

#ShutDownCanada protests planned for February 13th

By Mari Reeve

On February 13th 2015, thousands of people plan to partake in a variety of direct actions and demonstrations to "shut down Canada". Over 3700 people have "joined" the Facebook event page that was created for the event. The group is asking for "communities across Canada to blockade their local railway, port or highway on February 13th. Don't buy, don't fly, no work and keep the kids home from school... The goal is to significantly impact the Canadian economy for a day and demand there be an independent inquiry into the 2000+ cases of miss-

ing or murdered indigenous women."

The group, made up of grassroots organizers from the West coast such as Shannon Hecker and Dan Wallace, sparked this initiative through social media. The Facebook account 'In Solidarity with all Land Defenders' is encouraging people to show their discontent with the current state of affairs. The group is calling for diverse tactics that would disrupt the everyday flow of the Canadian economy. Organizers feel disturbed with how the Canadian state is trying to rule the continent: "The system has failed us miserably. There is no democracy

and we the people have an obligation to demand justice for all."

Plans to demonstrate outside city halls, shut down highways, occupy high traffic areas and more have been organized by groups in Calgary, Espanola, Edmonton, Fredericton, Halifax, Hamilton, Kamloops, Lethbridge, London, Moncton, Montreal, Niagara, Oshawa, Ottawa, Regina, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg.

The Facebook page states that "while the issues are many and varied throughout different regions, it is all interconnected and it is this corrupt government that is

responsible." The eight points listed for the day of action focus on institutional racism, systematic violence, destruction to the land paired with the illusion of jobs, lack of prior and informed consent with First Nations across Canada and poor planning for man-made environmental disasters. They also highlight Canada's refusal to launch a national inquiry into MMIW, existing and operational fracking wells, open pit mining projects, the Site C Dam construction, and the widespread devastation that tar sands and related pipeline projects brings to all life forms, ecosystems, families and

communities.

Wallace says he was "wanting more direct action that will prove to government people are sick and tired of how they are treating us." Hecker adds that "stopping the economy is the only way to get the government to listen. We would like to see unified action happen on a more regular basis, especially because this is so called Canada's election year. February 13th is just the beginning, a date chosen to coincide with the nationwide Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women's memorial on February 14th (25th annual in Vancouver).

Some suggest the

mass organizing and projected attendance of this event is a continuation of general discontent and a demand for justice that sparked other mass movements like Occupy and Idle No More. This day hopes to highlight a wide variety of issues that is hard to describe under an umbrella term, but Ethel Peason captures the objective well. "If you try and take something away from the 'white man' that he paid money for, then you will be listened to."