

OFL/FTO

SID RYAN - PRESIDENT

May 3, 2010

Labour movement pays tribute to honoured brother, Tim Brown

The labour movement has lost an inspirational Aboriginal and human rights leader and a cherished friend with the passing of Brother Tim Brown, OFL Vice-President for Aboriginal Peoples and Chair of OPSEU's Aboriginal Circle who died of cancer April 25th. Known as a mediator, a man who brought reason and thoughtfulness to all discussions, Tim was unequivocal in his vision of economic and social equality for Canada's Aboriginal peoples. For more than a decade he used his passion and commitment to achieve a vibrant OFL standing committee. Even while dealing with the many physical challenges of failing health, Tim's love of his people and commitment to justice remained paramount. In early March, Tim and I met with Attorney General Chris Bentley to tackle government plans to diminish the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs. Tim was a man of principle and vision. We feel his loss deeply and send our heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones. Brother Tim Brown was a pioneer, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and son. He was born on Six Nations Reserve of Grand River. He was an Eagle Feather Carrier, a position of leadership and respect.



Queen's Park rally in support of Vale Inco strikers and anti-scab legislation

USW Sudbury workers on strike against Vale Inco were joined by hundreds of USW members at this week's Queen's Park rally. In my speech, I called on the government to immediately implement anti-scab legislation and condemned mining giant Vale Inco's announcement that it intended to resume full production by using "replacement" workers. As the company knows full well, this will only escalate tensions in Sudbury. While we were outside addressing the crowd Nickel Belt MPP

France Gélinas (NDP) was introducing anti-scab legislation. The ban on replacement workers during a strike or lockout used to be the law in Ontario. Labour disputes were settled more quickly and tensions and injuries were reduced. Three thousand USW members in Sudbury and Port Colborne have been on strike for nine months in their determination to win a fair contract. Vale Inco's recklessness is creating great damage to the economies of both communities.



Shoppers Drug Mart and the fight for lower generic drug pricing

I continue to give media interviews calling for support for the Ontario government's reform to reduce generic drug pricing by up to 50%. More than 1500 Ontarians have signed on to the OFL Facebook's page to support the reform. Many have taken direct issue with Shoppers Drug Mart calling its main role in organizing opposition "shameful," "harmful," and "opposed to the public's interest." "I think it is brazen of them to have the little independent pharmacies fight their battle for them"; "I would have hoped that the independent druggists would have seized the opportunity to recapture the market share they lost to the conglomerates." Click on the Facebook link on the OFL site (www.ofl.ca) and weigh in with your support for lower generic drug pricing.

International solidarity

This week, the OFL hosted a lunch and meeting with **Haitian labour leader Dukens Raphael**, Secretary-general of the Confederation of Public and Private Sector Workers (CTSP) who spoke of the need for solidarity, not charity, in the provision of aid to his country. He emphasized that public, not privatized services, must be established.

April 28: Thousands gather across province "Kill a worker, go to jail"

Day of Mourning events for workers killed and injured on the job took place across Ontario this week. I spoke at the Lindsey and District Labour Council ceremony, and on April 28th at the Toronto event at Nathan Phillips Square that was attended by more than 600 workers. I thanked the USW leadership and the hundreds of Steelworkers present for their tireless efforts in winning significant health and safety protection. The USW's stewarding of C-45, the Westray Bill, has given the labour movement one of its most important tools, a way to hold corporate executives, directors and managers who act wrongfully or negligently criminally responsible. In Ontario, in the first two months of 2010, there have been 86 deaths and 38,184 claims for work-related injuries and diseases reported to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Dilshod Marupov, the lone survivor of the Dec. 24th tragedy in which four workers fell to their deaths, was an honoured guest at the event. A sea of messages in Nathan Phillips Square "Kill a worker, go to jail" called on the provincial government to utilize C-45 as the best solution to preventing workplace deaths.



The January 12 quake, killed more than 300,000 people and left two million homeless. Three hundred CTSP members were killed and its headquarters was demolished . . . I also attended a meeting with human rights activist **Yessika Hoyos Morales, of the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective in Colombia** who is on a speaking tour opposing the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and is calling on the labour movement to redouble its efforts to block passage of this agreement. Since Jan. 2007, more than 100 trade unionists have been murdered.

Expert Advisory Panel on Occupational Health and Safety Update

The panel's consultation paper has just been released. It incorporates all of the issues raised by the OFL which are reflected either as direct additions to the paper or in the questions being asked. I am urging all unions to ensure they fully respond to the questions posed, the central one of which is: *What do you think about the occupational health and safety system in Ontario?* The scope of inquiry is wide. Deadline for response is June 30, 2010. The working groups are being set up. The panel next meets the first week in May.

