

The New Balance Sheet: Corporate Profits and Responsibility in the 21st century

Ken Georgetti, O.C.*
President
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Commissioner
Canadian Democracy and Corporate Accountability Commission

From 2001-2002, Ken Georgetti was part of a multi-stakeholder commission that investigated Canada's approach to corporate accountability. Under the leadership of Ed Broadbent and Avie Bennett, the Canadian Democracy and Corporate Accountability Commission heard from experts, travelled across the country and hired public research professionals to reach as many Canadians as possible. The final report documented overwhelming support for tougher rules in corporate accountability and strong government leadership on the issue among working families.

Mr. Georgetti brings that experience, along with over 20 years of leadership in Canada's labour movement, today as he shares his thoughts about how Canada can do a better job when it comes to socially responsible corporate investment.

Biography

Ken Georgetti was elected the Canadian Labour Congress' youngest-ever President in 1999. He has since won re-election twice.

Mr. Georgetti came to the CLC after 13 years as President of the British Columbia Federation of Labour. Born in Trail, BC, he followed in his father's footsteps, working at the giant Cominco smelter and earning his trade ticket as a pipefitter. By age 28, Mr. Georgetti was President of the 4,400- member Local 480 of the United Steelworkers.

Within six years, Mr. Georgetti had become President of the BC Federation of Labour. Under his leadership, membership of the 'BC Fed' more than doubled. In 1987, he led British Columbia's unionized workers in the largest one-day general strike in Canadian history.

Mr. Georgetti has built both relationships with and a major presence for the Canadian Labour Congress on Parliament Hill, working equally in the spotlight and behind the scenes to advance the interests of Congress affiliates and working families in general.

Over the years, he has earned the respect of both business leaders and politicians through his use of a wide range of strategies and tactics to achieve labour's goals.

Mr. Georgetti's vision of labour activism is rooted in a passionate commitment to social justice and a profound belief in the need to empower individuals and involve communities in tackling social and economic problems. His priorities include the defence and strengthening of public medicare, organizing greater number of workers, providing lifelong learning opportunities, supporting initiatives to increase diversity, enhancing young workers involvement in unions and increasing the literacy levels for all Canadians.

Mr. Georgetti is also heavily involved in international issues. Promotion of labour rights and protection of employment standards in an increasingly globalized economy, and international development that respects workers' and human rights, and key priorities.

He is a Vice-President and member of the Executive Board of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. He chairs the ICFTU Committee on Workers' Capital. He also sits on the executive of the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development.

A supporter of a number of community-based organizations, Mr. Georgetti is Honourary Chairperson of the Association of Learning Disabled Adults and actively backs the United Way and literacy initiatives across Canada. In 1998, he became the first union leader to receive the Order of British Columbia. In 2000, he received the Order of Canada.