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national farmers union

In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HARPER GOVERNMENT LAW-BREAKERS, NOT LAW-MAKERS

A Federal Court ruling in favour of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) marks the third time in the last 11 months that the Harper Government has been found guilty of breaking Canadian laws. The latest decision, handed down June 19 in Winnipeg by Judge Roger T. Hughes, ruled that the gag order imposed on the farmer-run CWB in 2006 was unconstitutional and illegal.

In his judgment, Hughes stated it was clear the government's intent was to silence the CWB on the single desk issue.

The court ruling proves the Harper Government went beyond its legal authority when it imposed the gag order, stated National Farmers Union (NFU) President Stewart Wells.

"Every time the Harper Government has been challenged in court, they have been found to be breaking Canadian laws," said Wells. The Harper Government was also found guilty of breaking the law by a Federal Court in July 2007 after farmers challenged the government's attempt to remove barley from the CWB single desk through a Cabinet Decree. The Harper Government went on to lose an appeal of that case in February, 2008.

"The Harper Government has been wasting millions of dollars of taxpayers' money through these malicious and illegal actions," said Wells, adding the government has also cost farmers millions of dollars in legal fees by forcing them to go to court to fight for basic democratic rights and the right to free speech.

"I am also confident that any fair-minded observer would agree that the Harper Government is currently stealing money directly from farmers by forcing us to pay the severance package of Adrian Measner, the former CWB CEO who was fired without cause by Harper against the expressed wishes of the farmer-elected CWB Board of Directors," he said. "The government created this wasteful cost all by itself, and the government must foot the bill."

During the court hearing, it was revealed that the Harper Cabinet had planned to fire Measner at least 4 months before he was actually fired. "This was a premeditated career assassination," concluded Wells, "The action forced the CWB to spend considerable farmer money initiating a new CEO search, and continues to see the government stealing farmers' money directly from the pooling accounts."

“Speaking at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture convention a few months ago, Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz named those who supported these illegal actions and then went on to threaten farm organizations that dared to stand up on behalf of their members. The threat has scared many into silence, but luckily federal judges are not so easily cowed,” concluded Wells.

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