



PRESS RELEASE from
Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, CLC

Restoring citizenship to “disposable” workers, most of them women

**N.S. Federation of Labour calls for debate on Temporary
Foreign Workers Program**

Halifax – The Nova Scotia Federation of Labour joins the Canadian Labour Congress in calling on all political parties and on all candidates to bring back decency to the treatment of workers from other countries who come to Canada legally on a temporary basis. Under the current Temporary Foreign Workers Program, most workers practically become hostages of their employers and cannot expect any of the minimum protections of Canada’s employment and labour laws. They are treated as “disposable” workers: when the employer is finished using them, they are forced out of Canada.

Federation president Rick Clarke says that if these workers are good enough to be invited to work in Canada, they should be invited as immigrants, on the path to citizenship, with all the workplace protections available to them and all the ability to exercise their rights.

There are more than 200,000 temporary foreign workers in Canada. Currently 59% of them are women.

“Most of these women don’t see Canada as the land of equality and opportunity,” says Clarke. “Their status breeds abuse, exploitation and social exclusion. They know that they risk immediate repatriation when they complain about not receiving promised wages, about excessive work hours, about health and safety concerns or about deficient accommodation. Their legal status in Canada prevents them from developing any solid relationship with people in this country because they are virtual hostages of their employers.”

“Unions around the world have designated October 7th as the World Day for Decent Work (www.wddw.org). As labour leaders and activists, we want, during this federal election campaign to highlight the precarious plight of the “temporary foreign workers” in Canada.”

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Canadian labour believes that the country needs a comprehensive and forward-looking jobs strategy. Immigration should be part of that plan that needs to focus also on upgrading and recognizing the skills of the current workforce, particularly those now trapped in precarious jobs.

“Canada’s demand for international workers should be met by reforming our current immigration program rather than doing end-runs around it to please certain business circles,” concludes Clarke.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, the provincial voice of the labour movement, represents over 70,000 workers. Web site: www.nsfl@ns.ca

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