Labour Day

BCGEU marks a century of fighting for shared values

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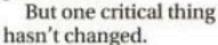
Like thousands of labour activists, I'll spend the first Monday in September surrounded by my family — my labour family. It's a family I've been a part of since I joined a union as a child-care worker more than 30 years ago. It's a family I cherish.

Labour Day 2019 is special for me and every member of the BCGEU because this is our centennial year.

The Provincial Civil
Service Association of B.C.
opened its first convention on July 26, 1919 in
Vancouver's Eagle Hall.
That convention was
attended by 37 delegates
representing a total membership of 980 — all of
whom worked directly for
the provincial government.

What a difference a century makes.

The BCGEU's membership is now over 80,000 strong and growing. And, while we still proudly represent tens
of thousands
of provincial
government
workers, well
over half of our
members work
outside government in the
broader public
service and the
private sector.



One hundred years ago, those convention delegates and the workers they represented came together because they shared values — values like dignity and respect; equality and fairness; opportunity and security — and they knew that by working together in solidarity they could bring those values to life in their workplaces and their communities.

One hundred years later, those values are still the foundation for everything the BCGEU stands for and fights for.

Labour Day 2019 is a chance for BCGEU members to celebrate those



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values and what we've achieved because of them. It's also a chance for us to acknowledge how far we still have to go to create a society where those values are a reality

for all working people.

Unions are under attack across the world and in our own country; the cost of necessities like transportation and housing continues to grow faster than wages; and we continue to see a shift from family-supporting full-time jobs to part-time, more precarious employment.

The workers of tomorrow are counting on us to
come through for them
as our predecessors did
for us. And this Labour
Day I'm full of optimism
for what we can achieve
together.

Stephanie Smith is president of the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union.