



A PROUD HISTORY
A STRONG FUTURE

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(By email sunletters@png.canwest.com)

Letter to the Editor
The Vancouver Sun

Can "BC labour law force employees to 'buy' a union," as claimed in Tuesday's Sun?
Not by a long shot. The reality is that many workers who want to join a union can't get one because of undemocratic employer interference.

The opinion piece by long-time propagandist John Mortimore of the anti-union employer organization, Canadian Labour Watch, expresses outrage that the BC Labour Relations Board decided a union for Canadian Tire workers in Powell River should receive legal recognition, even though the vote results did not show majority support for the union.

This kind of decision, called a remedial certification, is made only in exceptional cases where excessive, prohibited employer interference makes a secret ballot senseless. The LRB decision, upheld on appeal, spelled out what that meant in Powell River: pay discrimination against union supporters; illegal discipline of union supporters; sudden wage increases to undermine union support; and a complete ban on expression of union viewpoints on the union bulletin board.

Mortimore fears the decision violates "the freedom not to associate implied in the Charter of Rights." What about protecting the freedom of employees to associate by joining a union? If anything, the case underlines the need for even stronger deterrence of employer interference.

Our polling consistently shows that hundreds of thousands of BC workers would join a union today, but fear employer retaliation if they try. In a truly democratic system, the decision to be represented by a union is one any employee should be free to make without being subjected to these tactics. It's really none of the employer's business

Yours truly,

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President

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