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Releases

BCFED calls on Museum of History to preserve 1919 Winnipeg General Strike exhibit

VANCOUVER – The BC Federation of Labour is calling on the Canadian Museum of History to reconsider its decision to eliminate the longstanding exhibit devoted to the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike.

In a letter to the Museum's Board of Trustees, BCFED Secretary-Treasurer Aaron Ekman expressed his deep concern that this important historical exhibit will not be returned following renovations to the museum.

"The 1919 Winnipeg General Strike is a pivotal moment in the history of working people in Canada and should figure prominently in the national museum," wrote Ekman. "It is important that we continue to acknowledge this important time in our collective history; a time that has shaped our country."

During the General Strike in 1919, more than 30,000 working people - union and non-union - went out on strike for six weeks to demand fair wages and better working conditions following World War I. In addition to the strikes in Winnipeg, sympathy strikes sprung up in more than 20 cities and towns throughout western Canada, including Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Victoria and Vancouver.

During this strike, people put their lives on the line for the recognition of unions and the right to collective bargaining.

“The legacy of working people who built this country is all too often overlooked, making this exhibit even more important in the effort to educate and inspire current and future generations,” said Ekman.

“These powerful moments from our past must not be forgotten – and they deserve a place in our country’s History Museum,” said Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour.

The Canadian Museum of History Board of Trustees meets today.

“We are asking them to reconsider this decision and to protect this important exhibit’s place in the Museum,” said Lanzinger.

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Attachment: **Letter to the Canadian Museum of History**