

MEDIA RELEASE

7 October 08

Disabled worker demographic brings direction to health issues in this election.

Vancouver, B.C. – CFRO Co-Op Radio, 24 September 2008, The Election Show hosted and produced by Darrell Powell where he grilled Jack Layton, Elizabeth May and Carolyn Bennett on behalf of Stephane Dion - neither Duceppe nor Harper made themselves available - on their positions on a national health strategy. For more information on the show go to www.coopradio.org, Archives 24 September under “Discussion” and look for The Election Show, by Darrell Powell.

On CBC Newsworld yesterday health was shown to have moved to #1 in voters minds in this federal election. Powell said: “The need for a paradigm shift in health, which must be integrated with social and other federal policies to determine national standards, should be a significant election issue”. “Insurance Companies and Workers’ Compensation should not be steering the health system and government agendas”, he said. Health outcomes must be measured by national standards, established by the federal government based on recommendations by the World Health Organisation and its position on the social determinants of health.

Powell invites the media to reassess their election issues coverage in these last few days leading to the 14 October vote and put a National Health Strategy at the top of the list.

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Contact: Darrel Powell – removed for archive [_____](#)

Darrell Powell was an Official Witness to the Senate Committee on Mental Health. He is a national advocate for health and disability issues for disabled workers and their families.

The week of October 6th is Mental Health Awareness Week.

Transcript attached:

The Election Show with Darrell Powell
Airing on "Discussion"
Co-Op Radio 102.7
Wed. Sept. 24, 2008
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Darrell Powell: Good evening. This is “Discussion” on Co-op Radio. My name is Darrell Powell. This is CFRO, 102.7 FM Co-op Radio in Vancouver.

This is the “Election Show.” I have Mindy Barrett here as co-host, and who’s come all the way down from Prince George to join me. And we have invited the leaders of the parties across Canada involved in the election to take part in this tonight—this show tonight—to talk specifically about health, and about health outcomes for workers and their families across the country, especially bringing equity and equality, and health outcomes that are appropriate for workers who are disabled due to occupation, and their families.

I’m replacing Charles Boylan tonight on Discussion. Charles is a candidate, and we will be interviewing him as well, for the party he is running for tonight for the election.

And so I think we’re going to move on now. Mindy, let’s say hello. Are you there?

Mindy Barrett: Oh, yeah, hi, I’m here.

Darrell Powell: Okay. We’re going to move into this here. We’ve got some good interviews tonight. Now, all the leaders were approached for this show tonight, and with a very simple, narrow focus of health and health outcome. And most were very gracious with the interviews.

We have Jack Layton, who will be on tonight. These are—two are pre-recorded. Jack Layton’s is pre-recorded, and for the NDP. We have Elizabeth May for the Green Party, and we have Carolyn, Dr. Carolyn Bennett will be standing in on health issues for the Liberal Party and Stephane Dion. Gilles Duceppe could not make it. We had two days of discussions, and I think he wanted to be in on this, but he couldn’t do it tonight, and has promised another time after the debate.

So, the Conservatives, I had a little bit of a hard time, Mindy. I phoned them four times, and he's got so many public relations people—Harper—that I didn't get the feeling that he thought a show to this demographic was important. That was my feeling. But it's hard putting this together. You've seen me put some of this together.

Mindy Barrett: Oh, I sure have. Yes. And it's been very difficult as it is to try and get our issues to the table, and get it out to all Canadians, and around the world on what it's like to be disabled by occupation. So, it was very important to get the Harper Government to make a statement, and see how they were going to help us along with the issues that were on the table tonight.

Darrell Powell: Mm-hmm. Yeah. And we did pretty good really considering. Most were very, very good with it. I think what we're going to do, because we are a little bit behind tonight, is we're going to head right into some of these interviews, and we can talk in between. What do you think?

Mindy Barrett: It sounds good to me.

Darrell Powell: Okay. So, the first interview is going to be with Elizabeth May from the Green Party. And we'll just check with our tech here and see if it's ready to go. Hold on. Just hold on, folks. This is hard work here. We've got a little bit of a tech problem. We can't get the sound out of the board here. Charles?

Mindy Barrett: Just hold on tight, everybody.

Darrell Powell: Okay. Mindy, can you just take this here, and—?

Mindy Barrett: Sure I can. So, to all the Canadians out there, and disabled-by-occupation workers, it's very important for us to really get these issues on the table, as I know myself as being a disabled worker, I have had a lot of diversity, and difficulties dealing with compensation, as well as having to deal with the— with my injuries.

And now I think we've almost got ourselves intact with the interview with Elizabeth May. And thank you very much, Elizabeth, for coming today, and voicing what you feel is going to help us along with the issues that we have raised.

Anyhow, we're not quite there yet, but we're getting there. And, as you know, Darrell Powell and myself and Charles Boylan, and there are a few others across Canada have been really working hard at trying to get these issues out on the table, and resolve what's been going on with disabled workers. And it's been very difficult as it is, and I know a lot of people across the country that

I've been in touch with all the way from B.C. to Nova Scotia, have a lot of things to say about what has happened to them, and how this has affected their lives and their families.

Darrell Powell: Yes, Mindy, that's great. Okay. Now, we've got a tech problem with our board here. So, we're going to take it straight off the portable device, and we're going to give this a shot. So, you're going to hear a bit of static, because it's going to be unfiltered.

So, this is the interview with Elizabeth May just before she got on her whistle stop tour in Vancouver here. And we're going to go for it now.

Interview with Elizabeth May

Darrell Powell: So, Elizabeth, very nice to meet you. This is for I mentioned on Co-op Radio where I'm having the leaders on to talk about their party's position on health and disability and health equity across Canada. So, I'll give a bit of a preamble, Elizabeth, and [inaudible] as your party position, or where [you see going with this area]. The working class and the middle class standards across Canada, in the family, are in a health crisis and as you probably know. And so, what I'm looking at is like where do—does the Green Party have a position on where they're going to go, because there's also a problem with workers and their families of post-injury occupational injury. They're absolutely devastated and not being supported by the structures that are to help them, or considered in the same group or class of persons as disabled persons in Canada. And so I was wondering if you were aware of this—are you aware of this, and where your Party would go on this, or—and what your position is in that area of [inaudible] disability and human rights.

Elizabeth May: *Well, Darrell, first of all, thanks for asking me that. The Green strategy and policy around people with disabilities is really robust. And, of course, there are a lot of other parts to our platform that are relevant. I wish to say that we want to work towards a guaranteed livable income for all. The situation is raised when someone is suddenly—a traumatic incident happens in the workplace, there's quite a delay in support coming through. And sometimes, you have to prove you're disabled, and there's no income to support in the intermediary period. That would no longer be as a traumatic event if we had guaranteed livable income because there wouldn't be those holes to fall through.*

Personally, I used to practice in Worker's Compensation law. So, I know a lot about the extent to which people can be left hanging in a period when they're looking for a disability payments to kick in, or for their Worker's Comp to cover during the time that they are recovering.

But our broad approach, let me just say right off the top, that we're very aware and concerned about the fact that there are disproportionately large levels of poverty around people with disabilities. The system is failing. And we need to address this issue in a comprehensive way. So Green [Inaudible] and recommendations of the [inaudible] Institute, and a number of other organizations [inaudible] to support legislation of the Canadian Disabilities Act to bring together all pieces of the framework of what needs to be done. We just today actually did a press release supporting the National Action Plan and exclusions. And we have a very detailed program that includes, of course, reporting at the United Nations level, the convention for the rights of the disabled.

But just giving you a sense of right away what we would do, [with] the conversion of disability tax credits, the refundable credit is a first step in creating that national basic income program, establishing a rigorous needs-based eligibility standard for basic income so that an affordable system has the supports. And redesign the Canadian Pension Plan and Disability Benefit test to incorporate the definition of disability and [inaudible] employment rather than this current situation for a [client's] severe disability.

Just recently, I was helping a man in my community who is disabled. His doctor is saying he can't work. But somebody sent out a video camera, and saw him walking behind a lawnmower for half an hour. [Inaudible]. I mean he was able to walk behind his lawnmower for half an hour. So, we need to have a comprehensive system that provides basic income support [inaudible] rights for the disabled, and immediately for to provide a boost to the income supplement that disabled persons receive.

Darrell Powell: That's very good. That's excellent. So, you're going to be looking at actual health outcomes?

Elizabeth May: Yes.

Darrell Powell: And for people? So, any discussions through the election and through the work with the Green Party further on, you're going to be inclusive of disabled workers as with other disabled people across Canada?

Elizabeth May: Absolutely. And I forgot to mention one other part of our program is Mr. Harper—well, part of his program recently, but I know that he—this week, he allowed for income splitting for parents who are looking after a disabled child. Now, I just want to make it clear, our platform involves income splitting for all married couples. So, it's not [inaudible] obviously, it would help people who are caring for a disabled relative at home, but also help them care

for a parent who needs care, or just out of fairness, they shouldn't collect taxes on income that wasn't earned. So, there's a whole range of our tax fairness policy that are also going to help people in that category. But since Mr. Harper adopted our policy partially, I thought it was important that I mention that we do more than that, and everybody [inaudible] income splitting.

Darrell Powell: There's an [inspiration] of mental health and physical health, and [inaudible].

Elizabeth May: *I should say, our health policy embraces the definition of World Health Organization, but health is not just to be absence of disease or infirmity. Health is a complete state of physical, mental and even spiritual well-being. So, a complete state of health would be absolutely [inaudible].*

Darrell Powell: That's interesting. I suspect you've seen the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health?

Elizabeth May: *Yes.*

Darrell Powell: And the issue of the final report.

Elizabeth May: *That's right. And the single largest determinant of health is economic status.*

Darrell Powell: Right.

Elizabeth May: *Poverty is—if you wanted to have a health prevention policy to have healthy Canadians, you eliminate poverty. And that's core in our documents. The core of our [inaudible].*

Darrell Powell: Thank you very much, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth May: *Thank you for having me.*

Darrell Powell: All the best to you in the election.

Elizabeth May: *And anybody who wants to check our policies on anything [inaudible] people's disabilities, our platform is available on our website, and look under Vision Green, and if you're looking around the website, [it's] hard to navigate. But our policies are detailed in Vision Green.*

Darrell Powell: Okay. Thank you very much, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth May: *Thank you very much. Thanks for inviting me.*

Darrell Powell: Okay. So, that's the interview with Elizabeth May. And you can see what she's talking about, Mindy. She's talking about guaranteed annual incomes for people, and tax cuts for people with disabilities. And I mean this is a good—I'm really happy that—you probably are from hearing this—that she does—is noticing the standard of care, and what people are ending up with after an occupational disability, on Worker's Compensation, and the devastation that most Canadians are left in by these programs.

And so, consequently, there is a paradigm shift in the way health is viewed, and some standards to be set where people do not slip further and further down into poverty, on top of disability, on top of litigation with compensation. This is absolutely destructive.

So, from your position, you know what it's like to raise a family of four children. Fortunately, your injury did not happen to you while the kids were young, eh?

Mindy Barrett: That's true, yes. My kids were quite a bit older when it did happen. And I think most importantly for being a woman in the workforce, trying to have your own independence is extremely important. Working hard to achieve that is very difficult. So, with my situation though, I finally was starting to get some of that independence, and a good job under my buckle. And ever since I'd suffered from this disability, workplace injury, I have really had a very difficult time trying to regain my independence again, to take care of the family, and take care of myself. So, yes, it's been very difficult, you know.

Darrell Powell: You were lucky the family, the children were older and everything. But, you know, I've met so many people across the country like, you know, and they're not in that position. And so there are more Canadians being impacted from an injury or a fatality in the workplace. And really the health outcome from dealing with Worker's Compensation is definitely not meeting the standard for worker care. And this is a health problem across the county.

When I hear people talk about—I hear a lot of explanations as to what people would do, but sometimes people don't understand. Well, what good is a tax cut to somebody who has no income?

Mindy Barrett: Exactly.

Darrell Powell: So, we really have to take a different paradigm in health. But I think from that interview, we can see that she is—

Mindy Barrett: Oh, with Elizabeth May? Yeah.

Darrell Powell: Is recognizing that there is a definite problem with identity, and—for disabled workers, and parity with other disabled people across the country.

Mindy Barrett: Well, she really touched good on the World Health Organization, which is extremely crucial when we're including the United Nations. There is over 193 members through the United Nations that adopted the World Health Organization's Constitution. So, they—it's very important that we look at these reports. And when Elizabeth May touched on that, it's very crucial—the most recent report that had come out by the World Health Organization on Social Determinants of Health. And I'm really glad that she had the opportunity to review this, and how important it is to society, and to take better care of our health in the workplaces, and all around.

Darrell Powell: Yeah. So, basically, we can look at this as okay, is there somebody there that we can build some consensus with, with other people in Government on these issues of mental health integration, and the social determinants of health down the road, kind of like I've been advocating on, and how I think we can pretty much say that she would be one that we could work with, and build some consensus with.

Okay. So, now we're going to go to an interview with Jack Layton, and after that, Charles Boylan. So, we're just going to get set up here for a minute, and—there we go. And then we're just going to hit the “play” button after that, and see if it—see if this comes through this time. This is quite a high tech room here.

Mindy Barrett: I'm really, really glad to have these interviews with Jack Layton, and where his priorities are with health, and with his party—the NDP Party.

Darrell Powell: Yeah. Yeah. And I think we may—we're still having this problem. I'm going to have to run it through the same way with the other one. This one is quite louder, because we were outside with Elizabeth May. So, if I can just have a minute here.

Mindy Barrett: I just want to touch a little bit on WHO. Their final report that came out was very, very interesting. And just to give you an idea of some of the areas that they have touched on in this report, and I think it's really important that Canadians and people around the world should definitely be in touch with that over the Internet, to look up the World Health Organization, and really understand what this report is on, and how important and crucial it is to us.

Darrell Powell: Yeah, that report just came out a couple of weeks ago. So, Monique Bégin was on CBC Canada several times through the day talking about how social injustice kills. So, these are health issues, and this is why I've been pushing

disabled workers, or what some people call injured workers issues as health issues, and certainly with—in mental health as well.

So, we're going to go to the interview with Jack Layton now, and we're going to be running it through the same system. But you'll notice that it won't be outdoors. So, it'll be a little bit clearer, folks. Okay?

Interview with Jack Layton

Darrell Powell: [Phone rings.] Hello.

Jack Layton: *Darrell Powell.*

Darrell Powell: Yes.

Jack Layton: *Darrell, it's Jack Layton. I'm sorry I couldn't speak with you at the event earlier.*

Darrell Powell: That's okay, I know how these things go. Thanks for calling.

Jack Layton: *What's up?*

Darrell Powell: I've been doing interviews with the leaders on health outcomes for workers and their families for a couple of years for Co-op Radio, a bit more like an educational series on health disability and the law. And I'm going to be on tomorrow morning, and wondering if I could just ask you a question for the record on health policy of the NDP, and send out a reassuring word to disabled workers across the country, if that would be okay. And I can just say that I spoke to you, and—

Jack Layton: *Oh, please do.*

Darrell Powell: And on the radio, and the question is very simple. I think you'll like it. I'll do a little preamble here. The middle class have been—and which is the working class—have been devastated in the country, Jack, as you know. And the health for workers and their families is a critical issue in Canada. And I'm wondering if the NDP will be taking a paradigm shift in how health is viewed, and looking at health outcomes for workers and their families, and especially when they become disabled from an occupation, and what happens to them afterwards, and if you have a platform or a position that you're working on for that?

Jack Layton: *Well, first thanks a lot for the question, Darrell, and you are right. Health is absolutely front and centre for working people, for families, for people struggling with the challenges of poverty, or with disabilities. And our party believes that the healthcare system should be there for everybody who needs it irrespective of their financial means. And that's why, in this campaign, we're saying that it's time we got a prime minister who put forward those concerns front and centre every day, the concerns of the kitchen table.*

And when it comes to healthcare, we know that millions of Canadians don't have their own family physician they can turn to. There's nowhere near enough nurses and healthcare providers. So, we want to train a whole lot more. Plus we also have, many folks who have come from other countries with professional training in the health disciplines, but we don't let them work in those fields. That's nuts. Let's deal with that, and make sure they can get their certification.

Then there's the whole issue of medications. So many people do need some medications, and their doctor will prescribe them, but then they can't afford them. And that's why we propose a Pharmacare program.

And we're also very much against this approach the Conservatives are taking with the support of the Liberals to bring in a bill that makes it much more difficult to get access to traditional health medicines and natural health products.

Then there's the issue of looking after folks at home, just a little bit of homecare. A few hours of homecare can make such a difference to a family or an individual who wants that independence, and doesn't want to be—have to be in an institution with the full level of care, because (a) they don't need it, and (b) it's much more comfortable to be at home. But you need that kind of help. So, we've announced a full-fledged homecare program right across Canada.

And, of course, I also want to emphasize the need for long-term care, and for keeping our healthcare system public. That's absolutely vital. We can't have these privateers and profiteers coming in; otherwise, we're going to find that more and more people are going to get left behind, or get sub quality care.

So, that's how we put it forward. And, in addition to that, there's the work around the disabilities legislation to make sure that people, no matter what their level of ability, have full human rights. These are our commitments as New Democrats.

Darrell Powell: Exactly. I'm really glad you mentioned that, because this goes to what I'm saying, Jack, is that I've had thousands and thousands and thousands of people talk to me ever since I testified at the Senate Committee on Mental Health. And the biggest complaint that I have is that once workers become disabled, they're not viewed in the same class or group of persons in Canada as described in the Charter. And, in fact, they are subrogated. And the health outcomes for these people and their families is devastating due to the Worker's Compensation schemes in Canada. They're not looked after, and they're not viewed the same across Canada, and that was the biggest concern.

And that one small effort I made to the Senate Committee on mental health really gave people a lot of encouragement. I know from speaking to you before about mental health that you have a big interest in that and a very sincere one in integrating mental health properly with healthcare, and I do know that much.

So, are we going to have a focus on an inclusion of disabled workers with other disabled people in Canada when we're speaking of identity and health outcomes for Canadian workers?

Jack Layton: *Well, that's sure our approach in the New Democrats, and we're going to push it forward, not only in the election, but in the House of Commons as well, Darrell. And through your interventions, it took a lot of courage, and it wasn't easy to make that long trip to that hearing, but, boy, I can tell you, you had an impact on Parliament Hill, and I can tell that you've motivated an awful lot of people who have stayed in touch with you and your listeners on your program. And I want to congratulate you for the hard work that you are doing, because you're raising awareness. And I know it's not easy. It might have been easier to sit at home, and watch TV, you know, and not be active on these issues. But you've chosen to grab the torch, and I simply want to congratulate you on it, and our party will be working to try to move things along very much in the direction that you laid out. And I want to wish you well, and all of your listeners well, as well.*

Darrell Powell: Yes, and, Jack, the same to you. It's always been a pleasure of everybody I visit on Parliament Hill, and speak to in Government on these issues—even though I've done it enough to know, and there's quite a difference, and I think people are noticing this now, especially this election. I wish you all the best, and everybody in the NDP.

Jack Layton: *Thank you, Darrell, and October 14th, so let's go out and make some real change happen.*

Darrell Powell: Okay. Thanks, Jack.

Jack Layton: *Take care. Bye now.*

Darrell Powell: Bye.

Okay, Mindy, I think you're going to have to take the mic there. He's flattering me a little bit. There are many people who have pushed these issues, and worked very hard to advocate on these issues. And, you know, you, yourself sitting right beside me, so I can't take all the credit here.

I think the big thing is—tell me whether you agree—I mean you live up in Prince George area, at the top of B.C., can you give me a brief idea of the atmosphere up there? Are people willing to work together—the working class, the middle class that's been devastated, and people who are in—are they in fear of the Harper Government? Do they want to see better areas in health and social policy developed? Are they willing to work together, do you think, in order to do this?

Mindy Barrett: Absolutely. Absolutely. I truly believe that a lot of people up in the North, and Prince George, and surrounding areas, you know, a lot of them have lost their jobs recently with the forest industry being so low right now. It's just been unbelievable for the people up in that area. And I am pretty sure that they are willing to work very, very hard in establishing some sort of an agreement for all of us to better our health as well as the welfare of our families.

Darrell Powell: Mm-hmm. Yeah, that's great. I've been sensing it across the country. And I think this is—this election, people really are going to have to work together in order to stop this ideology from taking foothold any further in Canada, and so union or non-union, disabled or not disabled, this is about workers' families and their children and spouses. And it's about health, and welfare of the citizens of Canada. So, people are really going to have to work together on this.

Okay. Next, we're going to have—let me see—we're expecting Dr. Carolyn Bennett at 7:35 to 7:40. Is she on the line yet there, Charles?

Okay, we're going to go straight to Charles now. And, Charles, as you know, anybody who's heard my shows before, these were his shows except for tonight, because he is a candidate. So, I am interviewing Charles. He's running for Vancouver South for the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada.

Now, this Party has been around for a long, long time, hasn't it, Charles? Can you give me a breakdown on your Party's general position on worker and

worker health, and how much—how important is that to your Party in advocating on those issues, and pushing for those issues in Government?

Charles Boylan: *Well, first of all, Darrell, thanks a million for taking over this show tonight, and it's kind of nice to be on the other side of the mic [and you] ask the questions.*

Darrell Powell: I'm the boss tonight.

Charles Boylan: *Yeah, right on. And if your other guest phones in, we'll have to make a bit of a scramble to get around while I'm trying to be interviewed at the same time.*

Darrell, yeah, the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada is running candidates right across the country, and central to our Party's platform is the slogan "Accountability Begins At Home." And when we say accountability, we mean that the Government is meant to serve the public good, not to serve private interests, the profit of very few rich people. And so we say stop paying the rich; increase investments in social programs, like healthcare, like education, like social housing, and the like.

And the question for working people right across Canada is one of empowerment. You see, no matter how the debates go, and no matter how good the words sound from politicians at election time, the fact of the matter is the majority of Canadians, the working class first and foremost, is excluded from decision-making in public policy.

If you even just take the fact that there's not a single worker, let alone a worker politician with a strong stand on these questions in the House of Commons, it tells you something about the nomination process. By virtue of monopolizing the nomination of persons to run in the election, the so-called major parties have excluded the working people from having any say in who gets to be a candidate.

Darrell Powell: Right. I want to go back to something you touched on, because it's something that the World Health Organization has recognized, and that is involving people from the vulnerable groups themselves in the formulation of policies, especially health and social policies, which need to be integrated. And so that is something—a point that they brought out, and this doesn't mean the sort of always going to the traditional issue, constituency leaders or the leaders of groups or even labour. It means bringing in as well individuals from the vulnerable groups of—

Charles Boylan: *Well, what we're saying, Darrell, is that the citizens through their associations, through their workplaces, through their seniors homes, or*

communities, or whatever, they need to be empowered as the sovereign power in the country in order that they can select the candidates first, and then elect their representatives, and then those representatives go there with the program that has been set—the agenda—the political policy agenda set by the citizenry. This means that the people would be sovereign. They would have the power.

Now take the question of healthcare. It's clear that we do not have a modern definition of healthcare in our legislation. A modern definition of healthcare—and this is a standard of the working class, because it's the most modern class. It's the class that's engaged in modern production. It works collectively together with the most advanced means of production that produces the wealth in the country applying its labour to the natural world, and producing all the good things in life that the working class produces. And that class defines right as being inherent, so that we argue healthcare is a right for all. It's not a privilege. And healthcare is all-sided healthcare. It means the question of physiotherapy, dental care, pharmaceutical care, supplementary medical treatments, like naturopathy, homeopathy, and others. These are all inherent rights.

Now, the problem with injured workers, Darrell, is that the Constitution of Canada, like the relations of production in this country, and like the political system in this country, is totally outdated. It's a 19th century achronistic arrangement, because if you just look at the issue of—the question of injured workers, and their rights, ought there not, in a modern state, be a national standard of care for all injured workers? Why would it be segmented into ten provincial systems of Worker's Compensation Boards? Would there not—for the benefit of all the workers in this country, would there not be a system—would there not be a system of standards established at the Federal level that ensured that the worker who was injured—remember this is a worker who was coming from the class that produces all the wealth in the country—would not such a worker be fully guaranteed their compensation, full compensation, or a right to a livelihood with all their medical cares being—costs being looked after to that worker with no harassing efforts by a bureaucracy to shake that worker out of his livelihood, or to deprive them of their income, and create a kind of emotional and mental stress that has happened.

And as you know, Darrell—and you correct me if I'm wrong on these statistics—but I believe there's about 1,000 workers killed every year in this country, and about 900,000 injured, three percent of whom are seriously injured with permanent disabilities. Now, that's a phenomenal toll on life and limb in Canada. And we need a Federal standard set by the Parliament of Canada that ensures that no provincial compensation system in this country

can do the kinds of injurious attacks to workers, adding suffering to injury, from provincial compensation boards.

Darrell Powell: And the original social agreement, which is what I'm pushing for to be reviewed myself, really does need to be reviewed for all of Canadians. And it is going to be out of step with what is being in recommendation from the WHO, for example, and their Commission on the Social Determinants of Health.

So, we do need a paradigm shift in health. And I know that your Party has been—always had a strong supportive position for workers and their families. And we have had many shows together about disabled workers. So, I know this is a big issue to you personally as well.

Okay. Do we have a call from Dr. Carolyn Bennett yet? We're waiting for her to call. No call in yet?

So, Mindy, I don't know. I think maybe we should get you jumping in here somewhere. Again, we're going back to what it sounds like, we need a paradigm shift in the way health is viewed. And it sounds like social policy and other areas of governance must be healthy policy, and it must create and promote health.

Mindy Barrett: Exactly, Darrell.

Darrell Powell: So, you've read a lot of that report from the WHO.

Mindy Barrett: I definitely have, yes, and I think with the report in itself, and some of the areas that they have touched on—you know, in general, we're looking at the fair employment and decent work. I mean that's extremely important, under laws and policies, and things that we're supposed to be following.

So, they have touched on these different areas such as the right to health, and the right to the conditions for health. I mean the World Health Organization has been a part of our tradition since 1948. So, since that time, they've been investigating—every three years, they come up with a report. And it's not just on Canadians; it's worldwide.

With all of the issues that we're suffering from here in Canada with our health—mental health, and other health issues as well, they take a good look at what's been going on. And this latest report has been a three-year investigation. And the things that need to be changed, the right to health, the right to the conditions for health, you know.

Darrell Powell: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah, it's just a really—

Mindy Barrett: A political empowerment, inclusion and voice, you know, all of that stuff is extremely important, and I would definitely recommend that all Canadians, and people around the world definitely should have a look at this report.

Darrell Powell: Yeah. So, we're moving ahead with the Mental Health Commission being formed. But I think there's a lot of work to be done there yet. They're working in areas of stigma and discrimination. But I know when it comes to workers' issues, there is nobody there yet who's representing—who is actually representing post-injury disability, onset mental health. But I'm hoping that these things will come together and with the formation of a new Government, and things will start moving more—to a more integrated fashion.

Charles Boylan: *Darrell, I'm just wondering if I could just add one comment that I would like to have said before?*

Darrell Powell: Okay.

Charles Boylan: *Before ending my contribution to this discussion, and that is that the issue of empowerment as your colleague said, is so fundamental to all of this that unless the citizenry has some active role to play in reshaping the electoral system, we're going to be stuck in the same old "pick one of the parties" box, and I think that's a very dis-empowering thing.*

I think your call has come in though. And, Darrell, keep talking. I'll get her on the air.

Interview with Carolyn Bennett

Darrell Powell: All right. And, hopefully, this will be Dr. Carolyn Bennett, representing the Liberal Party of Canada. Here we go. Okay. I think we have Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Liberal MP, from Toronto. Do we have you on the line there, Carolyn?

Carolyn Bennett: *You do. I apologize. I was having trouble getting through. So, I'm through now.*

Darrell Powell: Okay. Good. That doesn't surprise me, because these shows that I've done usually crash everything—the phone lines, servers, everything.

So, anyway, I'm glad you've made it. Now, you've pretty much have got the scoop on the Liberal position on health, and what direction you want to go

with health. How do you see—with health, how do you see your Party's position on going forward with integration of mental health, inclusion of all disabled people in consideration of health outcomes, even people after an occupational injury, and disability, because we do have a problem there where it—that you've probably seen yourself.

So, do you want to fill us in quickly on sort of what trajectory you're going to go? Are you going to be looking at the social determinants of health, and the health outcomes for Canadian workers and their families, and especially for those who have a member of the family who is working and disabled, or has suffered an occupational disability?

Carolyn Bennett: *Well, absolutely, Darrell, and I was pleased to hear both of you chatting about the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health. I mean we know very clearly that the to just fund the sickness care system, or the repair shop model in the old-fashioned medical model just won't have our system sustainable. So, moving on all of the issues from poverty to violence to illness based on occupation, all of the things that we know are—from affordable housing, to injury prevention, all of these things are hugely important in terms of us being able to make sure that Canadians will get what they need when they need it.*

So, it means that I think, that we'll see in the Liberal platform, that there are—we need—beginning to sort of properly measure the health outcomes from asbestos-related diseases to the effects of pollution, occupational health and safety problems. We need better data than we have currently available, and we're committing to that.

We're also committing to work with the provinces to begin a Pan-Canadian profile on things like infectious disease and chronic disease, mental illness and injury because you can't manage what you haven't measured, and that we need to know that we can put interventions in there, and including the Canadian Health Measures Survey.

I mean I think all of the things that you've been working on so brilliantly around moving the full citizenship, and full security for people with disabilities or illnesses that, based on their occupation, means that we actually have to have a system that deals with that.

In the Liberal platform, we have begun by talking about CPP disability and being more flexible in dealing with people, particularly with mental health issues or the more cyclical ones. And as you know, one of the things that we've been really fighting for is to have the disability tax credit refundable for those Canadians not lucky enough to get to pay taxes, and for whom tax

credits don't really help, that we actually hope that they'll start to see that they will get a cheque from the Government for what we know is more costly in living with a disability—so from catastrophic drugs to all of the things. I mean I think that—I was there in Santiago when we launched the WHO Commission on Social Determinants. And I was so pleased to see in the report that it challenges every country to deal with all of these issues, but including the illness and disabilities by—that are due to people's occupation.

Darrell Powell: Yeah, I read the report, too, and, you know, I've been tracking it as well. So, I'm absolutely in agreement with you there. Compensation was not always where you had to fight to get even acceptance of what you needed to be diagnosed after a disability. And disabilities can turn into many other things. So, I think it really—you know, the trajectory in compensation.

I think from people I talk to across the country that everybody's realizing we need a paradigm shift in how we view health and social policy. And pretty much that would be your idea if the Liberals were in would be to take a step back, and take a look at really where we're going for the working dynamic family across the country, eh?

Carolyn Bennett: *Well, I think as you have taught so many people, that this impairment approach just doesn't work, and that when—sometimes when it's—workers are also caught in this, who pays the [limb] of first payor, and whether it's an insurance company, or whether it's a Workman's Compensation Board that they—the kind of stress and almost abuse that workers have to take just doesn't—isn't any interest of them being full citizens in our society.*

I think I wrote to Ontario Workers' Compensation Board, when I was a family doctor, Darrell, I wrote way too many letters saying that I couldn't believe that an organization of their stature could be treating people this way, and actually contributing to them staying unwell, and their total inability for some of them to understand that somebody who has had significant body betrayal because of an injury, that the post-traumatic stress, the kinds of things that happen in terms of a reactive depression, or any mental reaction to a serious injury is—must—surely any organization that's dealing with helping compensate for this can't be playing games the way they've been playing up till now.

So, I think we need to look at this seriously, and that—and I have been a little concerned, or a lot concerned, that the structure of the committees in the Mental Health Commission right now tend to look at occupational mental health problems more from a white-collar stress approach, and isn't dealing properly with the people who've been physically injured, and then have a mental health sequelae.

Darrell Powell: Well, Carolyn—Dr. Carolyn, thank you very much. I call you Dr. Carolyn. But Dr. Bennett, thank you very much. You know, we're almost going to wind down now for the end of the show. I'm so glad you could make it on. We did put the request out for everybody to appear, and the opportunity for everybody to appear from all the parties, and this was for the leaders. And so I'm glad you could step in, and put out the Liberal position on health.

I guess you noticed in the paper today the article in the National Post about these issues—health issues not hitting the election in through the media yet, in issues. So, did you notice that article today?

Carolyn Bennett: Yes. Yes. And so thank you for doing this, and with this wonderful show. And just keep up the good work.

Darrell Powell: Okay. Well, we're going to try. And thank you for phoning in. I think this is giving everybody a pretty good picture as to where the parties stand.

Mindy Barrett: Thank you very much, Carolyn.

Carolyn Bennett: Thank you.

Darrell Powell: Thanks, Carolyn.

Carolyn Bennett: Keep fighting!

Darrell Powell: Okay.

Mindy Barrett: Thank you.

Carolyn Bennett: Okay. Bye-bye.

Mindy Barrett: Bye-bye.

Darrell Powell: Bye. Okay. We're going to wind down here now. So, Mindy, I guess we had too many other people on tonight—important people.

Mindy Barrett: Wow! Yeah. And very good because they definitely touched on what we needed to hear. I think the most important thing with the World Health Organization, and it's something that I've really managed to grasp, is whoever ends up becoming the party leaders for the Federal Government here in Canada, I think it's very important that we know where they're going to go with this report, and make sure that it gets implemented and spread out

throughout the country, as well as all the other nation states around the world. This is crucial, absolutely.

Darrell Powell: Yes. Right. For some countries, they need a well in the centre of town, for industrialized countries like ours they have come out with, the biggest barriers to health are actually created by Government and Government policies and political policies, and, basically, unintegrated social policy with health. So, I think we pretty much can see that everybody we talked to tonight—now Mr. Duceppe wasn't on, and Mr. Harper wasn't on—I think that with everybody we talked to there that there is a group that we can maybe work on after the election to build consensus on these issues, and move forward, and I guess keep advocating.

Mindy Barrett: Okay, Darrell. So what are you going to do or suggest after the election?

Darrell Powell: Well, I'm going to suggest right now that people really move towards this election, and vote with their minds, not their hearts on this one, because we have a palpable condition here of an ideology coming into the country that is not centred down to the working family level at all, to the great majority of Canadians. And so I'm making that suggestion now to workers across the family, in their families, whether you're disabled or not, workers, whether you're organized in labour or not. We've all got to work together on this one, and really make sure that these health policies come out more and more and more, and we have a stable foundation.

Mindy Barrett: Right. And with what Charles touched on earlier about sovereignty and democracy, I think those are really big issues for us out there in Canada. And that is something I think the majority of Canadians really want to hold onto. And that's been given our right. We've had it for many, many years. And as having a freedom of rights and a freedom of choice, that should never ever have to be an issue that we should be having to debate at this time in our lives.

Darrell Powell: Hopefully not. Okay. Thank you, Mindy, for co-hosting.

Mindy Barrett: Thank you very much.

Darrell Powell: I thank everybody who phoned in, and everybody with the pre-recorded interviews, and everybody who took part tonight, and helped in support. Thank you Donna Boyle in Hamilton for research and assistance. And goodnight.

Mindy Barrett: Goodnight, everyone.

Host: You are listening to CFRO, 102.7FM. This was Discussion on CFRO, and Darrell Powell hosting. And it's the Election Show.

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