



For immediate release

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If it's good for BC and Quebec, it's good for Canada

OTTAWA – After the first debate on Bill C-257 – An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (replacement workers) – Canadian working families feel more confident that Parliament will finally adopt legislation to ban the use of scabs during labour disputes under the Canada Labour Code.

“It’s a matter of fairness and balance,” explains Ken Georgetti, president of the Canadian Labour Congress. “The prohibition to use scabs protects the interests of working Canadians and their families against the might of large, often global, employers with no roots in the community.”

Such legislation exists in Quebec since 1977 and in British Columbia since 1993; causing, in both cases, a general decline in the loss of work time due to strikes or lockouts, and marking a diminution of their length and intensity.

“If it’s good for BC and Quebec, it’s good for all of Canada,” explains Georgetti. “It is well documented that employers that hire scabs during strikes or lockouts are given an unfair advantage to drag their heels in bargaining, reaping profits from unpaid salaries (scabs are often paid less) and compromising any hope for a fair settlement.”

“The ongoing dispute at the Ekati Mine in the Northwest Territories makes the case in favour of this legislation. For months now, the huge multinational corporation BHP Billiton has evaded its duty to arrive at a first collective agreement with its 400 members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, regardless of the consequences for workers and community.”

“The Prime Minister campaigned on the promise to help working families in Canada. He can now move beyond the rhetoric of an election campaign to concrete action by supporting this legislation,” says Georgetti.

“We thank the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party who are working together to secure the adoption of that bill and we also thank all the Liberal MPs who have announced that they will vote for its adoption.”

The Canadian Labour Congress is launching a national campaign to secure anti-scab legislation in this parliament. “Everywhere in Canada, mostly in ridings where the MP is Conservative or Liberal, union leaders are telling workers: Call your MP and ask everyone in your family to call their MPs to tell them to vote in favour of anti-scab legislation. It’s a basic matter of fairness for working people,” says Georgetti.

The Canadian Labour Congress, the national voice of the labour movement, represents 3 million Canadian workers. The CLC brings together Canada's national and international unions along with the provincial and territorial federations of labour and 135 district labour councils. Web site: www.canadianlabour.ca

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