



December 4, 2014

The Montreal Massacre – 25 Years Later

Twenty five years ago, on December 6th, 1989, a lone gunman, carrying a legal military style firearm, entered l'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal and gunned down 14 female engineering students.

It was an act of violence against women that must never fade away from memory as time passes. Nor too can we forget the countless others, like the women on the Picton pig farm in British Columbia, 49 year old Stephanie Chaisson, who was murdered in 2012 by her estranged husband while at work in southwestern NL, or Loretta Saunders, the pregnant 26 year old aboriginal woman from Goose Bay who was murdered by her roommates earlier this year.

We can never forget about the thousands of women - many of them aboriginal or working in the sex trade, who have disappeared from our cities and towns or from along highways right across Canada. All sisters and daughters.

Nor, the unfinished lives and silenced voices of the 85 missing and murdered women and girls in NL who were honoured this Fall at the "*In Her Name*" Vigil in St. John's, NL.

Every day in the media, we hear stories of physical attacks against women, and the abhorrent violence that women are subjected to in their homes, and in their workplaces.

Violence against women and girls in our society is much too prevalent, and an indication of the inequality that continues to grow in Canada. Like Loretta Saunders' thesis advisor stated; "It is an organized terror of the everyday, and it must stop."

Police reports in NL state that between 2006 and 2012 violent crimes against women in our Province increased by 24%. There were 14 homicides against women during that same period.

As we gather to remember those who have died as a result of gender-based violence, and those who still experience violence in their lives, we commit to join in solidarity with others to work to eliminate violence against women and girls in whatever way we can - at home and at work; at the bargaining table, and at the ballot box.



-2-

Our federal government has failed to develop a national action plan to address this inequality and end violence against women in Canada. Despite requests from provincial and municipal governments, citizens and the aboriginal community in every corner of our country, The Harper Conservatives have yet to agree to launch a national investigation into the more than 1200 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in our country.

The Canadian Labour Congress recently surveyed nearly 9,000 participants and found that one third of respondents, predominantly women reported experiencing domestic violence in their lifetimes.

More than half of those indicated that the violence followed them to the workplace. The acts include abusive phone calls, text, stalking, harassing, assault and murder. Nearly 10% of those who experienced domestic violence either lost or left their job because of it. Canadian employers lose nearly \$80 million annually due to its direct or indirect impact.

Committed efforts by the labour movement have made positive changes in unions, workplaces, and communities. We know that more needs to be done.

On December 6, we commit to working with our allies to pressure decision makers to enact action plans, policies, and laws to end the violence, no matter what it takes.

On December 6, we commit to working towards a more equal and just society. And we will never forget.

Mary Shortall
President – NL Federation of Labour