

## **Merit Canada Applauds Passage of Union Transparency Bill**

June 26, 2015 (OTTAWA): Today's passage of Bill C-377 by the Senate means that long overdue labour organization transparency requirements are set to become a reality in Canada, just as unions and their affiliates are stepping up efforts to influence the next federal election.

"I congratulate Senators for supporting union financial transparency and rejecting the self-interested arguments being peddled by many union leaders, who for some reason fear having a public spotlight on their expenses," said Terrance Oakey, President of Merit Canada.

"In light of revelations about union corruption and financial mismanagement stemming from the Charbonneau Commission, a criminal investigation into the leadership of the Ontario Provincial Police Association and blatant attempts to influence electoral outcomes, arguing that there is no need for public transparency and accountability of union finances is untenable," added Oakey.

This Private Members Bill will require labour organizations to report annually their financial statements, salaries paid to senior employees, the amount of time spent on lobbying and political activities, and certain information about expenditures over \$5,000. This historic legislation will bring public transparency to the over \$4-billion that unions collect annually in forced contributions from Canadian workers.

"Canadians believe that labour organizations must be accountable for the benefits they receive at public expense, and this legislation will bring Canada's union financial disclosure laws in-line with countries like Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States," stated Oakey.

A 2011 poll by Nanos Research found that 83% of Canadians and 86% of union members agree that unions should be required to disclose how they spend their dues.

"Transparency and accountability are fundamental to democracy. If labour organizations want to enjoy the dual benefits of mandatory dues collection and beneficial tax treatment, they must earn it by operating in a transparent manner," continued Oakey.

Merit Canada also offered thanks to the sponsor of the Bill, MP Russ Hiebert, and those Senators who fought to force a vote on it.

"I wish to acknowledge the leadership and commitment of the Bill's sponsor, Russ Hiebert, and those Senators who recognized the importance of holding a vote on this important issue," stated Oakey. "Their dedication and commitment to this Bill were instrumental in seeing it progress through Parliament. I would also like to thank all those Members of Parliament and Senators who ultimately supported this legislation."

**About Merit Canada**

Merit Canada is the national voice of Canada's eight provincial Open Shop construction associations. Open Shop companies and workers build more than 70% of the industrial, commercial/institutional, and residential construction projects coast to coast to coast. As of June 2011, the Canadian construction sector employed 1.26 million Canadians with 900,000 working in the “open shop” sector.

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