



# **BUILDING CANADA TOGETHER**

Our Vision for Fair and Open Construction

**BUILDING  
CANADA  
TOGETHER**



# *We are the* **Progressive Contractors Association of Canada**

The Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA) is the voice of progressive unionized employers in Canada's construction industry. Our member and affiliated companies employ more than 20,000 skilled construction workers across Canada, represented primarily by the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC).

Since our founding in 2000, PCA has worked to ensure fair access to work opportunities for our members by promoting a legislative framework and industry practices that establish a level playing field for all construction industry participants.

The innovative partnership that exists between our member companies and their CLAC employees is founded on a mutual respect dedicated to achieving a fair outcome for all parties, maximizing productivity in the relationship between labour and management, and a commitment to safety that is second to none. As such, our member companies tend to enjoy a highly cooperative and productive relationship with their CLAC employees compared to that which exists between other employers and

the craft unions, such as the Building Trades Council (BTC). The uniqueness of our labour model – both worker to worker, and worker to employer – ensures there are no jurisdictional disputes, and that we are united in our focus on building a high-productivity, high-performance business and a culture around construction.

And, unlike non-unionized construction firms, our unique labour-management model ensures a strong voice for employees, enabling better dialogue between employer and employees, improved workforce management capabilities, and a cohesive culture. As opposed to many in the non-unionized construction sector, we believe that there can be a role for progressive unionization in our industry. Fundamentally, Canada's construction industry should be one that allows for fair and open competition of companies reflecting various labour models; in which no sector is given artificial and unfair advantage over another on the basis of union affiliation or lack thereof. Simply put, PCA is not anti-union, we are anti-monopoly.

# PCA's Strategic Context

As the champion of a labour model that is committed to a non-adversarial relationship between employees and employers, PCA represents the fair-minded middle option in the construction industry. Being reasonable in a polarized industry, however, creates a strategic context that offers both challenges and opportunities:

Because our model presents a significant competitive advantage over the BTC's own model, the craft unions see us a major threat to the construction monopolies they have engineered. They are working hard to shut us out of work opportunities, and they will take extreme steps to guard the privileged position they enjoy in most provinces outside of Alberta. As we make our case for a fair and open construction industry, we will need to confront the craft unions each step of the way.

Because political parties have varying attitudes toward the vision that PCA espouses in the construction industry, we cannot afford to take a neutral stance. To ensure our policy vision achieves political success, we must be proactive with our political support for those parties that support our vision, and oppose those who oppose our vision.

While our vision is national in scope, large swaths of Canada – including Manitoba and most provinces east of Ontario – have historically been unreceptive to the progressive unionization model and the vision PCA espouses. Although much work will be required to educate governments and employers in these provinces and municipalities, they represent a significant opportunity for PCA to grow beyond our current base.

In some regions, certain non-union contractor associations have attempted to dilute and diminish the differentiated nature and value of the progressive unionized approach to construction labour relations. As a result, we need to be proactive in demonstrating the advantages of our progressive unionization model. Through assertive education efforts, PCA will meet this challenge directly, so that we are recognized as the undisputed voice for CLAC-signatory contractors.



## Canada's Economic and Political Context

It is no secret that Canada is encountering formidable change.

The demographic and fiscal pressures on the country are unprecedented. The age of the average Canadian is rising, and the supply of skilled labour is failing to meet growing demand. Massive increases in spending on health care, education and other priorities are straining governments' already-stretched budgets. At the same time, significant political realignment is occurring both federally and provincially.

By being a leading, progressive voice for the construction industry, PCA is well positioned to help not only its members and their employees, but also municipal, provincial and federal governments and the private sector, to meet some of the biggest economic challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

PCA will continue to work with any political party or government committed to meeting these challenges, regardless of political stripe. We will strongly support those parties and governments who espouse our vision. We will educate those who are undecided, and will actively confront those standing in opposition.

# VISION

## PCA's Vision

PCA has a vision for a fair and open construction industry in Canada – an industry that ceases to pit worker against worker, and worker against employer. We support a construction industry that is open to all, regardless of union affiliation.

By calling for the elimination of labour laws that favour certain craft unions, including the labour and tender monopolies in Ontario, we seek to level an unbalanced playing field that holds back not just the construction industry, but also our national productivity and the Canadian economy.

Throughout Canada, we will work for every province and municipality to embrace this new vision: a fair and open construction industry, cooperative labour relations, and a robust, inclusive and highly capable construction workforce.



**RESPECT  
FAIRNESS  
INNOVATION  
ACCOUNTABILITY**

# Solving Canada's Fiscal Challenges



## Canada's Challenge

At all levels, governments in Canada are in the midst of profound fiscal challenges intensified by sizeable shifts in the country's demographics.

In our industry, government policies have allowed for the creation of labour monopolies that exclude workers purely on the basis of union affiliation. These monopolies have driven up the cost of construction, thereby diminishing the number of projects that can be accomplished or adding to unsustainable public debts.

Because of these monopolies, PCA member companies have been restricted from bringing their progressive unionization model into major markets across Canada – such as the Maritimes, Quebec, Manitoba, municipalities in Ontario, and up until recently Saskatchewan.

The fiscal pressures on municipal, provincial and federal governments are an opportunity for change.

In the private sector, we have already seen the effect of these pressures. For example, construction demand associated with the Oil Sands in Alberta pushed industry owners to expand competition beyond the craft union affiliated contractors to those affiliated with CLAC and other workforce models.



# RESPONSIBILITY

## PCA's Perspective

## Our Plan

PCA strongly opposes these construction monopolies and champions change.

Our vision for fair and open construction competition is well suited to help governments and the private sector meet Canada's fiscal and economic challenges.

Our collaborative approach stands in sharp contrast to dealing with the craft unions, which are invariably drawn toward the rent seeking derived from the monopolies they seek to protect.

We will right the wrongs that preserve the restrictive labour agreements produced by the construction monopolies and impose a heavy cost on taxpayers in Canada.

We envision a construction industry where open and competitive tendering is the norm across Canada. Therefore, we will actively work for the inclusion of our model in Saskatchewan, in Ontario's municipalities, and wherever we are not currently permitted to work.

The same openness on our job sites is what we are seeking throughout the industry.

New opportunities for PCA's members will come out of Canada's stark fiscal realities. The unique model we champion makes us part of the solution. When given the opportunity, we have shown that we can compete.

# Strengthening Canada's Construction Workforce

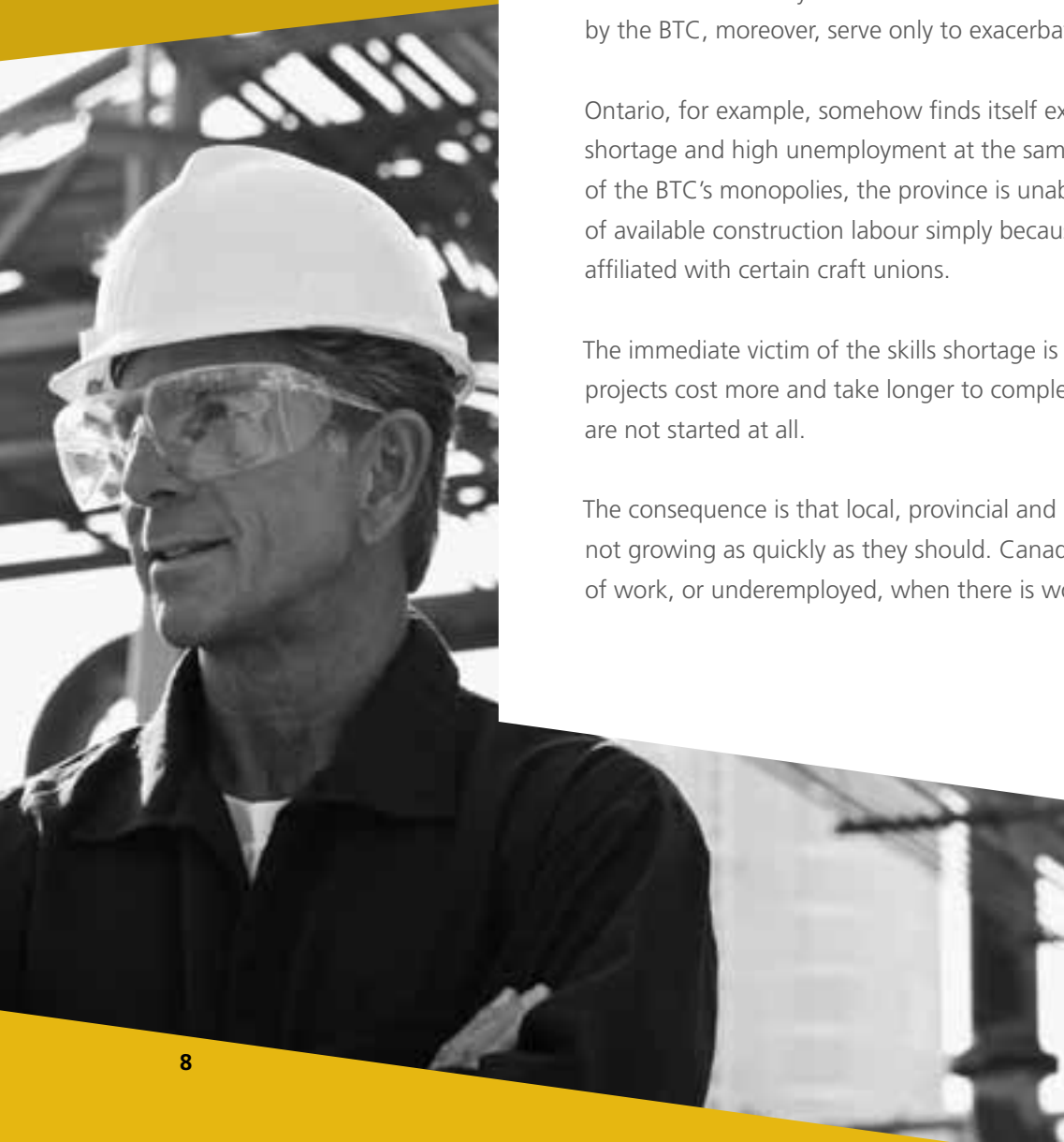
## Canada's Challenge

Canada is experiencing an acute shortage of skilled labour in the construction industry. The construction monopolies advocated for by the BTC, moreover, serve only to exacerbate this shortage.

Ontario, for example, somehow finds itself experiencing a skills shortage and high unemployment at the same time. As a consequence of the BTC's monopolies, the province is unable to leverage large pools of available construction labour simply because these workers are not affiliated with certain craft unions.

The immediate victim of the skills shortage is productivity. Construction projects cost more and take longer to complete than necessary. Or they are not started at all.

The consequence is that local, provincial and national economies are not growing as quickly as they should. Canadians find themselves out of work, or underemployed, when there is work that needs to be done.



# WORK

## PCA's Perspective

Employing more than 20,000 skilled construction workers across Canada, PCA member companies stand ready to provide relief through our numbers, networks and expertise.

Our innovative, wall-to-wall labour agreements mean that our employees bring all of the necessary trades to a project in a single contract. The unique collective agreements between PCA member companies and the CLAC render unnecessary the need to engage in a series of separate negotiations with trades that are treated as disparate parts based on craft union affiliations. And we experience none of the productivity obstacles that come with the frequent jurisdictional disputes experienced on craft union dominated work sites. By design, we do it all.

In addition, our cooperative approach is non-confrontational by definition. Our employers and employees uphold a respectful partnership that achieves a fair and productive result for all parties. A refreshing alternative, this model offers the best of all possible arrangements. It stands in sharp contrast to the simple employment structures of non-unionized labour, and to the rigid structures and adversarial nature of the craft unions.

## Our Plan

We will show that, in order to alleviate the skills shortages Canada faces, the construction industry requires new approaches.

We will lead the industry in our partnerships with Canada's First Nations peoples, as well as other underrepresented communities in the construction trades.

Across the country, we will promote apprenticeship in the trades to help develop the workforce of today and tomorrow. As part of that effort, we will advocate for a modern apprenticeship system that includes lower apprenticeship ratios. And we will engage with private and public colleges to help Canada create the most flexible and dynamic training system in the world.

We will show how the progressive unionization model – in contrast to the craft unions and non-unionized labour models – yields the highest level of productivity in the Canadian marketplace.

By expanding Canada's construction workforce and strengthening its ability to work together, we will enhance the productivity of our industry and our economy.

# Building Canada's Economic Opportunities

## Canada's Challenge

Increasingly, natural resources are at the centre of Canada's economy. Whether it is the Oil Sands in Alberta, potash in Saskatchewan or mining in Ontario – to name but a few examples – global demand for our country's natural resources continues to grow.

At the same time, Canada needs to ensure that it has the underlying infrastructure necessary to support a rapidly growing natural resources sector.

The opportunities arising from the demand for Canada's natural resources and the need for adequate infrastructure present considerable opportunities, including in the construction industry.



# OPPORTUNITY

## PCA's Perspective

In many respects, natural resources represent an untapped opportunity for PCA, especially outside Alberta. Just as the Oil Sands helped level the playing field for PCA's members in Alberta, we believe that the natural resources can play the same role in other provinces, including Ontario. The craft unions will not be able to exploit their privileged position any longer. Instead, they will have to compete for work opportunities.

Moreover, our expertise and leadership in construction of the infrastructure upon which economies are built is well established. Examples of our work include hydro projects in British Columbia, highways in Alberta, and water treatment plants, hospitals and schools in Ontario.

On a level playing field, our members can compete and win. When it comes to the skills that will be in demand, we have shown that our companies and their progressive model can lead the industry.

Moreover, while there are opportunities for growth in Ontario and Saskatchewan, PCA is already deep-rooted in the provinces where much of the growth is occurring, especially Alberta and British Columbia.

## Our Plan

PCA will leverage the skills and expertise that we have acquired to build on the successes that we have already achieved in key economic markets such as the Oil Sands in Alberta. We will pro-actively engage resource owners involved in developing Canada's natural resources. We will actively work to educate them on our cooperative model so that they will take an open approach to the construction industry.

Moreover, we will position ourselves as the builders of a world-class infrastructure that supports Canada's resource-based economy. We will champion our proven model in the corridors of governments at all levels and in all jurisdictions in which we operate.

We are well prepared to move forward in Saskatchewan with the implementation of Bill 80, which brings Saskatchewan's rules for organizing in line with those of British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. And we are working towards a breakthrough in Ontario, especially Northern Ontario, in the mining sector. In British Columbia, our focus is on mining, hydro projects, pipelines and resource connections, such as ports.

# PCA's Plan to Meet Canada's Challenges

Canadians are demanding more.  
PCA is ready to play our part.

PCA is passionate about the future of Canada's construction industry because we believe there is a better way to build the future success and prosperity of our industry, our workforce and our economy.

For too long, the craft unions have been able to exploit the labour and tendering monopolies they have engineered. These monopolies have exacted a heavy toll on Canadians. They have harmed Canada's productivity and held Canadians back from work that is ready and needs to be done.

Dramatic changes, however, are threatening the craft unions' grip on much of Canada's construction labour supply.

Unprecedented fiscal and demographic challenges mean that governments can no longer afford the hefty premium that labour monopolies demand. Across the country and at all levels, governments are looking to achieve more with less.

A shortage in skilled labour means that governments are now willing to take a fresh look at ensuring access to a skilled labour supply. Unsurprisingly, the construction monopolies are unable to meet existing demands for labour.

Finally, as natural resources become a greater part of Canada's economy, both natural resources and the infrastructure necessary to support their development represent a major area of growth for our sector.

These shifts represent significant opportunities for PCA's members.

We seek a level playing field because we are confident we can compete with anyone when the rules of the game are not slanted in favour of any one of the participants.

It is therefore with optimism that we embrace the future. While there is much that remains to be accomplished, we are confident that the conditions are ready for us to grow and for our members to succeed.

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