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Releases

RECONCILIATION WEEK MESSAGE FROM JIM SINCLAIR

The B.C. Federation of Labour encourages all union members to take part in Reconciliation Week, September 16 to 22, 2013, to be educated on the concept of reconciliation and what it means to the people on whose land we build our livelihoods as working people.

Reconciliation Week is an important part of understanding the magnitude of the issues caused by the residential school atrocities that occurred in Canada and the level of impact they had on our country's first peoples.

"It's important to realize that reconciliation with Aboriginal people doesn't just mean understanding what happened to people who were forced into residential schools, but the longstanding impact of government policies on Aboriginal peoples in Canada," said Jim Sinclair, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour. "Reconciliation means more than just saying we are sorry for what happened: it means making every effort to ensure that the Aboriginal people of our province and our country are considered in economic initiatives in our communities. Aboriginal people should be beneficiaries of economic initiatives and decision makers in the processes from which those initiatives are born."

The Federation hopes that Reconciliation Week will not be a one-week-per-year series of events, but rather, the beginning of a shift towards a culture of collaborative effort with Aboriginal people in community planning through all levels of government and society. Sinclair congratulated organizers

for recognizing the importance of reconciliation with and for other Canadian cultural groups. “From Japanese Canadians who faced internment, to Chinese Canadians and Indo Canadians who faced the discriminatory head tax or were barred outright from entry into Canada, the struggle for human rights is shared.”

The B.C. Federation of Labour is proud to endorse and join Reconciliation Week events.

*Lighting the Fire of Reconciliation: September 16, 2013

*All Nations Canoe Gathering: September 17, 2013

*Truth & Reconciliation Commission BC National Event: September 18–21, 2013

*Walk for Reconciliation & A New Way Forward: September 22, 2013

For more information on events during Reconciliation Week, please visit http://reconciliationcanada.ca/events/