

# Brockville Psychiatric Hospital Bargaining News



Local 439 ROH - BPH Bargaining Bulletin Issue 4 June 2003

## Back to arbitration July 9

Your two bargaining teams and the employer are back in front of arbitrator Kevin Burkett July 9 and if he's available, on the 10th, as well.

We're before Burkett again because we need his help to get a decent and fair settlement. The employer's last offer in bargaining was neither of those things.

At our last session, April 15, Burkett ordered the two sides back to the table to finish negotiating a first contract.

We negotiated and came to what we thought was a fair settlement on many items. We had the hospital's verbal agreement on them. But when the hospital typed up the proposals, they made changes we could not agree to.

### ROH wanted concessions

The first concession had to do with your job security. The hospital proposed language on contracting out that would **not** have adequately protected our jobs. We couldn't agree to their weak language because we know our jobs are in jeopardy.

We know this from a secret consultant's report, done for ROH in October, 1999, that we only found out about this May. We distributed it to you shortly thereafter.

The report outlines the staffing needs for the new jail and our 44-bed forensic unit, all that will be left when BPH is closed. We counted 276 of our jobs being eliminated. These job cuts would affect two-thirds of our members.

The second concession had to do with the hospital's proposal on wages. The hospital reneged on a number of issues previously agreed to.

Among other things, the hospital proposed giving no raise to some categories of members while reducing their hours from 40 hours to 37.5 hours per week. This amounted to a six per cent wage rollback!

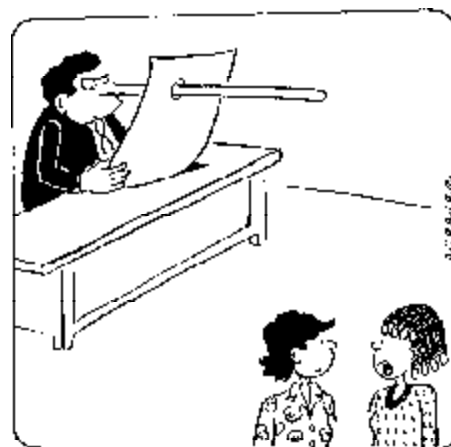
Obviously, we could not agree to this.

To sum it up, the employer gave us two packages when we met with them in late May.

One was on language. It included very weak language on contracting out that would not protect our jobs. The second was on wages. Among other things, it would have rolled back wages for some categories.

The employer told us that these two packages were not negotiable. They said we had to take them or leave them.

*continued on page 3*



"Management is working on their list of lies for contract negotiations."

# Where's my job, Bob?

Your union is fighting for your job in two ways.

First, we're trying to win you a fair and decent contract with the best job security language we can get from an arbitrator.

Secondly, we're lobbying MPP Bob Runciman to keep his promise that we'll have jobs when BPH closes.

Now that the contract will soon be in the hands of an arbitrator, we're developing a public campaign aimed at Bob Runciman and his government.

This is where you come in.

## Tell Runciman to keep his promise

Ever since the Health Services Restructuring Commission announced its recommendations in 1997 and 1998, Runciman has said there will be work for us when BPH - the largest employer in Brockville - closes.

Runciman made this promise as recently as November.

He came to BPH to announce that the Secure Treatment Unit (STU) will be a schedule one facility. There was a lot of hoopla about the new jail and treatment centre from Runciman and senior ROH managers.

Everyone was left with the impression that we'd be part of this brave new future.

ROH CEO George Langill also promised us jobs.

Langill told the Brockville Recorder and Times, Feb. 13, "At the end of the day, no one should lose their job. The net effect will probably be more jobs at this site."

Runciman is now backtracking from his earlier promises.

He now claims, in a May 23 letter to our staff representative Bob Cook, that he never made any assurances about jobs.

He is trying to deflect the blame onto OPSEU for the fact that he hasn't ensured there are enough jobs to go around.

After all, it's **his government** that is closing BPH.

It's **his ministry** that is closing jails, including the Ontario Correctional Institute in Brampton.

His solution, the St. Lawrence Valley Correctional and Treatment Centre, run by his ministry, won't have enough jobs for both groups of laid off employees.

The OPS collective agreement gives laid off corrections employees the right to follow their work. As a result, they will get corrections ministry jobs at St. Lawrence Valley.

Since his ministry only plans to contract with ROH to provide clinical services for the STU, this leaves few jobs for us. We will do everything possible to secure those jobs.

Meanwhile, we will not let Bob Runciman off the hook.

We will not let him divide and conquer us.

We will not let him pit one group of laid off workers against another.

He and his government got us in this mess. They are responsible for getting us out.

## An election is coming up

We plan to hold Runciman to his promise of jobs for all of us. An election is coming up. We are all going to have to make a crucial decision about who we're going to vote for.

We need to know from Runciman, "**Where's my job, Bob?**"

We need the answer before the election for two reasons:

- 1) He is more accountable **before** an election when he wants our votes, rather than after it; and
- 2) So we know who we're going to vote for.

*continued on page 3*

# Back to arbitration July 9

*continued from page 1*

We chose to leave them.

The job of your elected bargaining teams is to get you the best contract we can under the circumstances.

The employer's proposals would not have given us that.

We know job security and fair wages matter to you. We would have been selling you out if we had agreed to their proposals.

We decided it was better to go back to Burkett and ask him to order a settlement.

The two sides will make their presentations to Burkett July 9 and hopefully on the 10th, if he's available.

If we get both days, then the next step will be to wait for his decision. If we don't get both days, we'll have to schedule another day of arguments.

Arbitrators can only order a maximum of a two-year agreement.

We'll probably be back at the bargaining table quite soon, negotiating the renewal.

# Join the campaign

*continued from page 2*

Your bargaining teams, the local executive and interested members met June 16 to put a plan of action together to campaign for our jobs.

We will unveil this plan of action at **our general membership meeting, July 8 at 7:30 p.m., at the Brockville Legion, 180 Park Street.**

This is an exciting and crucial time with a provincial election on the horizon. Never before has our leverage been greater.

We count on your support as we've counted on it many times in the past.

We know and appreciate the contribution you have made to the patients and to the community as a whole.

Your contribution is still needed. With your help, we will fight for your right to continue making it.

In solidarity,

David McDougall, **President, Local 439**

## **Office, Service and Clerical Bargaining Team**

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Brent Rathwell  
Margie Todd  
Dave Meeks

## **Paramedical Bargaining Team**

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