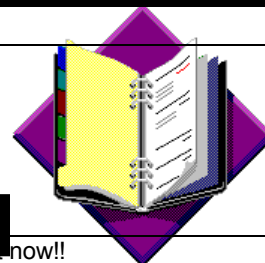


CASe Notes



Put The Children First!!! Campaign Update

By, Barry Rodman, Sector Chair

As you know, OPSEU held a press conference on January 20, 1998 to kick off the campaign, **Put The Children First!** To say the day was a success would be an understatement.

Our president Leah Casselman flanked by Board members David Calvert and Denis Boyer did a terrific job in presenting our concerns to the media and were able to answer their questions with informative responses. All three were later interviewed for a variety of TV and radio spots both English and French.

Much to our delight, the conservatives managed to screw up on cue for us. A day earlier Janet Ecker released a news brief to the media (for the third time) announcing 15 mill-ion to be put back into the CAS budget.

Coincidental timing? I think not. When asked by the media about the influx of money, they heard loud and clear that while it was a good start it was not nearly enough. Leah summed it up best when she described how this government has been systematically stripping the system bare. They then give you back a portion of what they had taken and think that this will solve the problem. It won't and this message was delivered

The media seemed genuinely interested in what they were being told. It seems to me that everyone is getting a little sick and tired of the crap the conservatives continue to dish out. When asked about the timing of Ecker announcement, and Leah responded by saying we would have held this press conference months ago, one could see that the reporters seemed to be thinking the same thing.

So we have started with a bang. It is now up to all of us not to let the momentum die.

Most locals have committees in place: (if you don't, pls contact Carol Whitehead at 1-800-268-7376 immediately and she'll help you get it going. Have you made contact with your MPPs yet? If not, do it as soon as possible. We have only a little more than a month before Queen's Park reconvenes.

- Contact your local media, and ensure every reporter has a copy of the Report.
- Consider conducting Public Forums. Teaming up with YOA facilities who are under the threat of privatization would be great as both issues are hot

- Shopping Mall Displays, leafleting cars, and attending any Public meetings are of benefit.

- **POSTCARDS!!!! We need at least 20,000 signed cards to make an impact at Queen's Park.**

So let's get out there and get them signed.

For years I have heard how OPSEU has not done much for us. **NOW IS OUR TIME.** We have the backing and the support, but we must go out and fight the fight. If you need help ask for it. Your staff reps are available. So is Carol Whitehead from Head Office. She's willing to come to your local meetings to assist you if you need her.

Your contact person from the Executive will be calling within a week's time, to follow up and offer any assistance we can.

In closing I would like to thank in addition to the above mentioned people, the sector executive **Karen Cudmore, Linda Aho, and Tom Komaromi** for their hard work in developing this campaign.

See "Thank You" - Page 2

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As well a special thanks goes out to **Carol Whitehead, Rob Field, Michelle Lupa and Katie Fitzrandolph** for their work; their dedication is a vital component that will help us **Put The Children First**.

In Solidarity

Barry

Pay Equity

Janet Wright, O.P.S.E.U Staff

The Ontario Court ruled in September that Schedule J of the *Savings and Restructuring Act 1996*, (commonly known as the repeal of proxy comparisons in the *Pay Equity Act*) violated the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* by discriminating against public sector women in predominately female workplaces. The Tory government wisely chose not to appeal this ruling.

What does this mean?

- Effective September 5 1997, all Pay Equity plans that were negotiated and signed prior to January 1 1997 are now resurrected. In other words, take them off the shelf, blow the dust off and put them back in play.
- If plans were not negotiated prior to September 30 1996, and there is a "proxy" order, those plans must be negotiated as soon as possible.
- If plans were not negotiated prior to September 30 1996, and there is not a "proxy" order, an application must be made to the Pay Equity Commission, Review Services Branch, for a "proxy" order. After receipt of the order, negotiations should begin as soon as possible.
- Adjustments are owing for 1995, 1996, 1997, (including retro-activity) and now 1998.

When will the Money be paid out?

The Finance Minister made an obscure announcement on December 14 that the government was adding an extra \$140 million to the funding

pot to cover the cost of re-

implementing proxy plans.

At a meeting in late January 1998 with a representative from the Ministry of Labour and another from Finance there was confirmation of the commitment to fund "proxy" plans including the retro-activity to January 1 1995.

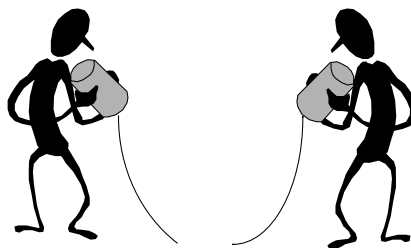
The bad news is that the government still has not figured out how they are going to determine how much money each agency gets.

We have told them that the easiest way is to continue funding the way they did before. They do not have to re-invent the wheel.

So I would say the good news is....funding will be made available to January 1995, but it may well be a few more months before the cheque gets put in the mail and the money gets put in your pocket.

What can we do?

- Convince your respective employers to put pressure on MCSS
- Lobby your MPP (bring your employer with you)
- Let the government know that sooner is better and that bureaucratic delays are not acceptable.



SURROUND SOUND CALVERT??

While hitching a ride home with Brother Calvert after the press conference on January 20, Barry Rodman had the *dubious* pleasure of listening to the croons of Calvert, both in person and in interviews on the radio..it was a loong ride home!!!!

What did we say to the

"Panel of Experts"?

David Calvert, E.B.M.

The Union was lucky to once again have the opportunity to enlist the services of **Brother Mike Hone** to assist in preparing our brief which was submitted to the Panel of Experts reviewing Child Welfare legislation. **Brother Hone** audited the Ottawa C.A.S. inquest last summer and gained a fair bit of insight into how the **C.F.S.A.** affects our ability to do our job.

I will attempt to summarize the more critical recommend-ations in his brief.

Least Intrusive vs Best Interests

We recommended that the balancing act between these two, often competing, interests should be completely removed. The Coroner's Jury in the Johnson inquest supports this argument. They recommended that the "Family Courts shall respect that the paramount purpose of the **C.F.S.A.** is to promote the best interests of and protection of children. Our survey found that 61% of us feel that judges base their decisions on the law rather than on the best interests of children.

Furthermore, we supported a recommendation from the **Peel Inquest** that *Section 37(2) of the Act* be amended to include endangering the emotional health of the child through family violence, mental cruelty and harassment of a child or other forms of destructive parental behaviors.

Finally, in this area, we recommended that any substance abuse which seriously incapa-citates a caregiver's ability to parent could be a condition in which a child is in need of protection. *Cont'd Page 3*
Children Suffering from Neglect

We recommended that the **Act** be amended to include neglect as a condition in which a child is in need of protection. We also recommended that the **Act** set out a clear definition

for neglect. This was concurrent with our survey results which found that 87% of those surveyed felt that a definition of neglect needs to be included in the current legislation.

We also concurred with the recommendation in the **Johnson Inquest** where the jury suggested the duty to report should be expanded to include suspicion of neglect.

Burden of Proof for Finding a Child in Need of Protection

We recommended that the "substantial risk" threshold be replaced with a test examining a child in need of protection in terms of when the safety, survival, security or development of a child is in danger.

Confidentiality and Access to Records

We recommended that Part VII of the **C.F.S.A.** be reviewed, revised and proclaimed into law, facilitating the sharing of information while conducting an investigation to determine if a child is in need of protection. This should also allow front line workers to share information amongst themselves for the purpose of peer supervision and guidance.

In general, we also made recommendations regarding the need for front line workers to be more involved in the process of changing the legislation. As well, we spoke to the issue of training for front line workers and the need for the government to take over the administration of child welfare services, as is the case in most other provinces in Canada.

Finally, we talked about the need for manageable caseloads for front line workers. All of these issues were spoken to in the context of a consistent application of the legislation across the province.

I think the brief we submitted was both comprehensive and professional. It drew from the wide range of recommendations

that had been made at the five inquests which have been reported to date and it framed the issues from our point of view.

Copies of the entire brief will be made available to the locals in the near future.

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Ext. 658

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Signalée aujourd'hui pour plus de renseignements:

Bill Matheson
1-800-268-7376
poste 658

6% de rétention. L'aubaine sans égale!

Welcome to the First Edition of the C.A.S. Sector's Newsletter.

We are interested in receiving any and all submissions; ie) letters, updates, ideas, suggestions, etc....

Information can be sent to:

Linda Aho
1453 Laurentian Vlg.
Sudbury ON P3E 2M5

Phone: 705-522-5895, Home
705-669-3389, Pager
705-523-3761, Fax
or email at lindaaho@isys.ca

REMINDER...

CONVENTION TIME IS HERE AGAIN!!!

April 16, 17, and 18 1998

There will be a C.A.S. Caucus meeting on

**Thursday April 16
1998**

5:00 p.m.

(Location to be determined)

An Agenda will follow with the next Campaign Update.

If at all possible, could you give me a quick call to let me know if you are planning to attend, so I can have a rough idea of how many people to expect at the meeting.

AND.....

We're looking to getting a group of us together to go out for dinner, and (*whatever else*) after the Caucus meeting. Let me know if you're interested, and if you have any ideas of where you'd like to go!!!!

Linda Aho