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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

" It is the nature of babies to be in bliss. "

Lockout a "disgrace"

More than 250 march in support of out-of-work Highland fish plant employees
By TERA CAMUS Cape Breton Bureau

GLACE BAY — More than 250 people gathered Friday for a rally to support two dozen workers who were locked out of Clearwater's Highland Fisheries plant in Glace Bay nearly 13 weeks ago.

After marching through some downtown streets singing Solidarity Forever, workers and their families, other union members and election candidates moved inside the Bayplex to demand the province intervene in the labour dispute and get the workers back on the job.

"I am so overwhelmed right now by the loving support shown by people in my community. . . . I could cry," said locked-out worker Debbie Simms of Local 4622 of the Canadian Auto Workers.

"Morale now couldn't be better," she said.

"We're stronger than when we first started. They pretend we don't exist but guess what, we're here and we're going to stick together."

National CAW president Buzz Hargrove said Premier Rodney MacDonald should "be ashamed" for not mediating a settlement between the company and the workers, who were asked to take a wage cut to \$10 per hour — what they earned 13 years ago.

When they refused, the company locked out union members, most of whom have worked at the plant for 20 to 30 years.

"This is a message for the premier through the media here," Mr. Hargrove said.

"It's a damn disgrace that you've haven't seen fit to put a mediator in here to put the parties together to resolve this dispute. Shame on you," he said.

"It doesn't take a brain scientist to figure out something is wrong here."

He said Clearwater's owner, John Risley, is getting rich by scooping up fish quotas and mc processing to other countries like China, where the market is heavy and the wages are ch



National CAW president Hargrove urged the pr get involved in the ong at Highland Fisheries. Camus / Herald)



Locked-out workers ar supporters marched th streets of Glace Bay or protest the ongoing lo Highland Fisheries. (Te Herald)

Deepak Chopra

"There should be no choice for a wealthy owner to say, 'We're going to process it elsewhere' Hargrove said.

He also added that the fish quota off Nova Scotia should be processed in the province.

He said the workers just want to get back to their jobs.

"I believe the government is the only one who can bring this company back to the table," Hargrove said.

"We are willing to work with the company to improve productivity and product," he said.

"Don't ask to cut wages to \$10 an hour — it's not fair and not just. We shall overcome. We overcome."

Rick Clarke, president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, thanked other unions, including Communication, Energy and Paperworkers, whose Local 972 members at Stora Enso in Pictou have been locked out since January but who showed up to lend their support.

"We have to make sure the natural resources of Nova Scotia are producing Nova Scotia jobs," he said, echoing Mr. Hargrove's comments.

"You can't bargain by extortion."

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador changed its legislation years ago to ensure companies profiting by its offshore quotas are processing that fish inside the province.

This province has no plans to do likewise.

Mr. MacDonald told The Chronicle Herald during an earlier campaign stop in Sydney that he believes in "free trade" among jurisdictions.

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