

May 23, 2011

Keeping up fight in name of Peter Burns, says reader

Peter Burns, a dissenting Nortel Disabled Employee, passed away on Saturday morning, May 14, 2011. He was with his buddies fishing, when he had difficulty breathing. He was rushed to hospital, but didn't make it.

Peter gave testimony to the Nortel bankruptcy court on March 5, 2010 and Sept. 29, 2010. He spoke for the Dissenting Nortel Disabled Employees at the November 18, 2010 Senate Banking Trade and Commerce Committee hearing on Bill S-216 to protect employer sponsored disability insurance at insolvent corporations.

Peter was still in the fight for the Nortel disabled to live in dignity, until the day he passed away at age 55. In the words of his friend Mark Christopher, who met with Peter recently, "He seemed in good spirits, although he was extremely disappointed with the inaction of our politicians." Peter was hoping that the Supreme Court of Canada would grant his group's Leave to Appeal on Nortel's Disability Insurance in its Health and Welfare Trust. The Supreme Court of Canada has not announced a decision yet on whether it will hear this appeal.

We express our sincere condolences to Peter's family and friends. We will cherish the time we had with Peter in his journey to seek a just solution for himself, the 360 Nortel disabled and their 160 dependent children.

Peter told the Parliamentary Press Gallery on March 12, 2010, "All of the disabled have a gift. They shine light into the darkest corners without fear. Today with the April Fool's settlement and our health in decline, we just hope somebody in charge wants to shine a light into the dark deeds of the junk bond holders, Nortel and the bankruptcy process itself."

The Dissenting Nortel Disabled Employees vow to continue to deliver Peter's message in our legislatures and court rooms, until a solution is found for them and for the 1.1 million Canadian employees covered by unsafe employer sponsored disability insurance.

Diane & Hugh Urquhart

Mississauga, Ont.