



NEWS RELEASE

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NLFL calls for anti-scab legislation

as employers escalate use of scabs in labour disputes

Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour (NLFL) Lana Payne said the decision by OCI to use scab labour after locking out the Newfoundland Lynx trawler crew shows an escalating willingness by employers in our province to use any means necessary to roll-back the clock on gains made by working people and their unions.

Ms. Payne said OCI is following in the footsteps of employers like Vale and Toromont Cat (Caterpillar) who used scab labour in disputes. "This kind of behaviour is giving labour relations in our province a black eye."

She added the provincial government must act to protect the labour rights of workers in the province by ensuring the right to collective bargaining is free and fair. "Free and fair collective bargaining can not occur when employers and corporations are able to use scab labour," said Ms. Payne. "Once again we call on the provincial government to send a clear message to employers in our province that the use of scab labour will not be tolerated."

The laws of our province may allow corporations to use scab labour, but that doesn't mean those laws are fair, just or ensure a decent labour relation climate.

She said OCI may wish to muddy the waters with respect to what is at the heart of this labour dispute, but the facts are simple. The corporation wants to reduce the incomes of the trawler crew by as much as 40% and the workers, many of whom have worked for decades offshore, are saying no way.

330 Portugal Cove Place, NAPE Bldg., 2nd Floor

P.O. Box 8597 St John's, NL A1B 3P2 Telephone: 709 754 1660 Fax: 709 754 1220 www.nfl.nf.ca



- 2 -

“There is no doubt that employers in our province and in the country are seeing an opportunity to attack workers and their unions. We’ve seen it with Caterpillar in London, Ontario, and with Rio Tinto in Alma, Quebec. This was the same problem we had with Vale in the Voisey’s Bay dispute,” said the labour leader.

“It is time for the provincial government to act to support workers and their labour rights,” said Ms. Payne. “We need anti-scab legislation in our province. Corporations must be sent a message that yes this is a good place to do business, but that business must also include a respect for the rights of workers to free and fair collective bargaining. This race-to-the-bottom mentality and attack on decent incomes and good jobs must be halted.”

-30-

Contact: NLFL President Lana Payne 754-1660 (743-5343 cell)