March 20, 2014 |

Statements

Statement of Solidarity with Vancouver Port Truckers

The leadership of the B.C. Federation of Labour met today and condemned the actions of the Federal and Provincial governments to try and force truckers back to work using legislation and license suspensions.

Representatives of BC's private and public sector unions were unanimous in their support of Unifor to negotiate a collective agreement to ensure all truck drivers can earn a fair and reasonable living servicing Canada's largest Port.

The right to collective bargaining and the right to strike are fundamental rights in a democracy and the right to exercise those rights are being stripped away by the Federal and Provincial governments.

Justice Susan Griffith said in her recent decision regarding the BC Teachers Federation that the right to bargain is a critical part of a democratic society.

"The freedom of workers to associate has long been recognized internationally and in Canada as an important aspect of a fair and democratic society. Collective bargaining was seen as fulfilling an important social purpose by providing equality in the workplace, diminishing the arbitrary power of the employer and allowing workers a means to protect themselves from unfair or unsafe work conditions", Justice Griffith wrote.

For nine years, since the last dispute, Port drivers have not received an increase in pay for hauling containers. In fact, the lack of enforcement of the pay rates negotiated in 2005 means that many truckers are earning less today than nine years ago.

We cannot expect to run the largest and most important port in Canada, moving more than two million containers a year, on the backs of underpaid truck drivers who are pushed into a race for the bottom to maintain the ability to work.

There is a solution. It is tried and true. Sit down with Unifor and negotiate a new collective agreement. Pay truckers properly, enforce the rate for all drivers and ensure waiting times at the ports are kept to a minimum.

We stand as a labour movement united in our support for truckers to negotiate an end to the labour dispute through collective bargaining and in total opposition to the legislative attack on bargaining rights.

We urge all those who can to attend the rally at Canada Place on Friday March 21st at 12:00 noon.