**Appendix 2- Lesson Strategy Lesson: Vancouver Island War**

**Introduction:**

This lesson is intended to be taught as part of a Socials 9 or 10 class, Laurier Period unit, or as part of a Pre-First World War history in Socials 10. Students should have some background already in the history and economic development of BC up to and including 1871 when the province joined Confederation. It is recommended that the events related to labour unrest in BC’s coal communities as a result of Robert Dunsmuir’s and James Dunsmuir’s business practices already be taught.

The teacher should introduce the lesson by briefly reviewing some of the significant content described above then briefly describe some of the conditions that led to the mass coal miner’s strike that becomes known as the “Vancouver Island War”.

Distribute the handouts entitled “The Vancouver Island War Info Organizer”, and play the video vignette “The Vancouver Island War”. Before starting the video, instruct students to fill out the organizer with the appropriate information from the video.

**Body:**

The teacher can then briefly discuss with the class some of the highlights of the video (and info organizer prompts; W5). The teacher then should ask the question of the class, “We know that there were some terrible labour practices in the past. We know that workers in the past were often paid very little, worked long hours and worked in very dangerous conditions, but do you think most of these are problems of the past? Currently, have we successfully addressed most of these problems?” Solicit a discussion, drawing out multiple points of view. It will be beneficial to draw particular attention to the belief that may be common that laws prevent most labour abuses nowadays.

Divide the class into small groups (3 or 4 students) then distribute the article from *The Tyee* entitled , “Embattled Striking Miners in Mexico are Led from BC” to be read by the students. Depending on the reading ability of the students, the teacher may wish to create a more condensed version of the article or may wish to read the article with the students to clarify different key points. Either through questioning or brief discussion, draw class attention to how there are, in fact, many similarities between conditions for miners in Mexico today and those in BC in the past. Then distribute one copy of “Article Analysis Sheet” to each group. Have each group appoint a secretary and as a group have them analyze the article, and complete the Analysis Sheet.

After giving sufficient time to complete, bring the groups together for class discussion. Each group should select a spokesperson to represent their views. Getting input from each group, record similarities and differences between the situations facing miners of Vancouver Island and Mexico on the white board, over head, or media projector. Now draw the class’ attention to the last question on the Analysis Sheet “Do you agree or disagree with the above statement?” (“Should workers have the right to strike?”) Solicit responses from different members of the classroom. You may wish to set up a random method of selection, either by number or draw, in order to distribute responses. Encourage class discussion on the issue.

**Closure:**

If time permits you may wish to draw attention to current headlines in the news related to shortfalls in worker safety or conditions in Canada. Highlight the importance of not disregarding the events and struggles of the past as necessarily irrelevant, as they apply even today.

1. Collect group analysis sheets for assessment. bctf/ufcw1518