

From The Hall

I.B.E.W. Local 2067

Newsletter #31 / September 29, 2021



Message From International Vice President Brother Tom Reid

Greetings:

Started in 2013, Orange Shirt Day helps increase awareness of the effects of residential schools on Indigenous communities in Canada. The name comes from the story of Phyllis (Jack) Webstad. On her first day of residential school at 6 years old, she had her orange shirt taken from her, a gift from her grandmother. This shirt was a symbol for a much bigger system at play. Indigenous children were taken from their families and were stripped of the culture that was theirs.

Orange Shirt Day helps to continue the conversation and efforts around reconciliation. Those who have suffered tell their stories and continue to heal. For the rest of us it's about supporting our Indigenous brothers and sisters that have been affected and to remind ourselves that Every Child Matters.

In 2017, Member of Parliament Georgina Jolibois submitted private member's Bill C-61 calling for a national holiday. The bill passed through the House of Commons on March 21, 2019, but never made it through the Senate before the next election was called.

On September 29, 2020, Canada's Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault tabled Bill C-5 proposing that Orange Shirt Day become a national statutory holiday, similar to previous bill by Georgina Jolibois. The new holiday would be officially named the "National Day for Truth and Reconciliation". On May 28, 2021, the day after 215 children's bodies were discovered in an unmarked cemetery on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian

Residential School, all parties in the House of Commons agreed to fast-track the bill and it passed in the House of Commons by unanimous consent. The bill passed the Senate unanimously six days later and received royal assent on June 3, 2021.

This September 30th, we ask that you take some time to learn about the history of the residential schools and work towards ensuring something like this never happens again. A great place to start is reading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action. We also encourage you to take action by sending a letter to the Prime Minister and asking him to make reconciliation an urgent priority for the new government. Finally, we ask that you wear an orange shirt to show solidarity with our Indigenous communities.

To learn more about the history of Orange Shirt Day or how you can take further action towards reconciliation please review the statement from the Canadian Labour Congress which includes a variety of links and resources.

In solidarity,

Tom Reid
International Vice President

The Business Office will be closed on Thursday September 30th, 2021.

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