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**This presentation is been made on behalf of the Thompson Labour  
Commiftee**

The Thompson Labour Committee (TLC) membership is comprised of union members from all areas of the working peoples in the City of Thompson: industry, commerce, and government. We are 2700 members strong and have much experience working with the present Act.

For years the TLC, in conjunction with the Manitoba Federation of Labour, has addressed issues surrounding the administration of the Workers Compensation Act in Northern Manitoba. We welcome the opportunity to voice some concerns, as there is no doubt that this review is important and necessary.

First though, I would like to commend the government for funding several Worker Advisor positions and situating them in the City of Thompson. Thank you. This is a wonderful gesture but was too long coming. The Workers Advisors for the region covers Thompson with a population of 16,000, and a host of other smaller communities. If one was examining population levels alone the workload may not be too bad, but one has to focus on the travel that is required in the northern regions to thoroughly complete the job as required. Travel may take up a significant portion of the Advisor's daily routine. Not only is the need for the Office to remain in Thompson to service the people of the North but it has to be adequately supported both in financial terms and in manpower. There is no doubt that this office needs to become a permanent fixture in Thompson for all the residents of the North.

Affiliates are telling me that providing Workers Compensation service to our

community was tremendously enhanced with the establishment of the Thompson office. No longer do individuals have to travel down to Winnipeg to have their case reviewed therefore the extra travel expense is no longer a concern.

Secondly, there has to be a continuation of the Workers of Tomorrow and other like education programs. This review should ensure that the Workers of Tomorrow becomes a fully funded program, as this is the best way to fight injuries and death. Who knows how many of the 18 workplace deaths that occurred in Manitoba in 2003 would have occurred if the workers would have had the opportunity to learn about a safer and healthier workplace.

TLC strongly believes that any changes to the Workers Compensation Act have to include stronger language mandating responsibilities for the owner/managers and increasing their liabilities. All workers should be included under the Workers Compensation Act so we have a truly representative system allowing all workers the opportunity for coverage in the event of an accident. Compensation for injuries should be set at the workers salary or at least a higher percentage that is presently allowed. Along with this the system of appeals should be reviewed, as it has been too long that the burden of an unfair decision be left entirely to the worker.

We believe that in Manitoba it is time to make changes that enhance the Worker Compensation Act. Employers should look past the monetary issues and to the betterment of their workers who should be their lifeline to prosperity and a strong future. The new legislation should be written in a manner that is consistent with the employer having responsibility for their actions and for the safety of all the workers in that workplace,

Thank you

Thompson Labour Committee