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April 28

Day of Mourning for Workers Injured or Killed in the Workplace

Mourn the Dead and Fight for the Living!

The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) joins workers from coast to coast to coast on April 28 to mourn workers killed on the job and pays deepest respects to all the families who have lost family members and to their co-workers and friends. It expresses solidarity with all those workers who have been injured or suffer illnesses as a result of their conditions at work and profound sympathy with all those who are suffering mental disorders or autoimmune conditions as a result of stress they are forced to endure at work. It also expresses profound concern for the actions of certain employers who are running roughshod over workers with disabilities or work related injuries by taking away their jobs in a new brutal form of cutting back their workforce, as Canada Post is doing.



The National Day of Mourning aptly brings us together to mourn for the dead and fight for the living. All workers have a right to safe working conditions. Our fight is for compensation for those who have been killed or injured or made ill at their workplaces and for a society that takes care of everyone and leaves no one to fend for themselves.

Across Canada and the world, ceremonies, vigils, meetings and other activities are being held, upholding the dignity of labour and reflecting on what must be done to improve working conditions and guarantee the right to health and safety. Workers' lives are more and more endangered as the state is being restructured to put private interests in control of everything. Governments are taking actions to get rid of regulations and allow businesses to override laws, including those protecting workers' health and safety, in the name of "cutting red tape."

On this day, we join in the demand that governments at both the federal and provincial levels make sure that all workers who suffer injuries or families which are deprived of a breadwinner are fully compensated as a right. Governments and employers must face strict consequences for neglecting worker safety or intimidating those who assert their rights. We demand too that workers and their families do not fall into poverty or suffer distress because they are forced to fight every step of the way for compensation and the health care that they need.

Workplace injuries and deaths are not inevitable; they stem from a lack of workers' control over their conditions of life and work. Accidents and diseases can be prevented by empowering workers to control their workplace conditions and safety measures. Sick pay and injury compensation systems must fully support workers and families. Workers must have the right to have their say



concerning workplace health and safety and refuse unsafe work without fear of retaliation. It is only by being able to exercise decision-making at all levels that workers can ensure that workplaces are organized around guaranteeing their health and safety.

All manner of anti-social and anti-worker decisions of the federal and provincial governments are being made in the name of protecting workers and supporting "good union jobs" with schemes to pay the rich to plunder Canada's resources for use in war production. Workers are used as a backdrop for their photo-ops announcing grand pay-the-rich schemes to invest in private enterprises – from production, including war production, to pipelines to infrastructure – needed by the rich for their projects.

An example is the federal government's plans under Chapter 7 of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement on labour mobility, which could lead to lowering standards as provinces have different requirements for training, safety standards and scope of practice. This is a concern particularly for workers in the skilled trades, health care, transportation and high risk jobs.

Workers are not consulted about what is required in the sectors of the economy where they work and face an uphill battle against employers and governments to ensure that their working conditions are acceptable and safe. There is no acknowledgement of the key role the working people play when they transform the bounty of Mother Earth to create the wealth the society depends on for its living. Workers produce all the wealth of society, transport the goods, rear and educate the younger generation, look after the health of the entire population and care for seniors. It is this living labour which the ruling elites denigrate.

Workers across the country are speaking out in their own name, laying the claims which they must which includes opposing the punitive measures the governments at both the federal and provincial levels are taking, including to make their struggles illegal. By speaking out in their own name, they are empowering themselves and holding the ruling class to account. On the occasion of the Day of Mourning, as the workers from coast to coast to coast uphold the dignity of labour, let us pledge to not permit a society which forces everyone to fend for themselves.

Quebec National Day of Mourning and Events Across Canada



On April 28, the Quebec Federation of Labour (FTQ) is organizing a demonstration to mark the National Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured at Work from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm in front of the National Assembly in Quebec City by the Tourny Fountain.

The FTQ writes: "This day of remembrance takes on even greater significance in the current

context, as the government has adopted a law limiting access to prevention mechanisms in the education, health, and public service sectors, and has just tabled a bill that would remove up to 85 per cent of full-time health and safety representatives from the construction industry. These legislative changes put the lives of Quebec workers at risk. For the FTQ, these setbacks are unacceptable. Every death, every injury, and every occupational disease serves as a reminder of a simple truth: prevention saves lives."

Information on the number of workers who have died on construction sites will be provided at the demonstration.

Workers are encouraged to bring their local union flags. For further information, [click here](#).

Across Canada, workers' defence organizations are also holding events to mark the Day of Mourning with demonstrations, rallies and ceremonies at workers' monuments, provincial legislatures, union offices and compensation board offices, as well as online events. For details, [click here](#).

Fight for Full Recognition of Workplace Psychological Injuries

A theme of many of the events marking the Day of Mourning in 2026 is the fight for full recognition of psychological injuries in the workplace. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) draws attention to this serious problem: "What are psychological injuries? They're invisible, unseen conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), burnout, anxiety, and depression caused by traumatic and hurtful experiences at work. Just like physical injuries, psychological injuries can be debilitating and even catastrophic, profoundly impacting someone's well-being, their personal life, as well as their ability to keep their jobs. Tragically, in the most painful cases, these injuries can lead to death by suicide."

CUPW points out that psychological illnesses are the top cause of disability in Canada and account for one-third of disability claims. Nearly half of working Canadians consider their work to be the most stressful part of the day. Psychological illnesses cost the Canadian economy more than \$50 billion annually.

Among the demands put forward are that employers ensure psychological injuries are treated as seriously as physical injuries in the workplace. Other demands are that they reduce the hazards that cause psychological injuries, including high workloads, poor workplace culture, harassment and stress.

Federal and provincial governments are adopting anti-worker and anti-social measures to serve the narrow private interests of the billionaires and oligarchs, in the name of "nation-building." Laws and regulations – including those that provide certain workplace protections – are being cast aside, putting workers in greater danger of physical and psychological injuries at work.

Airline Workers Honour Their Fallen Colleagues

– Garnet Colly –

Workers across Canada and around the world mark the Day of Mourning on April 28 for workers who were killed or injured on the job or suffered debilitating illnesses. Workers in the airline sector, family members and friends turn their thoughts to the senseless loss of two young lives: Captain Antoine Forest, a 30-year-old Quebecker from Coteau-du-Lac and his co-pilot, a 22-year-old

Ontarian from Peterborough, Mackenzie Gunther. They were killed on March 22 when the Jazz Aviation (Air Canada) flight they were piloting from Montreal was struck by a firetruck shortly after landing at New York's LaGuardia Airport. They left the world as heroes, especially in the eyes of those whose lives they saved. We also think about the flight attendant who miraculously survived and her colleague who will both be marked for life by the incident.



Memorial at Jacques-de-Lesseps Park, near the runways at Montreal's Trudeau International Airport, pays tribute to Capt. Antoine Forest, left, and First Officer Mackenzie Gunther.

Devoid of all humanity, the cartel parties forming the political class in both Quebec and Canada were unanimous in declaring that the problem was that the CEO of Air Canada offered his condolences in English only and that he must go. His resignation did not prevent a near-collision on April 20, less than a month after the March 22 tragedy, between an Air Canada Express plane and another from Republic Airways at JFK International Airport.

Many people are asking how such a tragedy could occur in 2026 given the available technology. Will those responsible for the neo-liberal wrecking be held accountable for the cuts to airport security they have imposed, whether or not the investigation – in which Canada is "participating" – manages to find a way around laying the blame where it belongs? The Transportation Safety Board reported a record 639 runway incursions in 2024, indicating a rising trend in safety incidents in Canada. But that is not a discussion that those responsible want to hear.

They are unanimous. No need to think about the anguish the March tragedy caused for so many people or why it happened. They don't want us to question their cutbacks to public services to facilitate the militarization of the economy.

Those who run Air Canada have no problem with the fact that the workers are producing the millions of dollars in profits that the company is raking in while it expects its flight attendants to perform part of their job for free. Air Canada forces everybody else, too, to fight for satisfactory wages and working conditions, and treats retirees as disposable second class citizens, taking away benefits it promised would continue through their retirement – no matter the language used.

Those in control have largely remained silent about Air Canada's other nation-wrecking activities, such as abandoning the regions. Meanwhile they are enthusiastic about its participation in the high speed rail project from Quebec City to Toronto. This despite the opposition of ordinary people all along the line, as well as that of people from across the country who will be saddled with the debt for a project that doesn't serve them at all.

Everybody is aware that replacing Michael Rousseau with a French-speaking CEO will change none of that. It is the social and economic problems that have been created by the cartel parties on behalf of the oligarchs that must be dealt with. We must turn our sorrow over the work-related

deaths, injuries and debilitating illnesses into strength to fight like hell for the living by working together to take control of the decision-making processes for all aspects of our lives.



Origin of Day of Mourning

The Day of Mourning has its origin among workers in the northern Ontario mining community of Sudbury in the 1980s. Like workers across the country, all of whom face health and safety issues at their workplaces, they wanted to make the problems known and to find solutions to them. In doing so they rejected the outlook of the monopolies and ruling elites that workers are disposable. They sought to uphold the dignity of labour by honouring those who have been made ill or died on the job, and to ultimately end workplace injuries and deaths.

In a 2010 article, Dorothy Wigmore, a Winnipeg-based occupational health specialist, writer and educator, recounts:

"Around 1983, the health and safety director of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Colin Lambert, and his long-time friend and fellow activist, Ray Sentes, came up with the idea of a day to recognize workers killed and injured on the job.

"As a steelworker and miner in Sudbury, Ontario, Lambert was instrumental in having mandatory coroners' inquests for all miners' deaths in Ontario. He also lamented the contrast between the lack of recognition for miners and other workers who died because of their work and the large public events for 'fallen' police officers and firefighters.



"Lambert 'floated the idea' with CUPE's national health and safety committee, talking about a special day of recognition for workers killed and injured on the job, to be held on May 1

(celebrated as May Day in Europe and elsewhere). The committee endorsed the idea. At its 1984 convention, union delegates supported the proposal. Soon after, some CUPE locals started negotiating events, such as lowered flags and moments of silence."

The Day of Mourning was first recognized at the provincial level by Ontario in 1984, on April 28, and workers across the country sought to take it to the national level. Wigmore writes:

"In 1984 and 1985, CUPE representatives took the idea to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) executive and its national health and safety committee. Local unions also sent resolutions to the CLC.

"In February 1986, the CLC announced the first Day of Mourning, coinciding with the first day of its convention that year. Rather than May 1, they chose the date when the Ontario legislature passed the country's first workers' compensation law, in 1914. The convention passed a resolution supporting April 28 as a day to 'mourn for the dead and fight for the living.'"

In 1990, the canary was chosen as the symbol for the Day of Mourning, harkening back to the turn of the 20th century when they were taken down into the mines, as they would show signs of distress due to toxic gases before the miners were seriously affected. "The canary's an appropriate symbol," Lambert said. "It shows that today workers are the canaries -- they are front-line protection for all of us."

Workers across the country were involved in the work to see that the Day of Mourning was officially recognized by the federal government. Winston Gereluk, writing for AlbertaLabourHistory.org, notes, "Health and safety activists across Canada maintained pressure on the Canadian government to implement a national day of recognition, with several Alberta-based activists leading the campaign."

In February 1991, the Canadian government passed a private member's bill naming April 28 as the "Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace."

Today, the April 28 Day of Mourning is observed in more than 100 countries. For example, in 1989 in the United States, the American Federation of Labour began to recognize April 28 as Workers' Memorial Day. Workers' Memorial Day was adopted by the Scottish Trade Union Congress (TUC) in 1993, the UK TUC in 1999 and the UK Health and Safety Commission in 2000. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International TUC declared the International Day of Mourning in 1996. Since 2001, the ILO has called it the World Day for Safety and Health at Work.

(With files from Dorothy Wigmore, BC Federation of Labour, Alberta Labour History.org)

Ontario

Necessity for Comprehensive Renewal of Compensation System to Provide Justice for Injured Workers

For decades injured workers and workers' organizations have been demanding changes to the workers compensation system in Ontario to meet the needs of injured workers, of the families of workers killed or injured and for measures to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for all workers in Ontario. Injured workers have been leading this fight, building their organizations and laying their claims on society. Since its formation in 1991, the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups (ONIWG) has been in the forefront of this fight.

Through its activism, advocacy and research ONIWG has challenged each retrogressive step of successive governments which violate the rights of injured workers and have systematically dismantled the foundation of the workers' compensation system. In 2004 when the consequences of the effects of the changes to the system imposed by the anti-worker Mike Harris Conservative government in 1998 were evident to all, ONIWG released a comprehensive Platform for Change. It lays out the much needed reforms to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), reforms that are crucial to injured workers receiving justice. The Platform for Change as amended by the Thunder Bay and District Injured Workers' Support Group in September of 2021 is available here.



The Platform for Change is based on the principles set out by Justice William Meredith in his report to the Ontario legislature in 1913 which laid the foundation for the workers compensation systems in all the provinces, except Quebec.[1] In Quebec the historical precedents on the front of work injuries and death were different with laws dating back to the 1880s to protect, not the workers, but the employers from being sued. In 1909, at the time legislative measures were being debated in Ontario, a bill was passed by the Quebec legislative assembly that recognized a "no fault" responsibility for employers in the cases of death at the work place. It led to the creation of the Commission on Work Injuries in 1928.

In Ontario, legislation based on Meredith's recommendations came into effect in 1914. Essentially the system was to provide full justice to injured workers by establishing a non-partisan organization to administer claims and assessments. Employers funded the system and shared the liability for injured workers. In return, injured workers receive benefits while they recover, and cannot sue their employers. The motto of the early Workers' Compensation Board was "Justice and Humanity: Speedily Rendered."

Over 100 years later, millions of Canadian workers, 1.56 million in Ontario alone, are not even covered by workers' compensation and are left to fend for themselves. Those that are covered do not receive justice and humanity.

Private Members' Bill Proposed Restoration of the Meredith Principles

It is due to years of arduous work done by injured workers led by ONIWG and their supporters in community groups, unions, academics and supportive politicians that Bill 86, *An Act to enact the Meredith Act (Fair Compensation for Injured Workers), 2025*, and to repeal the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*, was tabled in the Ontario legislature.

ONIWG's Platform for Change elaborates what is needed to have a just and humane system that protects and defends all workers. It was used by three NDP Members of the Provincial Parliament – Lise Vaugeois, Wayne Gates and Jamie West – to draft Bill 86 which passed first reading in the provincial legislature on December 8, 2025. The legislation would have replaced the existing *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997* with a new "Meredith Act," restoring the original intent and modernizing its provisions. It was defeated in a vote in the legislature on April 15, 62 to 41, with the Conservatives voting against it. The day before the vote, as the bill was being debated in the legislature, the Ford government issued a press release announcing planned changes to the WSIB.



Injured workers groups, unions and politicians hold press conference on the *Meredith Act* at Ontario legislature, November 25, 2025.

Had Bill 86 passed it would have, among other things, ended "deeming," the practice whereby workers are forced into poverty by having their benefits cut based on potential wages from jobs that they do not have; and granted injured workers the right to choose their own doctor for a second opinion, ending "paper-only" reviews by administrators. These are changes essential for the rights and dignity of injured workers to be respected.

Note

1. Sir William Ralph Meredith, KC (March 31, 1840 – August 21, 1923) was a Canadian lawyer, politician and judge. He served as leader of the Ontario Conservatives from 1878 to 1894, Chancellor of the University of Toronto from 1900 until his death, and Chief Justice of Ontario from 1913 until his death. Through his principles, known as the "Meredith Principles," he is regarded as the founding father of the Workers' Compensation System in Ontario, the impact of which was felt throughout Canada and the United States. For the Wikipedia entry on Meredith, [click here](#).

Ford Government's Amendments to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

The Ford government issued a press release on April 14 announcing that it would be making changes to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). These changes provide certain improvements to the compensation system but fall far short of what is needed to provide justice and dignity for injured workers and their families. They are the result of the unrelenting work of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups and their supporters for changes to the WSIB to uphold the rights of injured workers. But buried in the bill and deemed not worthy of mention in the government's press release are new provisions that would seriously harm injured workers.



The government announced three changes which, as reported by the Injured Workers Community Legal Clinic (IWC) are:

- follow through on a promise from two elections ago that they would raise injured workers' Loss of

Earnings benefits from 85 per cent of pre-injury wage to 90 per cent.

- would allow some workers to receive benefits past age 65 if they can prove they planned on working past that age.
- would expand mandatory coverage to 29,000 additional workers at residential care facilities, retirement homes and group homes.



The IWC reports that "the changes to the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* have now been introduced in Schedule 9 of Bill 105, *Protecting Ontario's Workers and Economic Resilience Act, 2026*. Unfortunately it includes several dangerous proposals that would fundamentally change the Workers' Compensation system, and leave injured workers exposed to a lifetime of surveillance and income insecurity."

The clinic is encouraging attendance at a community meeting at their office at 815 Danforth Avenue, Suite 411, Toronto on April 29 at 1:00 pm. The meeting will be hybrid and

attendees, whether in person or online, are required to register [here](#).

The IWC points out that the government's proposal to allow workers to prove that they would have worked past age 65 to continue to receive wage loss compensation is a step forward. But it is also insufficient, as it shifts the burden onto injured workers. There is a need for retroactivity for the increase from 85 per cent to 90 per cent in Loss of Earnings benefits (LOE). That five per cent cut should not only be restored, but it should also be repaid retroactively to 1998, with interest.

Injured workers have also lost retirement income. The legal clinic says, "An 11.9 per cent contribution rate, matching combined Canada Pension Plan contributions, would better reflect the reality that injured workers lose not only wages, but the ability to build retirement income. Without reform and retroactivity to 1998, many face poverty in old age, and are effectively hurt twice: first by injury, then by a system that fails to compensate them fully."

The Industrial Accident Victims' Group of Ontario (IAVGO), a Toronto-based legal clinic that serves injured workers, raised the alarm about a provision in Bill 105 that would cause immense harm and is urging people to call the Premier, the Minister of Labour, the head of the WSIB and Members of the Provincial Parliament to demand its removal. The IAVGO reports that:

"For workers who have not yet reached the 72-month "lock-in," this bill is a major change. Right now, after six years, a worker's benefits are locked in. That means stability. Under Bill 105, that protection would be gone. WSIB could review a worker's benefits at any time, for the rest of their life. They could do this on a schedule, or anytime something in the worker's life changes – like

INJURED WORKERS ARE UNDER ATTACK

STOP THE REMOVAL OF THE 72-MONTH LOCK-IN

Urgent!

A poison pill is hidden in Ontario Bill 105, Schedule 9. The Ontario government is trying to remove the 72-month lock-in for injured workers who have permanent injuries and can't return to work, and put us on perpetual probation. This will have a huge disproportionate impact on injured workers in precarious workplaces, such as migrant workers, refugees, and undocumented workers.

This lock-in is significant for injured workers for our income security, and its removal will re-traumatize injured workers with ongoing insecurity, threat of surveillance and reassessment, risking mental breakdown.

Make Calls:

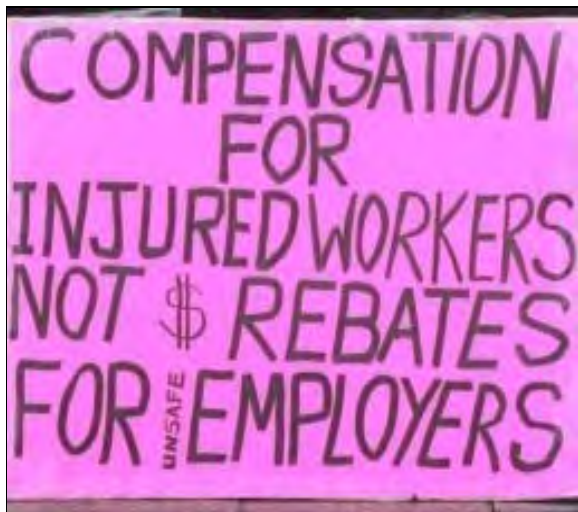
- Minister of Labour, Piccini: 416-326-7600
- Ontario Premier, Ford: 416-325-1941
- WSIB CEO & President, Lang: 416-344-1000
- Your MPP

losing a job or getting another benefit.

"The bill also says a worker can never receive more than 100 per cent of their pre-injury income. That means WSIB will reduce benefits if a worker gets money from other sources – like government programs, pensions, or employer payments. We don't even know the full list yet, but it could include things like CPP retirement, old age benefits, or other supports. WSIB can also continue to deduct CPP-D (disability benefits) forever. In simple terms: Workers with newer claims could have their benefits reviewed and reduced for life.

"And it's not just about money. This means lifelong monitoring by WSIB and, in some cases, employers. That level of ongoing scrutiny is stressful and invasive."

The government press release claims that this bill is all part of its plan to protect Ontario workers "by proposing the first increase in nearly 30 years to income replacement benefits [...] As Ontario continues to face economic uncertainty and impacts from U.S. tariffs, the government is taking bold and decisive action to protect workers. [...] These proposed changes are part of a broader package of measures the government will introduce in the coming days to continue delivering on its plan to cut red tape, protect workers and make Ontario the most competitive place in the G7 to invest, create jobs and do business."



To present the reversal of a cut in benefits that, along with other measures adopted by the Harris government, has contributed to the impoverishment of injured workers and their families since 1998 as an "increase" is self-serving indeed. So too is the extension of WSIB coverage to certain health care workers where recruitment and retention are a huge problem due to low wages and unacceptable working conditions. The Ford government itself has added to the impoverishment of injured workers. It has diverted to employers, as part of its pay-the-rich agenda, over \$5.5 billion in "surplus" WSIB funds, accumulated from cuts to payments and services to injured workers.

If the Ford government had a genuine concern for Ontario workers it would have implemented the comprehensive reforms that injured workers and advocates have identified, starting with passing the *Meredith Act*. Ontario workers have been fighting for needed reforms since before the Harris government's wholesale wrecking of the compensation system in the '90s which has been stepped up by successive governments since then, including the Ford Conservatives.

Quebec

Two New Memorials Honour Fallen Workers

In the past year, Quebec workers have erected two new memorials to honour the memory of workers who were killed on the job.

La Romaine Construction Site, Minganie

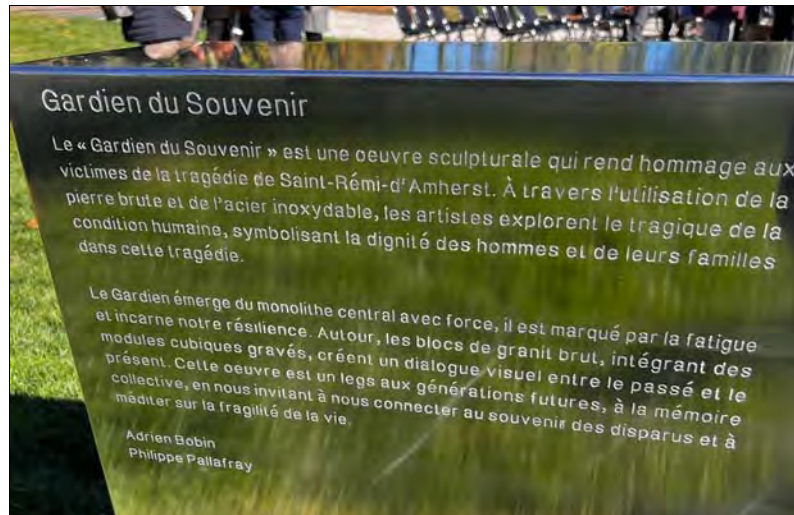
On October 2025, a memorial was erected in Minganie, a municipality on the North Shore, to pay tribute to eight workers killed during the design phase and construction of the Romaine hydroelectric project. This initiative was spearheaded by four former workers on the project.

The memorial has bronze plaques bearing the names of those killed: Jean-Yves Oaks, Dany Burgess, and Germain Vaillant, who died on September 1, 1975, in a plane crash during technical surveys. There is also Alexandre Tanguay, who died in 1974. During the construction phase, which began in 2009, four workers lost their lives: Gaétan Saucier (February 9, 2010), Steeve Barriault (March 11, 2015), Alex-Antoine Proulx (August 16, 2016) and Luc Arpin (December 9, 2016).



Memorial site in tribute to the workers who died on La Romaine construction site.
(Facebook: Site commémoratif Chantier Romaine)

Saint-Rémi d'Amherst



Monument inaugurated in September 2025 in memory of the workers who lost their lives in the silicon mine at Saint-Rémi d'Amherst.

In September 2025, the monument "Le Gardien du Souvenir" (the Guardian of Memory) was unveiled in memory of miners who perished in the 1940s due to the silicosis epidemic in the village of Saint-Rémi d'Amherst in the Laurentians. Silicosis is an industrial lung disease, caused by the inhalation of silica dust that causes irreversible lung damage. At that time, 46 victims were counted, but the number is believed to be much higher. So many deaths occurred that Saint-Rémi was nicknamed "the village of white widows." The granite and metal sculpture by Adrien Bobin and Philippe Pallafray is located in Place Burton-LeDoux.

Workers' Monuments With Deepest Respect



Elliston, Newfoundland, monument to those lost in 1914 sealing disaster.



Escuminac, New Brunswick fishermen's monument.



Saint John, New Brunswick Day of Mourning monument.

To view all the monuments, [click here](#).

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