



March 1, 2007



To: Ranking Officers of Affiliated Unions

Re: Continuing campaign on Bill C-257 banning scabs

Greetings!

We have been informed that Members of Parliament will vote on March 21, in third reading, on Bill C-257, which would make it illegal for employers to hire replacement workers while their own employees are locked out or on strike. Notwithstanding the public positions taken by Stephen Harper and Stéphane Dion, we still expect this to be a free vote. We anticipate that a majority of MPs will vote in favour of this legislation because they will listen to the voices of the majority of their constituents who are people who work for wages.

The media reports reflect the results of big business' intense campaign of fear mongering about C-257 and focus on the continuation of "essential services" during labour disputes. Essential services are already protected by both the Canada Labour Code and other statutes that deal specifically with federal public services.

Passing C-257 will do nothing to diminish these existing protections which are contained in section 87.4 of the Canada Labour Code. They are in effect and will remain in effect. The Canadian Industrial Relations Board has confirmed seven times in the last six years that section 87.4 is an essential services clause.

The Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities of the House of Commons (HUMA), heard from many witnesses while reviewing the Bill: 13 representing working people, 32 representing employers, and various technical experts. What stood out from those hearings were the irrational arguments big business put forward to confuse and scare MPs.

I do not doubt many MPs Parliamentary offices received letters, phone calls and visits in recent weeks from the business lobbyists. However, these same MPs will be at home in their ridings over the next two weeks where they will hear their constituents.

.../2

The Canadian Labour Congress, district labour councils and activists from many unions will be meeting with MPs during this period to explain to them one more time why voting for Bill C-257 is important for working women and men. They will be asked to decide whose side are they on – their working family constituents or federal employers who use scabs.

A strong majority of MPs supported the Bill (167 to 101) in second reading just four months ago. Nothing has changed since then except a lot of negative spin by big business lobbyists and the business media. We still have an opportunity to convince MPs to support the Bill so that we can win the vote on third reading.

Please ensure your activists and all of our supporters and friends are working with us in the field and that you encourage your activists, staff and locals to contact their MP as soon as possible to tell them to vote yes on Bill C-257 on March 21.

Thank you for your cooperation.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Georgetti', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kenneth V. Georgetti
President

cc: Officers and Assistants
Presidents, Provincial and Territorial Federation of Labour
CLC Staff