



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

# Vancouver Island

Quarterly Newsletter

Since 1902

## Temporary Foreign Worker Program Runs Rampant with Abuse

The truth about the Federal Conservative Governments Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program is surfacing again. Over recent years, the BC Building Trades have pointed out gaping deficiencies in the TFW Program when we found workers from Costa Rica making \$3.67 per hour while working on portions of the RAV Line in Vancouver. This time it's all about denying Canadians employment, bringing in foreign workers while half a million Canadians remain unemployed.

HD Mining in Tumbler Ridge BC rejected almost 300 resumes from Canadian workers, instead opting to bring in Chinese Miners through the TFW (WTF?) Program. HD Mining required workers who spoke Mandarin? And our Federal Conservative and BC Liberal governments not only allowed this, but they have defended their decision in the HD Mining Application from the beginning.

In total, 201 Chinese nationals have been issued visas at the Canadian embassy in Beijing to work at the proposed underground coal mine, while almost 300 Canadians applied for those jobs. Many of the jobs were deemed to be low skill level jobs requiring minimal training with a secondary school education; most of the Canadian applicants had the required education. One Canadian applicant is a pending graduate of a college program in Hard Rock Mining, while another applied with a Master's Degree in Mining Engineering, according to obtained court documents HD Mining, and the Federal Government deemed these Canadians not fit for employment at the Mine.

Heavy Equipment Operators, Industrial Electricians, Pipefitters, Drillers with decades of mining experience were all over-looked. HD Mining said there were no applicants looking to fill Manager Positions, but court demanded

documents revealed that there were several Canadians seeking Manager Positions with years of experience managing mines in Canada.

The Foreign Workers who come to Canada are not the problem; many of the companies using the TFW Program and playing by the rules are not the problem. The Federal Conservative Government is the Problem for developing and overseeing (or lack thereof) a program creating construction industry sweatshops throughout our Country. The Program and the abuses perpetually found within it lay rightly on the doorstep of 24 Sussex Drive. The Prime Minister and those who take up the positions to serve him are responsible for turning their backs on Canadian miners. A judicial review of Ottawa's decision to issue the temporary foreign-worker permits has been tentatively set to be heard in April, while the case has also prompted a federal review of the temporary foreign workers program itself.

Meanwhile, Saskatchewan is being urged not to use temporary foreign workers to compete with the private sector for employees during a labour shortage. The recommendations are in a report that looks at a labour shortfall in the prairie province and what the government needs to do to keep its economy growing. Herb Emery, a University of Calgary economics professor, notes that Saskatchewan's growth plan indicates it will work with the federal government to "expedite entry of foreign workers into Saskatchewan to meet critical skill shortages." Emery says that approach pulls down wages and doesn't encourage local employment that Canadian companies should be looking at other provinces like Ontario where many skilled trades' workers remain unemployed from the downturn in manufacturing, not places like Ireland and China to fill labour shortages.

## Winter 2013

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[www.ibew230.org](http://www.ibew230.org)

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## Safety Starts at Home

Let us know about your new-born child or grand-child and drop in the office or your Unit Meeting to pick up a couple of bags of receptacle covers, to protect your little loved ones.



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# Business Manager's Report



Philip M. Venoit  
Business Manager/Financial Secretary

It appears the Mayan calendar didn't predate the discovery of Tequila and with the end of the year (and world) behind us we can focus on 2013.

Well, the Harper Conservatives have finally stepped clearly out of the closet to show how they truly hate unions and what we socially represent. They are clearly frightened of the Canadian public's decision by electing an NDP federal opposition party, and they are moving quickly to diminish the power unions have in Canada. Unions have long been prohibited through legislation to give any federal politician any financial contributions, and now they want to diminish our financial strength and our voice.

Bill C-377 which is now being debated at Senate, is essentially the Conservative Jackboot of today stepping down on our throats while Harper puts both his hands in our wallet, to tell the world (but mainly our competition), what is in our bank accounts. You really have to ask yourselves, why is it so important to the Stephen Harper Government to tell the Merit Shop the anti-union construction consortium how much money we have in our Market Recovery Funds? Why is it so important to tell our anti-union employers how much we have in our Strike, or Legal Defence Funds? We have written Federal Finance Minister declaring our opposition to the Bill.

The answer is pure and simple, he wants to wipe us off the Canadian landscape, unions in Canada like the IBEW have built Canada, unions are the single sole reason we have a Canadian middle Class, without

unions in Canada we will be a nation of the absurdly rich, and the working poor. The recent importation of Chinese Miners to HD mines who's advertising required Canadians to speak Mandarin to work in their Northern BC mine, approved by the Stephen Harper government and condoned by the Christy Clark BC Liberals, is the scene for things to come, without unions to stand up against them.

That is Stephen Harper's Conservative and Christy Clark's BC Liberals vision for our Country and our Province, and we can no longer sit on our hands, waiting for him and his friends to stop their attack on us. We have to become politically engaged in every step they take. We have to begin talking to our friends and neighbors and explain to them how these governments are re-shaping Canada, and not for the better.

**Our Construction Market Share last year increased** by 2% to an overall value of 57% of all construction electrical work in the Industrial, Commercial, Institutional and High-rise Residential sectors. This figure will retain this year's market recovery dues for members working in construction at 3%. Our fund balances in this account has continued to serve the local membership well in maintaining and growing in areas we would have likely seen erosion in over the last four years in. We've negotiated a four dollar increase in the same time frame as the non-union have taken a four dollar cut to wages, and when you consider they were already eight dollars behind us it has grown the competitive gap closer to sixteen dollars an hour. It is important for you to know and share with non-union electrical workers that a Serviceman/"B" Foremen make \$52.83/hr. and Journeyman makes \$48.10/hr. in the IBEW this year. We need them to go back to their non-union bosses and get the wage increases they deserve so we can negotiate further wage increases at the same time maintaining our market share.

We met with Craig Paquin the owner of Sasco Electric as he has captured some of the commercial smart meter work on the Island and will look at drumming up other customer service work while they are here.

**The Marine Electrician Industry Analysis working group** wrapped up our

summary, with 100% agreement in creating a Marine Electrician Endorsement to the Construction Electrician Red Seal for electrical workers in the marine sector. Next steps will be to write the Industry Training Authority of course to endorse the endorsement! Then, to establish a Technical Committee who will develop the technical parameters of the instructional training.

**Our Dockyard Bill C-10 appeal was heard in the BC Supreme Court of Appeal** January 28-30, 2013. Arguments were heard from both sides by a panel consisting of 3 very experienced Supreme Court of Appeal Justices: Madame Justice Saunders, Madame Justice Kirkpatrick, and Madame Justice Garson.

Our legal team, consisting of Ms. Cathie Boies-Parker and Mr. Joe Avery, did an incredible job presenting our arguments before the Appeal Court Tribunal. Our team was up first, and spent a day and a half presenting our arguments, followed by the Attorney General of Canada and a short presentation by the BC Attorney General, before closing statements, their Decision is pending. We have 2013 Calendars available for purchase in the office all proceeds will go towards Clint Coleman's Family.

**Our Building and Metal Trades Christmas Dinner Dance** was December 15th with Chef Aaron from the Junior Ranks Club putting on a great spread with Turkey Dinner, the local band Flatline played the tunes into the late night and we gave out around \$2,000 in door prizes. The 50/50 raffle raised \$240 to go towards Santa Anonymous. I truly believe that everyone who came out had a great time and this event continues to be a great success. Our North and South Island Golf Tournaments were a success as well last year raising \$2500 towards the Victoria and Nanaimo United Way. Our Helmets to Hardhats Program has taken off with 625 members of the Canadian Military looking at being placed into the Trades across the Country and the Television Commercial which aired on CHEK 6 over the Remembrance Day weekend received rave reviews.

# Union Jobs Benefit Everyone

Having a union on your side makes your job and your workplace safer and fairer. Union employers pay you better and are more likely to provide benefits that help you balance your work with life at home. More people today without unions are having to find further employment, taking on two, and even three jobs just to get by. Unions make a difference both at work and in the quality of life we earn.

We call this *The Union Advantage*.

The Canadian Labour Congress has released a study which shows just how much better "The Union Advantage" truly is. Nationally and in dozens of communities across the country the study shows that on average, Canadian unionized workers earn \$5.11 more per hour than non-union workers. With over 4.5 million union members in Canada, union members generate almost \$800 million dollars more, each and every week of the year, and then we spend it, mostly in the same communities we work in, supporting local businesses so they can keep the lights on, pay their bills and taxes, and perhaps hire more employees.

Union workers are an important part of the local economy.

Communities with higher union density attract doctors, dentists, pharmacists, therapists and other health professionals as union benefit packages provide for good health and welfare benefits, and these health care professionals are filling a need for those with benefit coverage.

When unions stand up for fairness they raise the bar for everyone. Many of the benefits first won by unions are enjoyed by all workers today, like maternity leave, vacation pay, the eight hour day, forty hour

work week, oh, and the weekend.

Communities with higher union density enjoy relatively higher incomes overall, and support a richer mix of businesses and services that diversify the local economy and add to the overall quality of life.

Essentially, those communities are better places to work and to live.

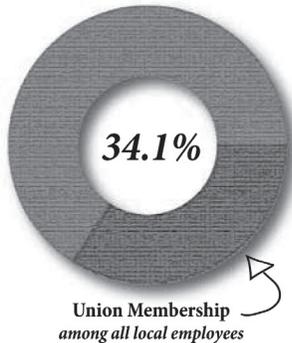
*The numbers below were provided by Statistics Canada, whom determined the average*

*hourly wage, average hours worked per week, the number of workers in the community, how many of those were union workers and by contrast those working without a union collective agreement. This was all done before taxes and deductions, and does not include deferred income (pensions, RRSP's), or supplemental benefits such as, vacation, training or health care. These further benefits would add another \$5-8 more every hour worked to the union advantage study.*

## The Union Advantage in Victoria

There were **50,500 union members** working in and around Victoria in 2011, over **34%** of all employees. Their weekly payroll of **\$47.5 million** accounted for slightly more than 40% of the total payroll for the whole community.

On average, unionized workers earned **\$5.25/hour more** than non-union employees. That union advantage translated into an extra **\$9.23 million** every week paid into the local economy to support local businesses and community services.



### What's the local Union Advantage? Difference in average hourly earnings with a union



### Union Wage Contribution to the Local Economy \*

Average hourly wage for workers with unions	\$27.02
Average hourly wage for workers without unions	\$21.77
<b>Union Advantage for local workers</b>	<b>\$5.25/hour</b>
How many workers are union members?	50,500
Union members as % of all employees	34.1%
Total weekly payroll for all workers with unions	\$47.5 million
Above as % of total community weekly payroll	40.1%
<b>What the Union Advantage provides to the local economy</b>	<b>\$9.23 million/week</b>

*\*Based on the average annual wages for 2011 in the local Census Metropolitan Area (Statistics Canada).*

To see the CLC's full study visit [www.canadianlabour.ca](http://www.canadianlabour.ca)

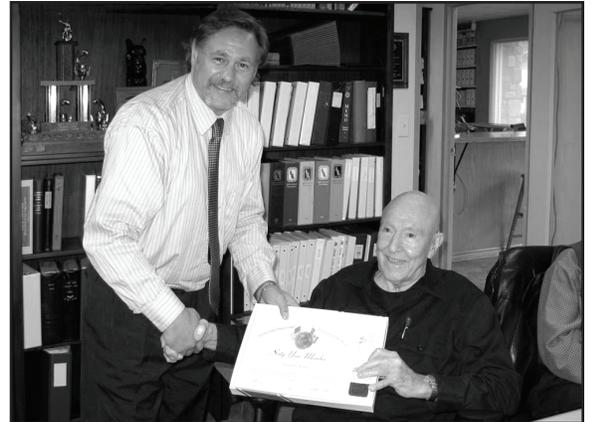
# Retirees Luncheon



Brothers Ted Browett, Gord Ells & Verner Fillman.

We facilitated our first up & down Island Retirees luncheon to distribute long service pins to retired Brothers Len Hale, Fred McCaffrey, Ken Krall, and Ted Browett all received their 55 year pin, Don Bentley Herb Mayer, Gordie Ells, and Herb Cordingley all received their 60 year pin, and Brother Vern Fillman received his 65 year pin, they all enjoyed an excellent a fantastic get together to talk about the old days over coffee and sandwiches. If you are a retired Local 230 Member and would like

to get together with some of the old gang next year please give Jen or Nicole a call in the office or send them an email at Admin@ibew230.org we would like to try doing this during the summer months this year.



Business Manager Venoit presents Brother Don Bentley with his 60 year Service Pin, unfortunately Don passed away a month later on January 22nd, his family and friends will miss him, labour lost a good soldier.

## Working While on (EI) Claim

As reported a couple of Newsletters ago last year's Federal Budget (Bill C-38) contained an overhaul to the Employment Insurance Program which will have deep and profound changes to the way many of our members in construction claim EI. Grouping our members in three different categories which are:

- Long Tenured Workers
- Occasional Claimants
- Frequent Claimants

The IBEW First District Office has been working with the Canadian Labour Congress and the Workers Commission for Employment Insurance to address the new negative changes impacting construction workers. They are looking for real stories of IBEW members that have recently or are currently going through the "Working While on Claim" reversion process.

Any Local 230 members currently experiencing difficulty with this process and would like to share their story please contact the Canadian Labour Congress Senior Economist Angella MacEwan by email amacewen@clc-ctc.ca These real life stories can be used to highlight the problems that are now occurring because of these unnecessary changes to our Employment Insurance Program. Each and every story will help build the case to show Stephen Harper's Conservatives went too far on these changes.

## BC Fed Convention

Local 230 attended the 55th Convention of the BC Federation of Labour, where Sister Michelle Laurie long-time President of the IBEW Local 258 contested President Jim Sinclair for the top job in BC Labour.

Michelle was backed by CUPE-BC, the Steelworkers, the Machinists and the IBEW however even with this large voting block of delegates she could not pull off a win. Provincially the IBEW attended with



Marine Unit Chairman Raj Takhar and Local 230 Training Coordinator Drew Garcia tend the Vancouver Island Building Trades oppose Bill C-377 Information Booth.

66 Delegates our largest contingent ever. Local 230 attended with our allotted 7 Delegates, and I would like to thank Business Representative Shane Scott for serving as a Sergeant of Arms, and Marine Unit Chairman Raj Takhar for sitting on the Balloting Committee. As well as, Business Representative Drew Garcia for running the Oppose Bill C-377 booth at the event, and sister Jackie Oliver for attending the Young Workers Conference preceding the Convention. There was a total of 1986 Delegates attending this year, and to provide contrast Alberta typically sees 1,000, Saskatchewan 400, Manitoba 500, Ontario 1,200 making BC one of the largest events in Canadian Labour.