



February 25, 2009

Nova Scotia
Federation of Labour, CLC

OPEN LETTER

Premier Rodney MacDonald
PO Box 726
Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 2T3

Via fax: 424.7648

Re: New Brunswick- Nova Scotia Partnership Agreement on Regulation and the Economy (PARE)

Dear Premier:

It should come as no surprise that we have some very serious concerns regarding the 'surprise' announcement and intent of the New Brunswick- Nova Scotia Partnership Agreement on Regulation and the Economy (PARE) - First and foremost being caught broadside on a matter of this magnitude, one that has the potential to have an impact on many thousands of workers and jobs.

We have been in contact with our counterparts in New Brunswick who share our concerns regarding this matter and they are passing on this concern to their Premier.

However, one thing became abundantly clear from our discussions and that is although we are uncertain who had been a part of the consultations referred to in the PARE, those who represent workers, their families and their communities were obviously **not** a part of this consultation, which given the direction of this agreement, is a grave oversight.

The surprise nature of the announcement of the PARE, combined with the potential for negative impact on workers, their families and their communities flies in the face of the good will discussed during our meeting of January 8th, 2009 regarding the economic crisis and the need to work together on positive solutions to lessen the impact.

Mr. Premier, this action does not reflect this atmosphere of good will and the intent of establishing positive working relationship through ongoing consultations as discussed at what all had described as a positive meeting.

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On first glance at this agreement, several questions and concerns rush to mind, such as:

- If this agreement is designed to improve labour mobility and to "harmonize" standards, why were workers not consulted?
- Under similar agreements elsewhere, "harmonize" standards translates as accepting the lowest standards, while we believe that standards must be harmonized "up" rather than "down"
- Would this harmonizing of standards imperil existing inter-provincial standards such as the Red Seal?

An agreement and direction of the magnitude of the PARE warrants focused efforts to ensure maximum transparency and accountability before details of the agreement are finalized, if we ever hope to instill public trust and confidence in this direction.

To achieve this, government needs to consult widely, with business, labour, and the public at large, to ensure that the provisions it contains improve rather than harm public safety, environment protection, and employment standards.

We have many questions and concerns and would request that we have the opportunity to meet to discuss this matter with you; hopefully before this matter progresses further.

We have also copied this correspondence to the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development, as much of what appears to be destined to be harmonized is labour (employment) standards and related regulations, and we believe that we should be meeting with him as well on this matter at the earliest possible opportunity, preferably at the same time as we meet with you.

Yours truly,



RICK CLARKE

President

RC/jw/CAW Local 4005

Copy: Honourable Mark Parent, Minister of Labour and Workforce Development
Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Executive Council
New Brunswick Federation of Labour
Media