

COALITION OF BC BUSINESSES

Misinformation peddled about the labour code

Special to the Vancouver Sun

Friday, February 17, 2006

Re: A Challenge For Campbell – Feb 14

Jim Sinclair's penchant for repeatedly peppering his rhetoric with misinformation reminds me of English writer Samuel Johnson's quote, "Many falsehoods are passing into uncontradicted history."

Crying out for particular contradiction is Mr. Sinclair's claim that the BC Labour Code needs to be balanced to "stop employer intimidation and harassment of workers seeking to form a union." Such activity is already prohibited - which Mr. Sinclair should well know.

It was a New Democratic Party government that amended the Labour Code in 1992 to give employers the right to communicate reasonably held beliefs to employees so long as they did not use intimidation or coercion. A series of subsequent BC Labour Relations Board rulings left employers feeling intimidated from communicating with their own employees. In 2001, the government did no more than ensure the right to communicate truly existed: the restriction on intimidation and coercion remains and has been enforced by the Board. In fact, the Board continues to give unions a broader right to communicate to employees.

Sinclair blames changes to labour laws and employment standards for declines in the well being of working families. The fact is BC posted the largest job growth of any province last year thanks in no small measure to the certainty, fairness and stability brought about by these changes.

Kevin Evans is Chair of the Coalition of BC Businesses