



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Longshore workers not planning strike notice

Vancouver (3 February 2011) The International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada has no plans to issue a strike notice at this time, contrary to statements by senior staff at the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association to the effect that a strike could begin as early as Monday.

In fact, the BCMEA and the ILWU are scheduled to be back at the negotiating table on Monday, February 7 and it is the ILWU's goal to reach an agreement that we have been in search of since bargaining started in January 2010.

"It is the height of irresponsibility for the BCMEA to make these comments which will only create uncertainty, a circumstance the BCMEA claims to be trying to avoid," said ILWU President Tom Dufresne.

Throughout the negotiations the BCMEA's primary agenda has been to seek legislative change to curtail the free collective bargaining rights of ILWU members, rather than to get an agreement.

An independent judicial tribunal – the Canada Industrial Relations Board – ruled just a few days ago that industry-wide bargaining is optional, not mandatory. Accordingly, the BCMEA's media statements predicting the shutdown of the entire Pacific coast industry are misleading and disingenuous.

The Board also found that the BCMEA's legislative agenda has "infected" and "overshadowed" the negotiations.

It's not surprising that the CIRB would come to this conclusion.

The BCMEA turned its back on a solution that was developed after months of thoughtful consideration by two highly respected and experienced labour relations experts – the Honourable Ted Hughes and Mr. John Rooney -- who served as special mediators. This reasonable solution was rejected out of hand by the BCMEA in favour of pressing its agenda to curtail the free collective bargaining rights of ILWU members.

"Irresponsible brinkmanship on the part of the BCMEA has brought us to this point. In spite of the fact that the BCMEA continues to prefer conflict over compromise, the ILWU remains ready to enter into a reasonable settlement that will bring prosperity and stability to the Pacific Gateway," Mr. Dufresne concluded.

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