

Higgs' press conference: fact vs fiction

WHAT PREMIER HIGGS CLAIMS

CUPE Members are "very well paid"

"Defined-benefit pensions are not sustainable" and "CUPE is unwilling to protect members pension plan".

"The \$500 COVID pay was never on the table,"

CUPE broke off talks.

There are other public sector contracts settled, and I offered more to CUPE.

CUPE is putting public safety at risk during the pandemic

THE REALITY

CUPE members in NB are the lowest-paid public service workers in Canada. For many, real wages in the public sector decreased because cost-of-living grew much faster than the 1% and 0% "raises" workers got in the last 12 years.

False. Defined benefit plans are the best for workers and they are more than sustainable when government respects its pension contract obligations towards workers. Higgs wants to convert those to so-called "shared risk" pensions because, in reality, all the risk is downloaded on the workers.

In bargaining sessions, the Union did propose to get members without a pension into the full-time defined benefit plan. To date, the employer has denied this proposal.

The Premier's negotiators brought the \$500 COVID pay to the bargaining table on the first pass when the union met with the mediator on Sunday, at 10:42 PM.

At approximately 10:15 pm, October 26, 2021, the mediator informed the union that the "rug had been pulled from under their feet" when the employer's bargaining team and the employer had no further offers. The union learned at today's press conference that the government's latest pass is no longer on the table.

False. The overall value of the "2%" presented to CUPE members, in real dollars, is worth much less to us since we are the lowest of the lowest paid of the New Brunswick public sector. At 2% per year, by the end of a 4 year contract, an average CUPE member would only receive \$1.89 (46cents/year), compared to other public sector wage settlements, where they would receive \$4.53 (\$1.10/year).

The union and the province mutually agreed on "essential service" designation levels through the Labour Board so a significant amount of workers continue to provide critical essential services during a strike. Those exist to ensure the health, safety, and security of the public are protected.

BARGAINING FORWARD

