

Statement



National Indigenous Peoples Day

June 21, 2019

As a union committed to social and economic justice for all, Unifor enthusiastically embraces National Indigenous Peoples Day and Indigenous History Month. There is much to celebrate in the enduring culture and achievements of Indigenous peoples.

This month is an important time to take stock of the state of Canada's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and the obstacles that remain to achieving its goals.

The backlash to the report of the inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) is evidence that there is still more work to do in confronting racist attitudes. The hijacking of the report's conclusions by those who would rather debate the definition of genocide is a shameful example of the kind of denial that perpetuates the marginalization and erasure of the (well-documented) Indigenous lived experience, both past and present.

Some of the same forces of denial are at work this summer in Canada's unelected Senate, where Conservatives worked to obstruct the long-awaited adoption of Bill C-262. The bill ensures that Canadian laws are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), something recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and adopted overwhelmingly in the House of Commons last year.

Senate Opposition Whip Don Plett and others made it clear that conservatives claim to be in favour of reconciliation, but when it comes to giving meaningful authority to First Nations, they will use undemocratic institutions to defend the status quo.

Unifor will continue to use its power to work towards genuine reconciliation. The union is proud to have contributed \$140,000 to support the construction of a training center for workers building the "Freedom Road", completed this month, connecting the people of Shoal Lake 40 with an all-weather road for the first time since 1915.

In the year ahead, Unifor re-commits to the national campaign for the adoption of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other efforts to recognize the rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

lhcope343

Tel/Tél: 416.497.4110 ext. 3762 | Toll-free/Sans frais: 1.800.268.5763 | Fax/Télé: 416.496.6552

Email: humanrights@unifor.org | Web: unifor.org

LOCAL #200