candidates for the NDP: **Jennifer Bowes** (Local 5917) and **Malik Draz** (Local 2014). ■

Humanity Fund Supports Wo

STEELWORKERS HUMANITY FUND (SHF) support has been critical for workers and communities in Asia, Latin America and Africa reeling from the impacts of COVID-19 for several months.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has left workers and entire communities to fend for themselves. The support we provide helps to give people a chance to overcome this acute crisis,” said Humanity Fund President Ken Neumann.

Humanity Fund support for organizations responding to the crisis includes:

- \$50,000 to the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity

The SHF has helped provide food baskets to thousands of Bangladeshi garment workers fired during the pandemic. The SHF and USW are working with other organizations to pressure Canadian clothing brands and the Canadian government to protect the women who have been making our clothes throughout the crisis and to build a sustainable garment industry that pays its workers living wages.

- Contributions of \$15,000 in Mexico and Colombia

The SHF, with the support of several USW Quebec locals and other Quebec organizations,

helped Mexico’s Frente Autentico del Trabajo (FAT) provide personal protective equipment and food baskets for garbage recycling workers facing the dilemma of exposing themselves and their families to COVID-19 or going hungry.

In Colombia’s Department of El Cesar, 250 families victimized by paramilitary forces and facing food insecurity have received food baskets from SHF partner Corporación Trabajadores por la Tierra.

- Contributions of \$37,690 in Guatemala, Peru, Liberia and Zimbabwe



Workers Affected by COVID-19

The support we provide helps to give people a chance to overcome this acute crisis.

– **Humanity Fund President Ken Neumann**

SHF partner ASDENA has distributed food baskets to peasant families in Guatemala's Chimaltenango area and raised awareness of the impact of COVID-19 and governmental lockdown measures. In the country's capital, CAFNIMA is providing food rations for the duration of the crisis to 400

families of informal recycling workers and safe child care for children of parents forced to work.

In Peru, Asociación Quisca is supporting a community radio station broadcasting public health information in the Amazon, as well as human rights groups documenting the dire

situation of the Kukama Indigenous people.

In Liberia, SHF funds are supporting Camp for Peace Liberia's farmers' school as well as marginalized groups living on the fringes of the country's capital.

In Zimbabwe, SHF funds are helping the Zimbabwe Labour Centre develop digital educational materials on workers' health, employment rights and fair wages, as well as online workshops for 1,000 workers. ■

Steelworkers Humanity Fund contributions have been critical in supporting workers and communities in Asia, Latin America and Africa reeling from the impacts of COVID-19, including Bangladeshi garment workers assisted by the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity.





Local Unions Stay Connected

Members of the Steelworkers held a physically distanced ratification meeting in Alma, Que., on July 10 (before mask-wearing indoors became mandatory in Quebec), with members safely apart from each other while local leadership presented the new contract via video link.

WHEN WE CAN'T MEET IN PERSON with members, co-workers and employers, we can still continue to do the work of our union – remotely and often online.

We must recognize that not everyone is comfortable with or has access to technology. While most of us use mobile phones, not everyone has a home computer.

Education and Conferences

From information webinars to online conferences, the USW has been bringing members together virtually. The union held an online Steel Conference over two days in May for members in the steel sector.

Our national office convened an online gathering for Women of Steel, as well as webinars on government support programs, mental health workshops and a recorded session on how to support targets of domestic violence.

The USW's districts held online workshops and webinars for

members on a variety of topics, starting with health and safety.

Some of these sessions are available on the USW's YouTube channel: [youtube.com/uswmetallos](https://www.youtube.com/uswmetallos).

Remote Arbitrations

Since the arrival of the pandemic, arbitrators in all jurisdictions have been holding virtual arbitrations via online platforms such as Zoom. The challenge has been developing the protocols to hear witness testimony and submit evidence. Our union has been on the forefront, training staff in online methods for preparing and presenting. As lockdown restrictions are lifted, in-person arbitrations are resuming in some areas.

Remote Bargaining and Mediation

During the height of the pandemic, some USW bargaining and mediation did take place remotely. In April, members of USW Local 8327, workers at Power Precast Solutions in Ottawa, held a virtual meeting to review their tentative agreement, and voted electronically to

approve it. As restrictions ease, physically distanced in-person sessions may resume.

Organizing

Our union has run remote organizing campaigns at workplaces where employees are interested in forming a union and joining the United Steelworkers. Organizers have reached out to potential union members by phone, Facebook and text and held online meetings. The electronic signing of union cards is a recent innovation. Some labour boards have yet to accept electronic union cards.

Union Meetings

The USW Education Department is developing an online workshop for local unions on how to hold online meetings including how to adapt the executive roles to an online setting, how to take votes and how to apply rules of order. USW local unions can request the workshop through their District Education Co-ordinator.

Find helpful hints for making virtual meetings more accessible at [usw.ca/covid19](https://www.usw.ca/covid19). ■



USW Lobbies VIRTUALLY

Zooming for Steel and Forestry

WHEN USW MEMBERS MEET with Members of Parliament (MPs), it usually happens on Parliament Hill. Meetings

are set up and take place in MPs' offices, in cafeterias, sometimes even in Ottawa bars. Our members are invited to

receptions and political party caucus meetings, and some appear before committees and tribunals. But not in 2020.

USW had major Forestry and Steel lobbying campaigns planned for this past spring, that have had to go virtual. Enter the Zoom meeting.

Forestry Is for Everyone

Our Forestry Is for Everyone campaign (forestryisforeveryone.ca) is to deal with the crisis in forestry, caused in part by the lingering softwood lumber dispute with the U.S. and to promote Employment Insurance (EI) reforms for this wildly cyclical industry.

Our plans, including an appearance before the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, had to incorporate online meetings.

Since June, dozens of MPs from forestry communities have met with USW members and staff. USW Wood Council Chair Jeff Bromley is pleased with the response so far.

"I am happy to report that meetings have been met with general support and interest," says Bromley. "MPs are beginning to understand the need to reform EI, and we have received positive feedback on ending the softwood lumber dispute – the unfinished business of the new Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA).

"We have stressed that the concept of loan guarantees to forestry companies – equalling 75% of the amount they have

paid in duties to the U.S. – must be accompanied by conditions that companies use such guarantees to build back the industry in Canada, with jobs for Canadian workers."

Bromley adds that USW forestry members have been on many of the calls with MPs.

Our members have been seriously short-changed by an EI system that works against them, not for them.

**- Jeff Bromley,
USW Wood Council Chair**

"Their first-hand accounts are critical to showing how the extremes of boom-and-bust in the forestry sector have been felt in communities, and how our members have been seriously short-changed by an EI system that works against them, not for them," he said.

"Despite paying into the system all their working lives, they find they cannot access it when times are tough. That's not 'insurance,' that's 'injury.'"

An example of success is a letter from Ontario NDP MP Carol Hughes (Algoma–Manitoulin–Kapusking) urging Natural Resources Minister Seamus O'Regan and Industry Minister Navdeep Bains to carry out the measures called for by USW and ensure the future of forestry.

"Forestry is a large employer in my riding," Hughes said. "Such measures would certainly help the industry and employees in my riding and throughout Canada."

Stand Up for Steel

Our Stand Up for Steel campaign (usw.ca/standupforsteel) was expected to begin with a conference in Ottawa of about 100 delegates from the union's steel industry locals from across the country, followed by several days of in-person meetings with federal MPs on Parliament Hill.

Instead, the conference took place entirely on Zoom, and meetings are being scheduled with MPs, with USW activists taking the lead in setting up those meetings.

"This is a project that will involve more people over a longer period," says USW National Director Ken Neumann. "With enthusiasm and time, it can be a true union-building activity that will show that Steelworkers can have influence and impact despite the limitations of the pandemic."

USW activists lobbying to "Stand Up For Steel" are asking MPs to support the union's four core demands:

- Ensure unions have the right to initiate trade cases.
- Expand the definition of "material injury" in trade cases.

- Establish a carbon border adjustment on imported steel.
- Demand the use of Canadian-made steel in infrastructure projects.

“Basic steel production in Canada provides close to 125,000 direct and indirect jobs to Canadian workers and communities, but we have faced a lot of challenges,” says Neumann.

“First, we have the issue of foreign ownership. We no longer have a Canadian-owned-and-operated steel company in Canada. For decades our union has been advocating for a stronger Investment Canada Act, but Liberal and Tory governments have not made the necessary changes, placing us in the situation we have now.”

Workers confront unfair trading practices

Similar to the aluminum sector, foreign ownership and trade issues are the big challenge for our members in the steel sector.

“No industry in Canada has been more exposed to unfair trading practices than the steel industry,” he says. “Historically, in Canada, unlike in the U.S., unions have never had the right to participate in trade cases.

“However, after years of work by our union, the federal government finally introduced amendments to expand the ability of unions to participate in trade cases in 2018. We have been actively involved in 17 trade cases directly related to the steel industry, with very good results,

due in part to witness statements made by USW activists to the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT).

“This lobby in 2020 is an extension of that work. Among other things, we demand the right to initiate – not just participate in – trade cases. We also want projects in this country to be built with Canadian-made steel. No self-respecting Canadian Member of Parliament should disagree with that.”

Neumann says in 2020, the bottom line is that using technology, and the direct involvement of USW activists in forestry and steel, means that the fight for good jobs in two key economic sectors is underway across Canada. ■

Members in the steel sector and USW staff held a two-day conference over Zoom in May to prepare for virtual lobbying of MPs to “Stand Up For Steel”.



9490 **Labour peace secured at Alma plant**

Local 9490 members at Rio Tinto Alcan's aluminum smelter in Alma, Que., ratified a four-year contract in July to replace a previous agreement that was set to lapse due to the company abandoning plans for a billet production facility. The local union agreed to reopen its collective agreement in 2018, conditional on investments in the billet-production plant. The agreement was set to lapse in December, leading to new negotiations. Issues such as wages and pensions were not affected by the developments and were not subject to the negotiations. Gains in the new contract include contracting-out language that brings jobs back into the bargaining unit, as well as improved conditions for security workers and firefighters. The local union cited an improved labour relations climate at the smelter, where workers endured a six-month lockout in 2012.

2009 **Forestry agreements follow B.C. industry pattern**

USW Local 2009 won new, five-year contracts at several wood products facilities in the British Columbia Lower Mainland, including Interfor Acorn sawmill, CIPA Lumber, Haida Forest Products and the Stella Jones and Kanaka Creek pole plants. The local bargained each collective agreement separately, but was able to secure terms similar to the coastal forest industry pattern set with Western Forest Products. The new agreements include wage increases, improvements in health and welfare benefits and decreased LTD premiums for over 300 members at the five mills located along the Fraser River. "Our members in the Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley region have benefited greatly by the sacrifices made by our USW Local 1-1937 brothers and sisters who stood strong in the seven-and-a-half-month strike against WFP for a fair collective agreement on Vancouver Island," said USW Wood Council Chair Jeff Bromley.

7175-08 **Municipal firefighters continue to improve conditions**

Municipal firefighters in the southern Ontario community of Port Hope continue to improve their conditions, five years after negotiating their first collective agreement. The latest contract between Local 7175-08 and the Municipality of Port Hope, covering dozens of volunteer firefighters, includes total wage increases of 10%, as well as language improvements.

2020 **Labour stability at explosives manufacturer**

Local 2020 members at Orica Canada, a Sudbury, Ont., manufacturer of explosives and blasting systems used in the mining industry, reached a three-year collective agreement providing total wage increases of 6%. Other gains included language improvements, shift premium increases and a \$1,750 signing bonus.

9278 **USW agreement includes temporary foreign workers**

A six-year contract ratified by Local 9278 at ATIS Portes et Fenêtres Laflamme, a window and door manufacturer southwest of Quebec City, includes provisions covering members who are temporary foreign workers. The 180 members negotiated a new wage grid that increases first-year pay by 12.5%, to be followed by total increases of 16.25% over the remainder of the contract. The deal also improves shift premiums and modifies work schedules to promote work-family balance and improve the job-transfer process.

7580 **Talc miners absorb improvements**

A three-year contract provides numerous gains for members working at the Penhorwood Mine operated by Imerys Talc southwest of Timmins, Ont. The agreement includes 6% total wage increases as well as improvements in travel allowances, shift premiums, work boot allowances, vacation entitlement, tool allowances and union leaves, as well as a new provision for company-paid doctors' notes.

7106 **Community Living workers secure benefits plan**

Employees of the Association for Community Living in Flin Flon, Man., achieved a breakthrough with a health and welfare benefits plan funded entirely by the employer. The plan includes benefits such as extended health, drug and dental coverage, employee and dependent life insurance, long-term disability insurance and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. The two-year deal also provides the members of Local 7106 with annual wage hikes of 40 cents an hour.

5442 **Gerdau members overcome COVID challenges**

Steel mill workers at the Gerdau Manitoba plant in Selkirk, Man., achieved a new contract after overcoming severe challenges presented by employer demands and COVID-related restrictions affecting the bargaining process as well as regular workplace operations. The three-year agreement includes a \$1,250 signing bonus and wage increases of 2% while also protecting a cost-of-living allowance that will increase wages further over the contract's term. Language changes included improvements related to training for new job postings, union orientation and apprenticeships.

7065 **Quebec sawmill members achieve first contract**

New USW members at Scierie St-Fabien, near Rimouski, Que., negotiated a first contract that provides total wage increases of 7.1% over three years for the sawmill workers. The collective agreement establishes strong language provisions, including clear job classifications based on duties and responsibilities and improved health and safety protections.

8964 **Foundry workers cast gains in new contract**

The 80 USW members at Fonderie Laperle in Saint-Ours in Quebec's Montérégie region negotiated a five-year contract with total wage increases ranging from \$4 to \$4.30 an hour. The foundry workers, who manufacture road castings and utility covers and frames, also improved their retirement plan, shift premiums, benefits and language on training, subcontracting and job descriptions.

1-1937 **Sawmill agreement recognizes Indigenous culture**

Local 1-1937 members at Skeena Sawmills in Terrace, B.C., reached a 4½-year agreement providing several gains as well as provisions recognizing the cultural needs of Indigenous employees. The contract, retroactive to Jan. 1, 2020, aligns wages and benefits with other industry agreements and provides improved contracting-out language.

8748-05 **Machine shop members resist concessions, win gains**

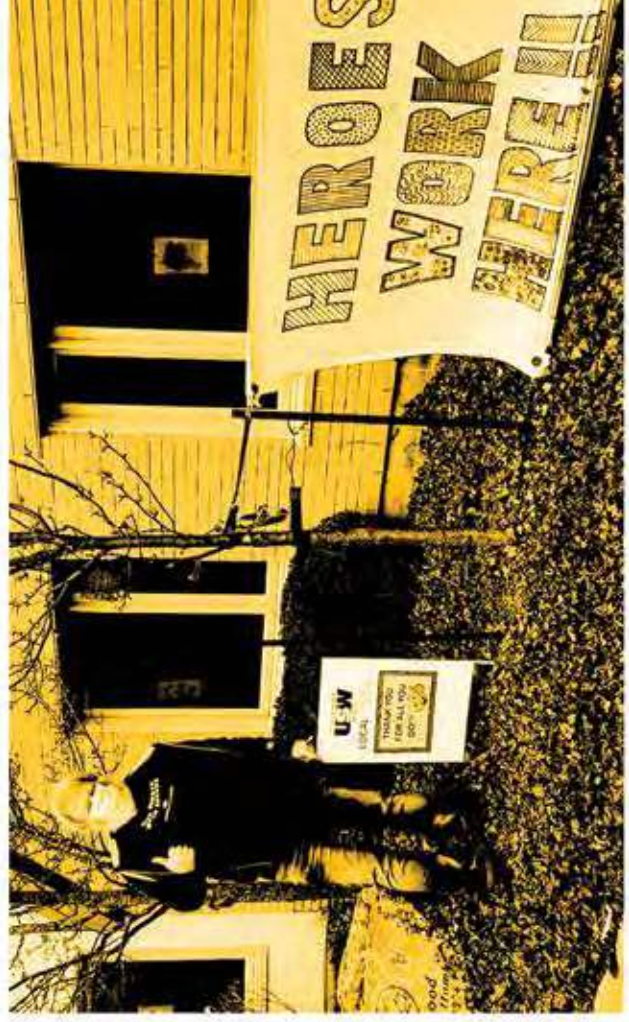
Members at Soo Foundry and Machine in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., resisted concessions and won several improvements in a five-year contract. The agreement includes annual wage hikes totalling 10%, pensions contribution increases and improvements to contract language, travel allowances, vision care and boot allowances.

7287 **Flooring workers' deal covers widespread gains**

Members at Planchers Mistral, a hardwood flooring manufacturer in Jonquière in Quebec's Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, ratified a four-year contract providing wage increases of \$1.25 for the first year, 2% in the second year and 3.5% for each of the following two years. Other wide-ranging improvements include four additional floating holidays, increased bonuses, additional paid leave for a health and safety representative, a new time bank, a bereavement leave extension and an increased work boot allowance.

Thank you!

To all our Steelworkers members who are essential and frontline workers, thank you for keeping us safe and keeping our country going. #USWWorks #USWCares





Merci!

À tous les membres des Métallos qui sont des travailleuses et travailleurs essentiels et de première ligne, merci d'assurer notre sécurité et de permettre au pays de tenir le coup.

#MétallosSontLà

