



**CBTU SMCC**

CANADA'S BUILDING TRADES UNIONS  
LES SYNDICATS DES MÉTIERS DE LA CONSTRUCTION DU CANADA  
Value on Display. Every Day. Valeur sûre à tous les jours.

**OTTAWA**, June 19, 2017.....This week has been a very good week for working people in Canada. First Canada, by way of the Labour Minister Patti Hajdu, agreed to ratify Convention 98 at the ILO. The ILO is the only leftover from the old League of Nations. It has existed for nearly 100 years and was continued as an arm of the United Nations to promote dignity and fairness at work. The ILO and its Conventions are a set of standards to each all responsible governments ought to aspire. The simple fact that Canada has only now espoused Convention 98 casts some prior Canadian Governments as somewhat less than thoughtful about what collective bargaining does for the community. The protection of collective bargaining is not about 'kissing up to the Unions' - it is evidencing confidence in our workforce and employers to be able to come to appropriate terms and conditions of employment. Not every workplace has a union in it and it is folly to think that there ever will be. The truth is that collective bargaining is applied compromise and responsible unions know that their employer needs to compete. Unionized workplaces set the tone for the industry that they are in. Check out wage rates in industry, when the union rate goes up so does the non-union rate and when the inevitable happens and there is need for a 'cut' both the union and non-union rates move down in lockstep. When the Union gets a pension plan the non-union get an RRSP, when the Union gets a health plan so does the non-union. It is about retaining and maintaining a workforce. So, the union doesn't just bargain for itself, it bargains with benefit for all in the industry. People get into the Middle Class via a unionized workplace, they stay there if the Union stays there. Ratifying Convention 98 is an act of courage by the Government of Canada, they will get a lot of flak from the self-appointed union haters; the people who understand that well trained workers have industry mobility and who sell the poison that boils down to 'we can create lot of minimum wage jobs as a way to grow prosperity'. Think about that for a minute; should we encourage good jobs, at reasonable rates and conditions or should we opt for lots of poor paying jobs with no benefits?? Collective Bargaining floats all boats and supports your life style.

Similarly, Bill C4 passed the Senate of Canada on June 14th ---- a lot of ink has been spilled over this Bill. Much hype has been unleashed and there is a ton of spin. I am intimately identified with one of the sides to the Labour Relations equation so some might think anything I say cannot be trusted to be objective. Let me try. Two aspects of C-4 exist in the Labour Relations space, Bill 377 and Bill 525. Each of these was ostensibly a Private Member's Bill but when the little dog pulled the curtain away the truth about the Wizard was revealed, it was stealth governmental policy and decided not on conscious but on a two line whip. Arguing the toss on these Bills takes a lot of ink, I will endeavour to be pithy --- Bill 377 was unconstitutional, it trenched on the power of the provinces, 7 of the provinces objected. It treated a select group of tax entities as evil and in need of regulation. How happy would you be if your taxes were on public display?? Bill 525 was

said to give workers a democratic say in the unionization of their workplaces. Who can be opposed to a secret ballot?? That is spin, pure and simple, the elections we all vote in for municipal, provincial and federal election never require the 7 people who are voting to have to do under the baleful gaze of their boss and where the 7 people consist of the boss's son, his 2 nephews and 4 strangers to the family. It takes 4 yes votes to certify so, it doesn't take long to identify the 'traitors'. Where compulsory votes are required to certify, unionizations rates plummet. There are a host of reported cases on unfair labour practices (ULPs) around certifications, if you like to score the 'ball game' on ULPs the employers are a long, long way ahead committing them. The reason is simple, the employer might have to pay some money if liable for an ULP, BUT -- won't be certified.

The actions of the Government of Canada this week have been significant, they show concern for the well-being of workers and a hope to make their lot in life better. We're non-partisan, we are beholden to no political party and support those people who support us. Being objective -- we have a real reason to be grateful for the first Canadian Government, at least in recent memory, that has adopted a policy supporting the role of collective bargaining in making Canada better! On behalf of Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU), an alliance of 15 building and construction unions that represent a membership of more than 500,000 skilled tradespeople across Canada, thank you!

For more information please contact the Canadian Office at 613 236-0653.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Blakely', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert R. Blakely,  
Canadian Operating Officer