

Minister of Labour and Minister of the
Economic Development Agency of Canada
for the Regions of Quebec



Ministre du Travail et ministre de
l'Agence de développement économique du Canada
pour les régions du Québec

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0J2

DEC 15 2006

Mr. J. C. (Cliff) Mackay
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Railway Association of Canada
1401-99 Bank Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 6B9

Dear Mr. Mackay:

I am pleased to respond to your letter concerning private member's Bill C-257, which would amend the Canada Labour Code to ban the use of replacement workers.

As you may be aware, on October 25, 2006, members of Parliament voted on Bill C-257, which was then referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

The Government did not support Bill C-257 because the current provisions of the Canada Labour Code adequately protect employees involved in a legal work stoppage. Furthermore, the proposed amendments would disturb the delicate balance of bargaining power between unions and employers in the federal jurisdiction.

Historically, the Canada Labour Code has only been amended after consultation with the community it regulates, namely unions and employers. The adoption of changes to the Code, without consensus and support of those regulated by it, can be expected to lead to increased litigation and more adversarial labour relations.

Finally, there is no evidence that legislation banning the use of replacement workers would reduce the number or duration of work stoppages and benefit workers in federal jurisdiction.

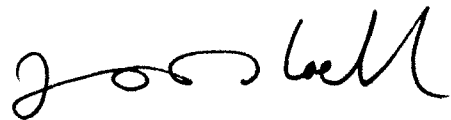
.../2

Canada

The Government is pleased that this Bill will now be studied in depth by the Standing Committee, which will undoubtedly hear evidence that will make it clear that this Bill is not in the interests of Canadian workers or the Canadian economy.

Thank you once again for writing and sharing your views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JP Blackburn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "P" followed by the name "Blackburn".

Jean-Pierre Blackburn, P.C., M.P.