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Releases

Double Double Takes on New Meaning

The BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre (BCPIAC) has launched a complaint at the BC Human Rights Tribunal (BCHRT) on behalf of four temporary foreign workers (TFW) from Mexico employed at two Tim Hortons locations in Dawson Creek, BC.

Living two to a room, in a five bedroom home, workers were asked to pay $200.00 each at the beginning of the month, and then asked by the employer for an additional $200.00 dollars rent mid-month, which their employer referred to as a "tip." "When Tim Hortons advertises the Double Double, I don't believe this is what most Canadians had in mind," said Eugene Kung, counsel with the BCPAIC. In total the employer received $4,000 a month in rent from each of two separate homes where he required his employees to live.

In addition to overcharging workers for rent, the complaint asserts the workers were subjected to derogatory racist comments including "[expletive] Mexican workers are lazy" and "Mexican idiots," while the employer described himself as the owner of their lives."

"When these workers raised any concerns about their working or living conditions, the employer threatened to send them back to Mexico," said Kung. The employer also regularly asked the workers from Mexico for their passports and would hold them for periods of time.

"These workers were left vulnerable to a flawed program where the power dynamic benefits the employer and creates a ripe situation for the exploitation of the workers," Kung added. Two of the workers were fired after they complained about their working condition, and others were forced to leave for fear of reprisals.

"This is yet another indictment of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program," said B.C. Federation of Labour President Jim Sinclair.
"For decades Canada has been a place of hope an opportunity for prospective immigrants. Instead, through the TFW program we are throwing away our reputation as a welcoming country for immigrants," Sinclair noted. "This is not how workers should be treated in Canada, no matter where they come from or how they got here.

The employer Tony Van Den Bosch, is listed as 525571 BC Ltd, while Tim Hortons parent group TDL Group Corp, helped recruit the workers to Canada. Additional complaints have also been filed with the Ministry of Labour regarding the employer's breaches of the Employment Standards Act."

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To view the complaint visitwww.bcfed.ca or www.bcpiac.com
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