

Letter to Yvonne Jones, Feb. 2018

Wabush, NL

AOR 1B0

February 12, 2018

Ms. Yvonne Jones
Member of Parliament
Ottawa,

Dear Yvonne:

Well 2017 has come and gone and the retirees of Wabush Mines are no further ahead than we were in 2015 when Cliffs filed under CCAA and were granted permission to curtail funding the pension plan of the employees; reduce our pension benefits and terminate our medical plan and life insurance benefit. Since that time there has been no support from the Federal Government on the plight of our people or for that matter, no assistance for any retirees in Canada who have been placed into the same predicament as we have been in for going on 3 years.

When you attended public meetings here in Wabush on our issues, you indicated that you felt what was done to us was an “injustice”. But what has this Federal Government done to correct this injustice – absolutely nothing – and there are no plans for this Government to do anything to correct what big business is doing to the workers in Canada who spent their lifetime striving to reach retirement and have a decent lifestyle in the later years of their lives?

I recently listened to Justin Trudeau’s presentation in Davos and the questions that were put to him by a reporter on the situation of pensioners – especially the Sears issue. Mr. Trudeau indicated that the government would be there to support people going through difficult times. He indicated that the government has programs in place to support retirees – CPP and EI. I can’t believe that he said this – the CPP is not monies from government – it is monies that all workers in Canada paid into for their lifetime in order that they could draw this upon their retirement – and I might add that we do not get the total amount of what we paid in – we only get a portion of this. This money is not government monies – it is the

monies of the hard working Canadians who worked and paid their CPP Benefits. The Government is only the distributor of these funds. And to add to that, a few years ago the government took 18 billion dollars out of the CPP Plan for what? Who knows? And as for EI – the majority of retirees are not eligible for EI upon retirement. In order to be eligible for EI, people have to return to work and obtain the required number of hours to be in receipt of EI. How can he actually state those things in public when this is incorrect information? We are not illiterate people - if he thinks we are then he is sadly mistaken.

Governments are in place to administer fairness to all members of Canadian society which includes companies as well as employees. When companies promise wages and benefits they have an obligation to live up to what they promised – no more and no less. Government must put laws in place to ensure that is exactly what happens. Many of us are stockholders in business in this country and we do not want ill-begotten gains that are stolen from employees, but a fair and ethical return.

Mr. Trudeau also indicated that the government continues to look for ways to support people who are experiencing financial difficulties. We are not asking for the government's financial support – we are asking for the government to change the laws on our behalf so we can obtain what we worked for in our lifetime – we are not looking for a handout. He expects corporations to be responsible, as behavior of the past that put profits before people cannot continue. There will be profits for shareholders but their must also be benefits for people. It must be great to be able to give lip service to people, but when you cannot put those words into action and do or say nothing as Cleveland Cliffs continues to make profits in the US while it walked away from Canada leaving the people who worked for them in a sad state of affairs is not “looking for ways to support pensioners” Maybe we should have Theresa May come to Canada and take care of this situation as at least she did have the gumption to take care of the workers in Britain (see: Theresa May: “I will fine greedy bosses who betray their workers” • PM pledges tough rules to tackle pension abuse).

Mr. Trudeau continues to say that he is taking care of the “middle class” people. That is nothing but a farce. He has done nothing to help the middle class people – the majority of retirees are middle class people. What has this government done to help them? The cost of living continues to rise and

tax increases and carbon taxes for people who are on a fixed income. Is that what this government calls helping people? The money of the taxpayers being wasted and squandered with not a second thought on who put that money into this government or who is paying the salaries of the people who are supposed to be representing us or what the government could do to fix the situation we are in. Mr. Trudeau acts like a dictator. He was not elected to be a dictator. It seems that none of our Federal Representatives get to express their opinion on any issues – it is his way or no way. Well this government was elected to represent the people and we want this representation from all of our elected representatives.

As far as I am concerned we have people in our government who are there for only one thing – to line their own pockets; to be able to retire with a pension. And we want the unethical and untrustworthy behavior to cease and stop brushing the issues under the rug because no one wants to answer for the actions of the people in this government. Government officials should be required to answer for their actions and stop hiding their illegal and immoral behavior. When it is someone else that acts inappropriately, they are quick to remove them from their position. That doesn't happen when they act inappropriately. It's about time for ACTION and not WORDS. Does anybody in this Federal Government have any stamina to stand up and challenge the workings of this Prime Minister? I am sure I speak on behalf of a great number of Canadians when I say that WE elected all members to work on our behalf and it's about time that all of you started earning your pay instead of ignoring us and hope we will go away. IT WON'T HAPPEN.

Yours Truly

Rita Pynn
Co-Chairperson
Wabush Pension Committee