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LIBERALS JOIN CONSERVATIVES TO KILL LABOUR BILL

OTTAWA - "With workers' rights at stake, Liberal leader Stephane Dion joined the Conservative government to kill legislation that would level the playing field for workers in federally regulated industries during a strike," said NDP Labour Critic Libby Davies (MP Vancouver East).

Bill C-257 had strong Liberal support at second reading, but the bill to ban replacement workers during a strike lost the final vote after a Liberal flip-flop that saw 29 Liberals switch their vote from yeas to nays.

"Under Dion's so-called leadership, support for workers' rights has just dropped by 30%," said Davies. "Almost 80 Liberals and 20 Conservatives voted in favour of the bill at second reading. At last night's final vote, only one Conservative stood his ground, and close to 30 Liberals, including Dion, followed Harpers lead to kill this bill," she added.

The legislation would have brought labour stability and evened the playing field for workers and employers. Similar long-standing provincial legislation in B.C and Quebec has seen the number and length of labour disputes decline while economic investment in those provinces has soared.

Western Arctic MP Dennis Bevington condemns Liberal flip-flopping over this issue. Over the past few months he has been contacted by several union workers and representatives in the Northwest Territories who asked him to fight for their rights and push this bill forward.

"Northerners are well aware of the dangers of hiring replacement workers during labour disputes, said Bevington. "This is very disappointing."

"Workers' rights have been chipped away at in Canadian legislation over the past 25 years. We saw almost nothing in this week's budget for Canadian workers and their families. Now, more than ever, we need to ensure that the collective bargaining process is protected under the law," said Davies.

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