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Government Brings Down Bill C-257 to the Relief of Employers

--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22nd, 2007, St. John's, NL – Employers across the country are breathing a sigh of relief with the defeat of Bill C-257 in the House of Commons yesterday. The aim of Bill C-257 was to prohibit employers under the Canada Labour Code (federally regulated businesses) from using other workers, including existing non-bargaining unit employees, managers, and owners themselves, from performing the duties of employees who are on strike or locked out. Such a measure would essentially shut a workplace down and prohibit an employer from keeping the business afloat during a labour conflict.

The legislative changes would have had serious ramifications to the Canadian economy and to public safety, due to the federally regulated industries that fall under federal labour legislation including, but not limited to, transportation, telecommunications, and banking. Thus, this legislation would have affected the core infrastructure industries that serve as the backbone of the Canadian economy. As an example of a serious ramification of Bill C-257, 911 emergency services could have been disrupted, causing an immediate and serious danger to public safety, if representatives of the employer were unable to undertake the work of those employees on strike or lockout, to rectify any issue with the provision of that service.

Virtually all Canadian enterprises and Canadians themselves would have been affected by any disruption in service by Canada's infrastructure industries. As another example, if seaports were closed and air transportation halted, Canadians and their trading partners, who rely on an uninterrupted flow of goods, would be heavily impacted. Canada's trading partners would lose faith in this country as a business partner, resulting in a substantial loss of investment and capital to the Canadian economy.

As the representative for employers in this province in labour-related matters, the Newfoundland & Labrador Employers' Council commends the MP's who voted against this detrimental piece of legislation. Marilyn Tucker, President of the Employers' Council commented "The federal government must be commended for recognizing the importance of keeping the balance of power intact between union and management during labour negotiations – this is the basic principle behind labour legislation. Bill C-257 would have altered the Canadian workplace in the most unfortunate way and taken Canadian labour relations a step backwards. Now, we can continue moving forward in creating positive and healthy working relationships in workplaces all across this country".

The Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council is the lead business advocacy group on labour and employment-related issues in this province.

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