



news release

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Ministers promote safety of young workers and prevention of violence in the workplace

Fredericton, New Brunswick — At their annual meeting, Ministers responsible for Labour underscored their commitment to the promotion of safety of young workers and prevention of violence in the workplace.

The meeting, which began on January 25th and concludes today, was co-hosted by the Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, and the Honourable Edward Doherty, Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour and Minister Responsible for the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat for the Province of New Brunswick.

“A safe and healthy workplace is a productive one that is good for workers, employers and the economy. The accident rate among the young is especially high and more must be done to help these workers,” said Minister Blackburn. “Furthermore, Canadian workers shouldn’t have to worry about violence on the job and as Ministers we will work with the stakeholders to eliminate this workplace threat.”

“As the Minister responsible for labour in New Brunswick, I am pleased to have co-hosted such a significant Minister’s Meeting,” said Doherty. “It is important to foster a safe and welcoming work environment for our country’s workers. Through this collaborative approach, we are able to share best practices to help reduce accidents and violence that sometimes occur in the workplace.”

In 2005, 1097 Canadians died as a result of work-related causes and another 337,930 work-related injuries and illnesses were reported. In addition to the human suffering caused by workplace accidents, the total of compensation paid out to victims, and other related costs, is estimated to be over \$8 billion. Accident and injury rates are highest among young workers.

With this in mind, Ministers expressed special concern about the health and safety of young workers in Canada. A joint statement on the importance of health and safety education was unanimously endorsed by Ministers. Through this statement, the ministers aim within their respective responsibilities to promote the inclusion of health and safety awareness and training in elementary, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions; to encourage partnerships among government departments and agencies responsible for education and occupational health and safety; and to foster greater inter-ministerial cooperation in these areas. This step is a follow-up on commitments Ministers made in March 2006 in Whistler, B.C. when they adopted a joint statement emphasizing the importance and benefits that healthy workplaces bring to Canadian society.

Ministers also discussed Canada's international labour activities and labour standards, including the recently completed review of federal labour standards headed by Professor Harry Arthurs.

The Ministers responsible for Labour meet every year to share experiences and promote cooperation among labour jurisdictions in Canada. Throughout the year, ongoing work continues through the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation (CAALL).

- 30 -

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