

No time for part time

Everywhere in Ontario, labour organizations are fighting for the rights of part-time workers. Part-time work is the new norm in our economy, while good full-time jobs are slowly being eliminated. Great for employers...and bad for employees.

Now MPAC wants to go down that same road.

In this round of bargaining, MPAC is adamant that they want to create part-time positions – in response to being “bombarded” with requests, so they tell us.

That is a very large load of fertilizer. Why? Let us explain.

First, the Bargaining Team asked members if anyone was interested in part-time work. Not one person responded.

Second, the employer refuses to negotiate a Compressed Work Week Agreement. They say it’s because MPAC is a “five-day-a-week” operation. In other words, full-time. Not part-time.

Third, in response to the employer’s demand for part-time jobs, the Team countered with a proposal on job sharing...a perfect solution for employees who might

actually want to work part-time (in a job-share arrangement, the position remains designated as full-time). Of course, the employer refused to talk about this.

Fourth, there is always a backlog of work at MPAC. Reducing full-time positions to part-time won’t get more work done.

Do the math. This isn’t about accommodating employees.

It all boils down to money.

This employer wants to save money on benefit costs. They want more people, working less hours, to do the same work, and not have to pay them benefits. MPAC wants to kick open the door for an insidious trend that will grow out of control...and eventually threaten every employee.

If MPAC members don’t make a stand now, here’s what the employer’s proposed language will allow them to do.

The employer says that “no current full-time employee will be forced to go part-time.” Sounds safe enough. But if that employee leaves their job,

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there is nothing stopping the employer from turning that full-time job into a part-time job.

So how does that affect you?

Consider the following:

- Part-timers will not receive any benefits, and have a reduced pension. This is nothing but pure cost savings for the employer, and they will want as many part-time positions as possible.
- The employer can convert ANY full-time vacancy into part-time. If that vacancy is a job that would mean a promotion for you, you won't get it unless you go part-time.
- Creating part-time positions in higher job classifications will be just the ticket for the re-hire of retirees and ex-managers.
- As the number of part-time employees grow, the number of employees paying into the benefit plan decreases. Eventually, members will have to pay more for their benefit plan, or face reduced benefit entitlements.
- Future rounds of bargaining will be degraded as fewer members are left in full-time positions. Demands for full-time improvements will be backed by fewer members, while part-time member issues will become more prominent. Most of the teams negotiating time will be trying to get BACK entitlements that were lost when positions got converted from full-time to part-time.

Look at the LCBO. In the early eighties, unclassified part-time employees didn't exist. The employer achieved language in the contract allowing for "temporary employees"...and the numbers began to grow. In 1996, under the Harris government, the employer again got contract language that would expand the part-time workforce...and the numbers shot up like a rocket. Now, 60 per cent of LCBO employees are part-time...and that number grows to 70 per cent during the summer and Christmas rushes.

The same scenario plays out over and over, with every employer that can hire part-timers. It happened at the LCBO. It has happened in Corrections youth facilities, where some units have 78 per cent part-time employees. And it **WILL** happen at MPAC

The employer's part-time proposal must be stopped dead in its tracks. The only way for that to happen is to give your Team a strong strike mandate.

On March 18, tell the employer you have no time for part-time.

Vote yes for the strike mandate