

## Preserving our History at Government House



Brother Scott overseeing the chandelier inventory

### GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Vancouver Island is rich in history and the capital is full of iconic buildings. Many of the buildings in Victoria were built by pioneering crafts during the dawn of the oldest Island Building Trades Unions, or even prior to. Located on the traditional territory of the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, BC's Government House is one of these momentous buildings. This 36-acre property located in the Rockland neighborhood functions as the office and residence of BC's Lieutenant Governor and serves as the ceremonial home of all British Columbians.

There has been three versions of the Government House, the first originally built in 1859 and known as Cary Castle. The "People's House" has burnt to the ground twice; the first time in 1899. The second Government House, a Tudor style building, was designed by renowned architects Francis Rattenbury (who designed the Empress Hotel and BC's Legislative Buildings), and Samuel Maclure (who designed Hatley Castle for James Dunsmuir). They came together to design the second building which opened in

1903; but, after 54 years, it also succumbed to fire. The last, and current structure, officially opened in 1959 and was completed by John Laing & Sons using the Rattenbury/Maclure design, Thomis Electric Charge-hand Brother Dylan B. says,

*"It has been amazing to work in such a beautiful and historic location. The house has presented many unique challenges and it has been an incredible learning experience for myself and the Thomis team. We are working hard to update the house to modern electrical and fire alarm standards."*

When you consider the history of the building, it is truly amazing that Local 230 members from Thomis Electric are performing extensive upgrades and renovations to Government House. The team has worked on new distribution, lighting, security, and data and fire protection for the building. These are incredibly important improvements to continue the preservation of our provincial history.



Brother Tyler working on fire suppression upgrades

**Volume 2: 2021**

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### Member's Dues Autodeposit

To send dues payments via e-Transfer, just email dues@ibew230.org

Remember to include your name and IBEW \* card number in the e-Transfer "message" section

\*Note: your card number is printed on your yellow dues receipt

### News & Notes

Due to multiple variants of COVID-19 and increased cases, our office doors remain locked to reduce the risk of transmission through the office. Our staff continue to work regular hours and are able to assist you by phone, by email, or in-person outside our office doors. Please note that we require you to wear a mask and be sure to dress accordingly for the weather if you plan on visiting either office.

### Upcoming Training:

Sep 11/21	Code Update		ONLINE
Oct 30/21	Code Update		ONLINE
Nov 10/21	Code Update		ONLINE
Dec 18/21	Code Update		ONLINE

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# Business Manager's Report



Phil Venoit, Business Manager/Financial Secretary

## COVID-19 & SICK PAID LEAVE

COVID-19 continues to have a deep physical and emotional impact on our members and the public in general. The Delta variant is of the greatest concern at this point, still infecting people by the minute and reaching 5 million deaths globally, and many countries aren't reporting or are under-reporting their dead from this virus. Although, there are a number of positive gains to lift our spirits like having the vaccines (although with varying efficacies), and a significant number of people (on the Island) are getting vaccinated. Unfortunately, we are a tourist "town" and sooner or later our (tourist) border will re-open, returning cruise ships and ferry passengers from all over the world to our Island bringing with them a boat load of COVID. That is why it is important to heed the science and the health experts (this does NOT include your fave pop-star, celebrity, politician, FB friends, or QAnon social planner). Vaccines will not stop you from getting COVID, they are intended to help soften the blow. The same way wearing a hard hat will not stop you from getting hit in the head, it's designed to "soften the blow" to help you from ending up in the hospital with a serious brain injury or on a ventilator.

After the past year and a half with C-19, the BC NDP is developing a new model for a Paid Sick Leave Program that will protect all workers. They are seeking input from workers and employers on sick leave programs before they launch a province-wide model. I am strongly urging you to participate in the first phase of engagement and provide your feedback in an attempt to gain sick leave for all workers in BC. You can find the surveys via the link below:

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/paidsickleave/>

The online surveys will close on September 14.

## THE CANADIAN BUILDING TRADES UNIONS

The **Canadian Building Trades Unions** has finished up their Indigenous Cultural Awareness Program and ABM McGregor and I, have started the first class rolled-out in Canada. At this time there are five modules being contemplated, and we have signed up to beta-test the first three modules. Hopefully, we get to a time and place where we can bring out the instructor to put this on for our Stewards and Executive Board in 2022.

I spent a day with some **BC Building Trades** Business Managers providing a Construction 101 for 46 provincially elected/re-elected MLAs to explain who we are, what our members do every day to build BC, and to explain what we need this year with Skilled Trades Certification, Asbestos, Awareness Training, more CBA projects and how we contribute to every community throughout BC. We contributed to a Building Trades White Paper in 2002 to the Provincial Government on Labour Code Changes for Construction to make organizing easier. BC has not had a review of the Labour Code focused on construction since 1992. Any real positive changes were repealed by the BC Liberals in the first months after winning the Provincial Election in 2002. BC is the only province in Canada without specific and comprehensive construction provisions.

The BC Building Trades **Get Flushed Campaign** kicked off April 21. Please sign the online petition, there seems to be a lot of non-construction trolls that think construction workers deserve much less than the honey buckets we have today. Be patient with these cantankerous COVID couch characters and attempt to be educative in your experiences. While I get this can be difficult, please, please, please try to kill them all with kindness.

I will be sitting on the **Underground Economy Working Group** starting up. It was 1997 when I walked into the Courtenay Employment Standards Office with the proof that began bankrupting Trilec Installations, the largest non-union electrical contractor on Vancouver Island. A few months later, I walked into the Victoria Employment Office with proof to launch complaints against six Victoria based non-union companies, and when I sat down with the new ES agent, after about five minutes she got up and walked out the door without saying a word.

After sitting for five minutes alone, the Manager came in to ask what I said to her because she just left on stress leave. Turned out she was the wife of one of the company owners, and now she would have to declare herself in conflict with the investigation and explain why (that she married a crook) to her new employer in the first week on the job. That same year, I walked into the Nanaimo Employment Standards Office with the proof that three contractors working on the Duke Point Ferry Terminal were cooking their books, which served as the catalyst to audit the entire project. Sixty-eight contractors! This was the biggest provincial audit of a construction project in the history of BC, which took them two years. Payroll fraud runs rampant throughout the construction industry and we cannot leave the crooks in our industry to continue to go unchecked and expect them to change on their own. The BC Liberals enacted laws to stop us from what we were doing and the NDP have repealed those barriers. So, we need to go at this with vigor and show the government, the public, and the world how corrupt some of these contractors are. If we leave them alone, we will have to find a way to compete against them.

**The Island Metal Trades** Managers had a meeting with Victoria Shipyard Manager, Joe O'Rourke, to hear about the state of the industry heading into the next few years, and let's not be fooled with a report on the downturn in work leading into negotiations. The marine work picture doesn't look that horrible with an LNG conversion project and the beginning of *"end of life"* frigate refits beginning next year.

## HEALTH & WELFARE

At our construction private shipyard and motor winder health & welfare meeting with DA Townley, we did a cost analysis (like we always do) on Long-Term Disability (LTD). We passed a motion to bump the LTD monthly amount from \$1,500 to \$1,750 for any new debilitating injury, disease, or condition that would medically impair a member from working. Remember, this benefit is only valid until the beneficiary reaches the age of 65. Many other unions abandoned LTD on their plans due to the associated high costs. The IBEW Trustees decided to make sure we found the ability to take care of our members to at least continue to help them in months or years of difficult health, instead of abandoning them.

# Skilled Trades Certification

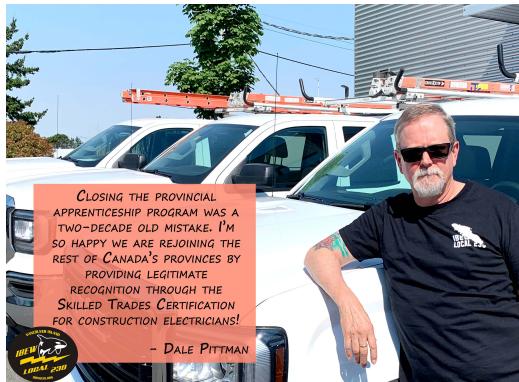
## BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

### CONTINUED: BURSARY COMMITTEE

We continue to monitor the revenues and expenses on the pay-out of the apprentice's bursaries without the requirement of attending union meetings. I feel comfortable in saying we should be able to continue this benefit model throughout the balance of the pandemic which is what is prohibiting our Union Meetings, or at least until spring next year. We had our inaugural **NETCO OASIS Committee Meeting**. OASIS is a program we are developing for the Federal Government in partnership with Sask-Polytech to allow all apprentices throughout the country to be able to use an online portal to manage and account for their time and tasks associated to their apprenticeship. This will help all apprentices regardless of what craft or province they work and live in.

### A SKILLED TRADES CERTIFICATION RED SEAL IS NOT RED TAPE

BC's Premier announced that Skilled Trades Certification is an important government initiative, and will be introduced in the coming months for 10 Skilled Trades. British Columbia had 11 "compulsory" trades, originally introduced in the mid-70's by the Social Credit government as "Designated Trades". Then in 2003 the BC Liberal government was duped into believing that "Red Seal" was synonymous with "red tape" and quashed the "compulsory" requirement deregulating the Province's Apprenticeship system.



Shop Steward, Island Temperature Controls

The new Skilled Trades Certification will legally require workers in 10 specific trades to go through a standard training program known as an "apprenticeship" to work in their chosen trade.

BC is currently the only province in Canada without compulsory trade certification for electricians. Compulsory certification will instill confidence again in investors looking to build in BC. Less liability for employers results in safer construction sites and fewer customer complaints, which lower insurance premiums, and a higher level of respect for our trades. These outcomes justify higher wages - something we could all use to set down roots and a family.

Three of ten trades being designated are; Construction Electrician, Industrial Electrician,

and Power Line Technician. So, you can see the IBEW in BC have some skin in this game.

Requiring workers plying our craft to do an apprenticeship and learn WHY they do what they do. The first part of the consultative process is over, and we knocked it out of the park. We put together concise and focused groups, so every time the government had meetings Local 230 was in attendance.

Local 230 has put together a Social Media Campaign including testimonials by our membership on the importance of the standard Red Seal training and the new Skilled Trades Certification. This has not gone unnoticed by government.

What's next? Here's where we need **YOU!**

The second phase to this important piece, is deciding on "Apprentice Ratios" and "Scope of Work." And to provide feedback on these very important last two remaining pieces, I'm urging you to do your part, in protecting our trade. Apprentices deserve the direct supervision of a Journey electrician, or P.L.T. to oversee their progress and pass on experiences and understanding of our trades.

**One to one, because mentor-ship matters.**

Please take the time to fill out the survey at:

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/skilledtrades/>

Survey closes early fall

## Canadian Federal Election 2021

2019 FEDERAL ELECTION RESULTS



### PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU CALLS SNAP ELECTION

On Sunday, August 15th, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called for a snap election, which will take place September 20th, 2021. Trudeau's reason for a snap election is to give Canadians a say, "during this crucial time," in how the country should proceed and recover in a "post-pandemic" era. We are just two weeks away from voting day and the Conservatives are closing in on the gap between them and the Liberals. Currently, Canada has a minority Liberal government comprised of 155 Liberal seats, 119 Conservative seats, 32 Bloc, 24 NDP, 5 Independent, 2 Green and 1 vacant seat.

Federal leaders and their parties only have the minimum allotted time to campaign (36 days) and many do not have a full or detailed platform out yet. To help you understand what is at stake this election, I will explain our political composition here on Vancouver Island, highlight what happened in the past under Harper's Conservative government, and explain what's changed under Trudeau's current Liberal government. I will also do my best to give you an open and honest review of how each major party will affect your work, your Union - in other words - your livelihood as an IBEW 230 member.

What the pandemic taught us, is that we could not have prevailed without our front-line workers, which include several unions. I'm talking about healthcare workers (nurses, residential care workers, food service workers, labourers, janitors, etc.), construction workers (electricians, carpenters, sheet metal, etc.), teachers and educational workers, utility workers, railway and transport workers, public and private shipyard workers, and the list goes on. We also heavily depended on our service workforce known for minimum wage and no benefits, such as cashiers, servers, fast-food workers, delivery drivers, etc. We need a government that is committed to protecting workers because this will not be the last pandemic, nor the last economic downturn.

We saw how crucial health benefits were like Sick Paid Leave, and many of our members and their families were kept afloat thanks to CERB. These are assistance programs that propelled our economy through the worst. I have been following the polls daily since the election announcement. At the start, the Liberals held a strong minority lead, followed closely by the Conservatives. However, recently the Conservatives have gained immense support and are now leading past the Liberals in the polls. I am not writing about the election to tell you who to vote for, but rather to tell you that you **should** vote and **how** your ballot could affect your work. We have made so many positive gains as a Union, and we have a lot at stake in this election with the Conservatives making a comeback.

### BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF VAN ISLE

The Island is largely NDP with only 2 out of the 7 ridings represented by another party. Saanich-Gulf Islands and Nanaimo-Ladysmith are Green. This year, our poll research shows that the NDP Party will continue to have strong support on the Island. Saanich/Gulf Islands will most likely remain green, while Nanaimo-Ladysmith could be flipped to NDP, and Victoria could be flipped to Liberal.

# Canadian Federal Election 2021



Left to right: Erin O'Toole, Conservatives; Jagmeet Singh, NDP; Justin Trudeau, Liberals; Annamie Paul, Greens

While the Island is expected to stay NDP strong, we know there is no chance they'll be having an election win. In a Liberal minority government, we saw that the NDP had strength and leverage which led to many positive changes for workers. As always, I urge you to gather information on your local candidates to make the best informed decision you can. Do not be fooled by cyber garbage and don't believe everything you see on social media. People will use anything as ammunition which may have nothing to do with the parties' policies. Think of the next four, ten, or even twenty years in terms of your safety, health, job security, and family.

## LIBERAL PARTY

Since the Liberal government took over leadership in 2015, we've seen Middle Class Canadians and families back at the forefront of issues. Unfair Anti-union Bills have been repealed that were intended to destroy unions by the Conservative government. Taxes for the middle class have been lowered while raised for the wealthiest 1%. In the past, the Conservatives have been known for giving tax breaks to the wealthier and keeping the poor, well poor. Liberals also introduced the new Canada Child Benefit to help children and families out of poverty. In addition, the Canada Workers' Benefit was introduced to reduce barriers to employment for low-wage workers. The Canada Labour Code will also be improved by increasing the federal minimum wage to at least \$15/hour.

**COVID:** The Liberals launched several relief programs as people lost their jobs and businesses faced hardship. Most notably, Trudeau's government implemented CERB which provide Canadians \$2,000/month if you experienced a loss of income. Other benefits included emergency student benefit, business loans, and wage subsidy, all of which helped workers and employers. I know not everyone agrees with these initiatives, but the alternative could have been zero help from the government and resorted in unemployed workers becoming desperate to feed

their families. We know violence and looting is a result of such desperation as proven throughout history.

**Skills Training:** Liberals promise to dedicate \$470M for a new apprenticeship program and \$240M toward increasing the wage subsidy for the Student Work Placement Program. In addition, they have launched the new Canada Training Benefit to help workers acquire skills for their current or next job. The Liberals have also made considerable investments to infrastructure like roads and bridges, sewage, and water treatment plants having a direct impact to the Local's membership.

**Pension:** Liberals increased CPP and promise to boost Old Age Security (OAS). During COVID, the Liberals also gave seniors a one-time-tax-free payment on top of OAS and promise to boost the amount given for OAS.

## CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Conservative leader, Erin O'Toole, has been tooting a different horn this election trying to appeal to the working/middle class (58% of Canadians). Let me remind you that the Conservatives have always represented the wealthy and are most likely testing a strategic tactic to rope in the working class. Under their leadership, Bill C-377 passed, an unfair piece of legislation requiring unions to disclose information otherwise deemed private, giving our non-union competitors an advantage. There's also Bill C-4 that would have taken away our rights as workers to strike. Let's not forget, Conservatives scrapped plans for a National Daycare Program and greatly reduced eligibility for our members to receive Employment Insurance.

**COVID:** Conservative leader, Erin O'Toole, has critiqued CERB as a waste of money for those who challenge the "middle-class values" of hard work. The Conservatives are loud and clear, they don't support assistance programs like CERB, something to keep in mind because this pandemic could get worse. In regards to Sick Paid Leave, Conservatives have voted down in the past and continue to do so.

**Skills Training:** Double the Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax for the next 3 years basically putting dollars into contractor's pockets. They've agreed to invest \$250M over two years to create a Canada Job Training Fund and create the Working Canadian Training Loan to provide up to \$10,000 of loans for people who want to upgrade their skills.

**Pension:** Eligibility for OAS decreased when it rose from 65 to 67, making every worker wait up to two years longer to receive pension payments. It's a big cut for a modest program and time at this age is everything.

## NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

There is reason why the NDP have a strong hold on the Island. They care about workers, fight for social programs, and work to raise people out of poverty. They are promising to create a universal \$10/day child care system to reduce barriers to enter work. A much needed update to EI benefits is promised with more funding. The NDP fought and achieved Paid Sick Leave in BC and will work on making this national. In addition, we can rely on action to establish a living wage for workers, better health care, and stronger bargaining rights.

**COVID:** Canada couldn't have implemented many of the support programs it did during COVID without the support and push of NDP Leader, Jagmeet. The NDP fought hard to increase the accessibility of CERB that initially left out millions of Canadians and also to increase the amount. The Party also pushed for commitment from the Liberals to provide 10 days of sick paid leave for workers to ensure no one has to choose between wages and going to work sick.

**Skills Training:** NDP sees skills training as a way to shift and adapt to the challenges brought by COVID. People with disabilities, new comers to Canada, and people who find themselves wanting or needing to change career paths would be supported under NDP leadership. We can expect funding, additional programs, and conversations with provinces to ensure access to education is sufficient to support the unemployed. Training is an investment of the people of this country and our future. **Pension:** We all deserve to live the end of our years with dignity and this is just what the NDP are advocating for. There will be masses of senior Canadians retiring in the coming years and we need a well thought out plan. NDP will lead a National Seniors Strategy that will make seniors health care a priority, reduce senior isolation and tackle poverty. This will include a Canada Caregiver Tax Credit.

## GREEN PARTY

The Greens have not launched a full platform at this time. From the polls, it is expected that the Greens will lose a seat or two and lose momentum this federal election.

## CONCLUSION

There are many topics that weren't covered such as environment, affordable housing, energy, etc. I kept the points as closely related to work as possible and looking into what affects your Union. Again, please make sure to seek information about your local candidates and vote. I cannot stress enough how much is at stake this federal election.

**Get Out And Vote!**