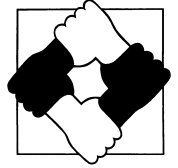


IN SOLIDARITY



The newsletter for OPSEU Stewards and Activists

We chose OPSEU!

Reorganizing at OPAC

by Will Presley, Chair of the OPAC Sector Executive, EBM, Region 6.

It wasn't a great shock to hear the Tories were intent on divesting assessment staff as part of their massive downloading scheme. The Liberal government attempted a similar transfer, but our members fought that plan and won. Now we were under the Harris gun, and worrying about our livelihoods began in earnest. Our predicament was made worse when Bill 7 made special rules for the OPS: a divestment meant you lost your collective agreement and union membership.

We were part of the Ministry of Finance. The OPSEU Employee Relations Committee was composed of four property assessors. With our division meeting looming, the Ministry Employer Relations Committee called the organizing department and myself (as Executive Board Member) to strategize. We decided to be proactive and lay the groundwork to move members from Finance to Ontario Property Assessors Corporation within OPSEU. We knew it was important to strengthen the leadership of the remaining members, since assessors had dominated the division leadership. The team proposed the splitting of the



finance division at the March divisional, eight months ahead of the divestment date. After endorsement by the delegates, the property assessment division elected a new team, and the balance of the Ministry elected their own team.

Transition team elected to re-organize

An important component of this meeting was the adoption of the new transition team's terms of reference. At it's simplest, the team was charged with

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The content and editing of this newsletter is determined by rank and file activists. We want members to feel ownership of *In Solidarity*, and view it as independent of any particular segment of the union.

Content comes from our own huge base of activists, staff and other labour sources.

Where an article has a by-line, the views are those of the author and not necessarily the views of OPSEU.

If no author is identified, the article represents OPSEU policy.

While we welcome your contributions (on disk or by e-mail if possible), we ask that these be constructive. All articles should be signed and include local number, and should contribute positively to the welfare of this union and its members.

It is not our intention to become involved in staff-bashing or member-bashing. If a person or office is named in an article, we will give that person or office the opportunity to respond in the same issue as the article appears.

We encourage thoughtful discussion of all related issues and reserve the right to edit for libel, length and clarity, and to reply to those that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the union and its policies. ☺



Who we are

The elected members of the editorial committee for *In Solidarity* are:

Laurie Chapman - Editor, Local 323

Len Mason - Designer, Local 737

Gavin Anderson - Local 460

Larry Farr - Local 559

Vern Silver - Local 670

Ex-officio members are:

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Katie FitzRandolph - OPSEU Public Affairs

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* If you require any support, advice or start-up
information concerning newsletters please
contact one of the executive members. ☺

Authorized for distribution:

Leah Casselman, President

In Solidarity is produced for all OPSEU stewards,
newsletter editors of INFO/BIS and certified Health
& Safety Representatives.

Ontario Public Service Employees Union

Editor's Handbook is ready for you!

Hello everyone,

Informed Newsletters for OPSEU (INFO/BIS) is very excited about a project that we have been working on and we know you will share our enthusiasm. Over the past several months we have been developing a handbook, called the *New Editor's Handbook*, that editors can use to help them in their day-to-day workings on their local newsletters. Vern Silver, a member of our team, has been extremely busy pulling most of it together and we are happy to announce that it is now ready for distribution.

Once we were involved in the project, we were amazed at the wealth of information that is out there. We know that we didn't cover everything but have tried to at least cover the basics. We've already begun to work on Part Two. (so keep your eyes open) The topics covered include such things as: newsletter design, web design, graphics, and resources and links. The *New Editors' Handbook* comes with a Compact Disk for easy use with links to newsletter sites, graphics and other useful information. The *Handbook* is also on the CD for your convenience.

We launched the first run at the "Editors' Weekend" in September, and would now like to offer a copy to you. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the *Editor's Handbook* please request one through: insol@opseu.org or contact one of the team members listed on page two.

Thank you for your continued support of *In Solidarity* and Informed Newsletters for OPSEU.

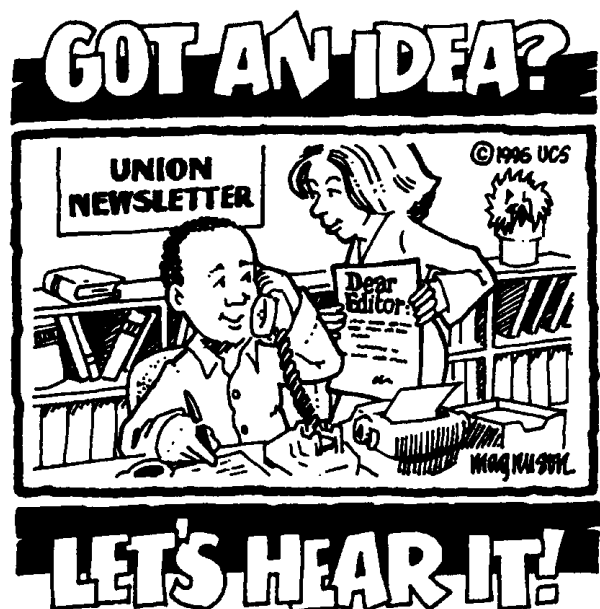
Laurie Chapman
Chairperson, INFO/BIS ☺

Are you interested in getting *In Solidarity* delivered to your home? We currently send the newsletter to known stewards and activists, but if you are interested in receiving the publication, please contact one of the committee members listed on page two.

In Solidarity is always interested in your opinion and welcome letters to the editor. We also encourage ideas and input about the newsletter.

We share articles from your newsletter with our network of editors. It would be helpful to us if you could send us a copy of your newsletter.

If you don't already have a newsletter at your local, are you interested in starting one? Do you need help in getting a newsletter up and running? Feel free to contact any of our committee members.



We chose OPSEU !

(Continued from page 1)

re-organizing our members and negotiating a first collective agreement. Assessment members wanted OPSEU to continue as our union.

The seven member transition team were: Bill Henry, Will Presley, Jennifer Reid, Tina Faibish, Ann Robinson, Larry Deschenes and Ed Faulknor. After divestment Ed retired and was replaced by Peter Thompson.

We based our initial strategy on the extremely successful OPSEU drive at the Queen Street Psychiatric Hospital. Queen Street was the first large divestment under Tory Bill 7. The members signed OPSEU cards before the divestment even took place. They took the overwhelming positive support for OPSEU to the employer and demanded voluntary recognition. The employer at Queen Street conceded defeat early and voluntarily recognized OPSEU. This was the best possible action as the members were never without a union and had an interim contract.

Although some offices wanted to immediately sign cards, the team decided that a short, sharp, province-wide campaign would have more success. April and May was used building our network of office stewards and educating ourselves on the membership's concerns over signing a new union card. Pre Bill 7 legislation would have meant we were automatically OPSEU. Members never had a choice of unions before so we knew OPSEU had to look sharp.

Getting every member to sign a card

We set the first two weeks of June for card signing. We identified work locations that were most likely to need assistance, and others that could be counted on to run smoothly. Team members and staff visited struggling offices, and others were told to move full speed ahead. The question of 'Why OPSEU?' was asked. We explained that the common assumption of everyone being in one union was not a given. We laid out the real possibility of offices being split among other unions. Few wanted to risk that. Due to OPSEU's history of improving our working conditions it was assured that most offices would end up in OPSEU. That fact, and OPSEU's track record, convinced over 90 per cent of our members that OPSEU was the right choice. A small group (probably

less than a dozen) still rejected OPSEU.

After two weeks, the results were powerful and rewarding: over 90 per cent of our members had said yes to OPSEU!

A not-so-small army of stewards

At this juncture we sent a thank-you to our soldiers in the field. It turned out that we had over 100 members helping out! The union could not have afforded to run a similar campaign with paid staff. It was a good test of the member-organizer model and OPSEU benefited from the experience.

The staff resources were important and impressive. After divestment we decided to send a thank-you card to the OPSEU staff who worked with us. We were surprised when we needed over 20 thank-you cards! Two of those staff members must be mentioned and thanked again; Ed Ogibowski who was key to our organizing, and Frank Rooney who we relied on greatly during the actual divestment negotiations.

D-day approaches

While we continued to work on signing up the balance of OPAC employees, the focus turned to the actual divestment. In November and December we negotiated our exit using the "reasonable efforts" clause in the OPS collective agreement. We were successful in keeping similar working conditions and wages due to the huge victories OPSEU had won in "reasonable efforts" grievances. A key goal was the hiring of all "unclassified" members (about 25 per cent of our unit) by OPAC. Both Finance and OPAC were correct that these workers were not covered by reasonable efforts. But the team would not agree that reasonable efforts had been met without job guarantees for all. In the end both employers agreed to our terms.

OPAC steadfastly refused to voluntarily recognize our union membership. They shaped their policies to reflect a non-union shop. We had a battle looming.

With the actual divestment date of December 30 approaching, the team plotted the certification campaign. We had to be sure that our members would solidly endorse the union in the mandatory certification vote. The network of activists was put to

(Continued on page 5)

work in earnest – checking the mood and responding to questions from nervous members. Just before Christmas we decided that we had the horses to do a quick and dirty application for certification.

The day after our divestment was New Year's Eve. That day was the first legal date for a certification application. On that unlikely date, OPSEU filed for certification for all employees at OPAC. This move caught AMAPCEO sleeping. Under the law our certification had to be tested across all employees and if we won, we would take the whole pie.

OPAC employees mark their ballots

As soon as certification notices hit the new employer they began a communications campaign to convince our members not to endorse OPSEU. They argued for a chance to run a non-union shop, and held out carrots such as a performance pay system. From our continuous reading of the membership, we knew that the employer's communications only aggravated most members and hardened their desire for a union. The certification vote was held on Jan. 12, 1999. Contested ballots (about 10 per cent of the total) were held apart, while AMAPCEO attempted fruitless legal challenges. The counted ballots revealed an overwhelming 70 per cent of OPAC employees wanted to re-enlist in OPSEU.

Although we celebrated our second milestone, we knew our organizing campaign was not complete. Under the legislation, some workers are not considered "employees." These are generally people who make decisions about hiring and firing, or are involved in labour relations. The new employer was determined to lessen our victory by reducing the size of our bargaining unit. After about six months of legal maneuvering, a compromise was reached. OPSEU got a slightly expanded bargaining unit AND the proviso that no other union (or association) could harm our bargaining the way AMAPCEO hurts our OPS unit.

Certification was a watershed but our 2,000 members were still without a grievance procedure or contract. Once again our leadership was ahead of the game with demand setting planned for less than two weeks following our certification date.

In the next *In Solidarity* we will look at that nine-month battle for a contract that came within two hours of a province-wide strike! ☺



Two weeks after the second world war ended, 11,000 members of the United Auto Workers at Ford in Windsor, Ontario, went on strike, demanding a union shop and seniority for returned soldiers. Negotiations failed. Workers and supporters left their cars around the plant, blockading the factory and creating a huge traffic jam. Supreme Court Justice Ivan C. Rand was appointed umpire. His decision said that every employee had to pay the equivalent of union dues, as every one benefited from the union's work. This "Rand Formula" set a pattern throughout Canada. ☺

My first day in Cuba

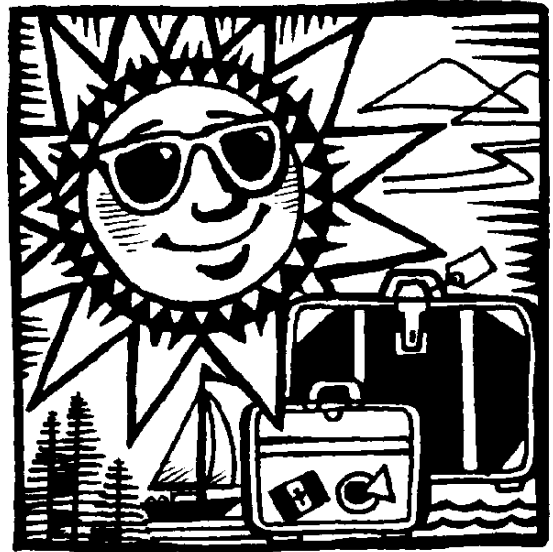
by Libby Walters, PWC Region 2

Upon arriving in Havana, Cuba, my baggage was sniffed and searched, I missed the bus to the guesthouse and no one missed me.

This was my first experience in this foreign country and although it was a little disconcerting, I did meet some friendly, helpful Cubans who helped me find my way to the guesthouse.

I was introduced to this hot, tropical paradise filled with beautiful flowers and palm trees in late April. The tour guide's sister, who found me sitting with my luggage in the airport looking rather forlorn, bundled me into an old taxi, that had seen better days in 1960, escorted me to my accommodations. The driver spoke little English and kept pointing to things speaking in Spanish. The highway was very bumpy and there were very few cars on it until we reached the city streets. The one thing that was quite evident to me already, even with my beginners Spanish, was the impact of a little boy. I could see billboards with pictures of Elian Gonzales which said, "repatriate him", on the roadside and on buildings.

I was relieved to arrive at Villa Eulalia and see the familiar faces of my union sisters. The Villa Eulalia is in Miramar; a residential part of Havana which has many foreign embassies and large villas formerly owned by the Miami Cubans who left after the revolution. The exterior of our guesthouse, which is used by the Ministry of Education as a conference facility, was beautiful with a courtyard, lovely landscaping and a patio bar. The fountain is rarely on due to constant water shortages. Inside the villa there were marble floors and a sweeping wide marble staircase, which lead us to our rooms on the second floor. The rooms were quite basic with two single beds and French doors which opened onto a roof balcony that overlooked a large bus terminal – which encouraged us to keep the windows closed and the air



conditioning on – when it was working. The bathroom, which four of us shared, was one large room with a pipe coming out of the wall. The small tiled area which you might call a shower, only had cold water which when turned on full was like a small stream. It was turned off completely most nights.

The villa was staffed by a number of young Cuban women who spoke a little English and were keen to learn more. They were very eager to help us especially with translation and also grateful to receive tips in US dollars as their salary was a meager seven dollars a week. Our first meal in the communal dining room consisted of fresh fruits, orange and mango rice, chicken and bottled water. The Cuban people who get ration coupons might have chicken once a month and as guests we had meat or fish every night. Milk was only provided with breakfast for your coffee but could be purchased extra. We all sat at banquet style tables in the dining room which had two large windows overlooking the walled garden of the villa which was locked and guarded at night. As we finished our meal one of the members of our group which was made up of members from OPSEU, CUPE, SEIU, CUPW and

(Continued on page 7)

My first day in Cuba

(Continued from page 6)

CAW came up to me and said, “There is someone here asking for Libby.” Imagine my surprise, who did I know in Cuba or better still, who could be looking for me?

In the waiting room of the villa sat a middle-aged man with graying hair and a young woman in her late twenties. They were the Dean of the Cathedral who is in the Partners in Mission project with the Canadian Dioceses of Niagara and his daughter, Mariella. They came to greet and meet our delegation. I contacted them prior to the trip to arrange for the delivery of much needed medical supplies and to visit the cathedral. Dean Juan Roman and his daughter joined us for refreshments. This warm, friendly greeting by the Cuban people was a very fitting end to our first day in Cuba.

Many members of our delegation donated the supplies they had brought from Canada. Mariella, a former doctor and now a theology professor, shared the difficulty of obtaining supplies to treat their patients.

The Dean sent me a note that he wanted me to share with the rest of OPSEU:

“We appreciate very much the donations you send our people because our country is blockade and is very difficult to get medicine, clothes, shoes and we hope one day this cruel blockade will end. We appreciate your solidarity and all the workers of the world. Our socialist society is very human and struggles for peace and justice for all. Thank you and please communicate to the union membership greetings.”

Dean Juan Roman de la Paz Cerendes ☺



Letter to the editor

Solidarity works!

For years I have heard about solidarity within the workings of OPSEU. I've also seen the effects first hand but never to the extent as with the largest unit of local 305.

Around the first week of July, I received a phone call from the unit steward, Nadine Ball. Nadine works for the Pines, which is a long-term care home. The administration of this facility has been contracted out to the Extended Care by the district government of Muskoka. Nadine advised me that management wanted to meet with us to discuss potential job loss.

We had the meeting, where we pointed out the fact that our members were already working short-staffed and needed more – not less. We told management that we would have to discuss the issue with the members and return to them.

Many ideas were bantered about at the membership meeting. They decided that they had taken enough from Extended Care and took a vote to work to rule. As Extended Care called it, the 'care plan' went into effect that night with the midnight shift.

We were finally able to meet with management two weeks later. Management voiced their concerns over the work to rule, (plan) and its effect on the workplace. Somehow they found some extra money and there would be no necessity to lay people off – at least for this year.

I am quite confident that this decision came about because the members of Pines worked together and continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder.

Many thanks to Nadine Ball and the committee.

Terry Curtis,
President, OPSEU 305

You have the right to union representation!

Canada Safeway Ltd. and RWDSU

In this case the woman was a cashier working for Safeway. The employer was suspicious that she was taking money so they brought an investigator in to question her. They discovered some transactions made by her over a three month period involving a short-fall of approximately \$5,000. The investigator and the manager invited the grievor to a meeting where they confronted her with the evidence. The employee eventually admitted to the theft. The investigator then stopped the meeting and instructed her to get a union steward or another bargaining unit member and return to the meeting immediately.



The meeting resumed when the grievor brought a bargaining unit member with her. The employer suspended her without pay immediately. The investigator then talked to the Human Resources department and a decision was made to dismiss her. The dismissal was done in the form of a letter delivered by registered mail.

The union made two arguments. The first was regarding mitigation. The woman was suffering from emotional problems related to her marriage. She was drinking and gambling during this period and she admitted the theft when confronted. Since her dismissal she had attended a rehabilitation program for 4 weeks.

Their second argument was that Article 23.05 had been breached. It stated that:

The shop steward or another employee in the bargaining unit from within the store, chosen by the employee concerned, shall be present when a member of the bargaining unit:

1. is given a reprimand that is to be entered on the employee's personal file;
2. is suspended or discharged

At the initial meeting with the grievor, she was not advised of her entitlement to union representation until half way through the meeting. She was also not allowed union representation during her dismissal since it was delivered via registered mail.

The employer argued a breach of trust and relied upon a policy that stated that theft was grounds for automatic termination.

With regard to the union's argument the employer responded that she was advised of the need for union representation prior to discipline being imposed.

The board first makes a determination as to just cause. To summarize they found that the employer had just cause for dismissal and that this case did not meet the test for mitigation.

They then went on to the second argument regarding union representation and found that she had been denied representation throughout the initial meeting and at the time of dismissal and ordered reinstatement. ☺

Bad boss was former activist

CAAT

Centennial College President, Richard Johnston, filed a college grievance against the faculty union, OPSEU Local 558. In a letter dated 9 May 2000, Johnston grieved that the Local took the position that “certain Transportation Apprenticeship Programs must now be considered post-secondary programs.” He didn’t like the fact that the union advised its members to grieve an unjust situation.

“I’ve only seen three or four of these in my entire career at OPSEU,” said George Richards, senior grievance officer at OPSEU headquarters. “It doesn’t make any sense. It’s the union’s job to grieve and management gets to deny the grievance,” continued Richards.

In February, the Ministry of Training, College and Universities amended the Apprentice and Certification Act to require Grade 12 as entrance to apprenticeship training. The change in the act acknowledges and reflects the increasing complexity of most skilled occupations. For some time the College has asked for Grade 12 as an entry requirement to most apprenticeship programs. Now the Ministry has made it mandatory.

The Union Local had informal discussions with the College to effect this change. However, the College refused to recognize apprenticeship faculty as post-secondary in spite of an earlier agreement to try to resolve the discrepancy in faculty workloads.

“The Union quite rightly advised its members to end this long standing unfair and discriminatory situation,” said Chief Steward, Ron Golemba. Teachers not in post-secondary programs have higher workload limits than those who are in post-secondary programs. These limits are two more teaching contact hours (20) per week and two more weeks of teaching (38) each year.

“The College has decided to fight the issue in every way they can,” said Golemba. The Union asked the College to extend hearing deadlines so that the backlog of union and individual grievances could be cleared up. The College refused to do so in spite of a long-standing practice of the union of allowing the College to extend deadlines.

Even worse, the College took the unprecedented action of refusing to discuss the employees’ workload complaints. On 26 May 2000, Lynne Watts, Vice President Administration, informed the Union that, “we will not be considering the individual workload complaints on this issue.”

The refusal removed any possibility of a resolution at the local level and forced the faculty to refer their issues directly to arbitration.

At the college’s grievance hearing, Johnston was at a loss to explain the rationale behind the grievance. The local reminded Johnston that the employees filed a group grievance that would determine the apprenticeship issue. Johnston claimed that he filed his grievance against the union before the employees grieved. Golemba showed employees grievance dated a

week before Johnston filed his grievance. Local 558 President, Eileen Burrows, offered to send the employees’ group grievance to an expedited arbitration process to resolve the issue. Johnston declined and insisted that his grievance go forward.

“This fundamental lack of respect for workers’ rights goes far beyond that shown by any of Centennial’s former presidents,” said Eileen Burrows. “To have an administration that would work so hard to frustrate the legitimate resolution of workload complaints is quite shocking.” ☹

(Richard Johnston is a former activist and Ontario New Democratic Party MPP.)



Proposition:

The CLC was right to impose sanctions against the CAW.

Point

Stop! We must unite, not split.

I am extremely concerned with the recent developments in the Canadian labour movement which are leading to a split between the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW).

I believe that OPSEU should take a sober approach to this and not inflame passions by jumping in recklessly on one side or the other.

We should favour a stance of resolving problems within the labour movement democratically; recognizing the right of all workers to free association. Those who are promoting a split between the CLC and the CAW on the basis of alleged 'raiding' and the necessity to enforce the CLC 'rules and regulations' are doing a disservice to the Canadian labour movement.

The union movement must look at concrete problems facing us. The Canadian political system, most notably here in Ontario where Harris was elected by less than half of the actual voters and by less than a quarter of the eligible electorate should be our main focus.

The labour movement, like almost all sectors of society, is being marginalized by the corporate elite, the media and the political process. Political parties are brought to power by chicanery and increasingly rule by decree. In Ontario and elsewhere, people have risen many times in defense of their rights against the attacks of the Harris government.

The 'Days of Action' allowed people of Ontario to flex their muscles. But with the failure of 'strategic voting' and the subsequent re-election of Harris, we hear that the union movement should avoid 'political action' and stick to the 'core business' of 'securing

David Starbuck is Communications Officer of OPSEU 655 (Cambrian College in Sudbury)



better contracts' and, unfortunately, take sides in this fratricidal war. If the union movement becomes consumed by a sectarian debate over who's right, we will get diverted from our main task of finding a solution to the Harris and Chretien governments.

The dispute over the Service Employees International Union locals should be resolved by a supervised vote of the membership. The CLC must recognize the right of workers to freely associate in organizations of their choice, not organizations imposed from above. If the rules and regulations need updating to allow this, then that should be done at the next CLC convention.

In the meantime, OPSEU should not do anything to exacerbate this situation and work towards promoting a principled resolution to this question.

We need to focus on the real tasks facing us.

Everyone should join in the discussion. ☺

Counterpoint

Democracy must prevail !



Barb Coombs
*is retired and the
former Vice-
President EBM of
Region 7.*

raiding have turned it around to suit their own situation. Democratic? I think not.

There are so many unorganized workers in Canada. Have the CAW forgotten about them? Why not focus our efforts on them instead of raiding already organized members?

Many questions remain unanswered: Why did the leadership of SEIU accept positions with the CAW prior to being placed in trusteeship? Why did these same people vote in favour of a new Canadian structure just months before the raid during the SEIU convention?

The CAW did hire some staff after the SEIU was placed in trusteeship but many remain unemployed. Now, former SEIU local executive members want to be allowed to run in future elections if they end up back in the SEIU. That is extremely ludicrous. Once you jump ship, you sink or swim and live with the consequences.

Unfortunately, the only ones benefiting from this rift between the CAW and the CLC are the right wingers. It is not helping the labour movement to be seen as so divided and we must get our act together to fight the real fight of organized labour.

Our members are confused so imagine how the unorganized must be feeling. At the very least they must see us as a joke – nothing more than what we've been accused of - Union bosses looking for power.

The leadership of the CLC appears to be bending over backwards to accommodate the healing but will the CAW swallow their pride and make amends? Only time will tell. But how much time do we really have? The Tories are bent on destroying unions – the only voice for working people. The sad irony is that we may be more destructive to ourselves than the Tories ever could be. ☺

Absolutely! The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) was right in imposing sanctions against the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). Democracy should, ideally, prevail in all facets of life but especially in the labour movement! In my opinion, this was definitely not the case.

There is a 'justification' clause in the CLC Constitution to address issues such as changing unions which in 1992, the CAW along with other affiliates agreed to. Why then did the CAW and disgruntled Service Employees International Union (SEIU) members not use Article IV instead of conducting interest votes amongst the locals?

Ironically, the CAW did use Article IV to file raiding charges against the United Steelworkers of America when they believed sanctions were warranted. This verifies that they are in agreement with the Article but since they were found guilty of

My name's not George

The story of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in Canada

by Len Mason, *In Solidarity*

The personal reminiscences of Stanley G. Grizzle come to life when you pick up this excellent book published by Umbrella Press.

This read is a journey through the life and times of an African-Canadian man in Toronto from 1918 to the present.

Stanley G. Grizzle educates the reader on the history of African Canadians and the hardships that faced families as they searched for employment and tried to plant roots in Canada.

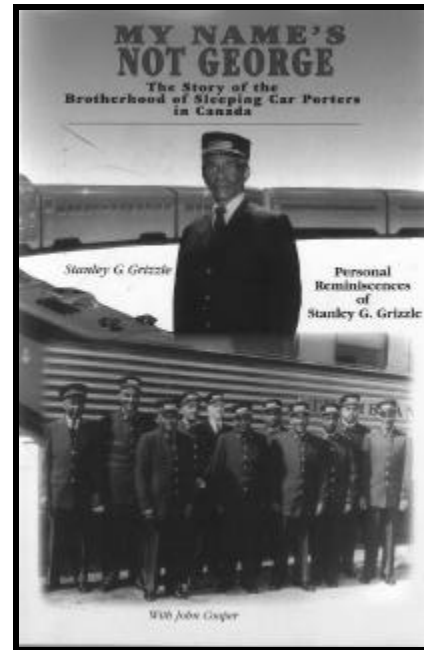
The Canadian Pacific Railway is the employer who inspires Grizzle to become active and organize a union which represent the Sleeping Car Porters.

The book introduces A. Philip Randolph who was an inspiration to Mr. Grizzle. It talks about the hurdles that were before the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters as they fought for the respect that they deserved in Canada.

I found it hard to stop reading as I was propelled into an atmosphere where I was sitting on a couch with Mr. Grizzle as he reminisced about his life. With each new chapter, I imagined Grizzle stuffing his pipe with a new pinch of tobacco, looking me in the eye, taking a puff, and launching into another era of the life of a man who wanted respect for all workers.

Labour Committees, the Ladies Auxiliary, and the fight for equality are all titles of chapters in this short book. There is a nice collection of pictures which chronicle the life of Grizzle and enable the reader to travel back in time to the 1940s and 1950s when passenger trains was the preferred method of transportation. Pictures of organizers, volunteers, and people who inspired the fight are all proudly on display in the book.

Stanley G. Grizzle is the first acknowledged



African Canadian to contest an Ontario provincial election. The story of his life talks about how he was asked to run for election in the riding of York East in 1959.

Mr. Grizzle changed careers in 1962 and became the first African Canadian to be employed by the Ontario Ministry of Labour.

In 1978 Mr. Grizzle resigned from the provincial civil service to accept an appointment by Prime Minister Trudeau as a Judge in the court of Canadian Citizenship – the first African Canadian in the court's history.

Stanley G. Grizzle received the Order of Ontario in 1990 from Lieutenant General Lincoln M. Alexander and the Order of Canada was conferred on him by Governor-General Romeo Leblanc in 1995.

I highly recommend that you read this book. It is an education in many aspects of life. A real inspiration. ☺

Getting members to Help Out

A steward who tries to do everything himself or herself is a steward who probably thinks it's fun to be hit on the head with a brick.

The smart steward gets all the help possible in doing the union's work. It involves some effort, but stewards who follow the Turnout Formula described here can just about be guaranteed a successful recruitment of volunteers for any activity.

Try it, but heed caution: don't skip any steps! Like a good recipe, the outcome is successful only when you use every ingredient.

To start, get a sense of each person you're going to approach. What interests them, motivates them, makes them involved in things. Understand their reasons for participating in the things they do participates in, be it a club, a church, an organization.

Then go to them and make your pitch. Do it in person. Make sure you show them what they can get out of it (socializing, recognition, sense of helping others, etc.). Let them know you need them specifically.

What motivates someone?

It's important that you make the approach directly, in person. You're trying to get something from them and such an approach has to be from someone they know and trust.

Make it clear what they'll get out of it if they agree to participate. They need to obtain enough information from you to understand the task at hand.

It helps if they understand that someone like them has done the task before, successfully. It also helps if you really listen to any concerns they may have. Ask them questions. Try to understand and help them overcome their fears.

Talk from your heart. Tell the prospective volunteers that the union really needs their help. Be enthusiastic about the union and the task: when

you're enthusiastic, it rubs off on the other person.

Finally, when you want to motivate people, involve them in one small step at a time. Don't tell them or expect them to stuff 5,000 envelopes all by themselves; tell them, for example, (and be truthful about it!) that 500 envelopes need stuffing, and two other volunteers are helping.

Seal the deal

Once you've made your approach and heard a positive response, seal the deal by getting a commitment from the volunteers. Get them to say they'll be there, at the time and place designated, and shake hands on it.

Follow up with a letter thanking them for volunteering, acknowledging their commitment, and reminding them exactly what they're doing and when and where they are expected to show up.

As the day of the activity nears, make it a point to see or telephone the volunteers to remind them of the event or assignment.

As insurance, always sign up more volunteers than you think you actually need. It's better to have a few too many hands (or feet or voices) than you really need. Someone always gets sick; someone always has a family emergency. Be prepared. Anticipate dropouts.

Finally, be sure to praise and thank your volunteers for turning out. Everybody likes recognition and thanks, and offering them will make it more likely that your volunteers will come back to help you again and again. 😊

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Truth in advertising

by *Judith McCormack/CALM*

“A little inaccuracy sometimes saves tons of explanation,” said the famous writer Saki, and many prospective job applicants agree. A little padding in a resumé, a few omissions on a job application – all part of the marketing game, they think.

One problem is that this kind of inaccuracy can come back to haunt workers later. The line that may have hooked the job can also cook the job, if it’s not true.

Arbitrators have considered several issues in deciding whether to uphold a discharge in these kinds of cases. The first is whether the inaccuracy was important or not. A worker who falsely claims she took technical courses relevant to the job will be in more hot water than one who puts down the wrong address.

Another factor is whether the misstatement was deliberate or accidental. A blatant lie will be more serious than an innocent mistake.

In some cases, an arbitrator will also consider what has happened since the job application. If the worker has been competently doing his job for the employer for several years, he may be more successful in hanging on to it. These arbitrators will look at whether the misstatement makes a difference to the worker’s ability to perform his or her duties.

If the employer required a high school diploma, for example, and the worker obligingly made one up, it may not mean the end of his job if the this qualification wasn’t really necessary in the first place. What about applicants who omit references to medical conditions or disabilities?

This may bring into play another factor. An employer may find it more difficult to argue that a worker who concealed a disability wouldn’t have been hired if the disability had been known. In some cases, this may amount to discrimination.



Whether it is discriminatory or not may depend on the nature of the job. If the job really does require sight in both eyes, a person with sight in only one may be in trouble.

Like many aspects of labour law, workers and employers are not equal. The remedies against a prospective employer who lies in a job interview are few and far between. Was the job really as well paid or interesting as the employer claimed? What about all those working conditions that sounded so good? In most cases a lawsuit isn’t practical to deal with this kind of thing, and in some cases, it isn’t possible. That leaves workers with one tried-and-true method for improving poor wages and working conditions: their union.

Judith McCormack is a former chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board who now practices labour law with the firm of Sack Goldblatt Mitchell.

It's time Harris appointed a Minister of Advertising

by *Linwood Barclay, The Toronto Star, Sept. 29/00*

When the Ontario Legislature resumed four days ago, I had high hopes Mike Harris would make a bold, daring appointment. Sure, the Tories are taking hits on a lot of fronts, but there's still at least one thing they do very well, and when you do something well, it only makes sense to play it up. It draws attention away from the things you're screwing up.

I'd been hoping the Premier would create a new ministerial position. He should have named, effective immediately, a Minister of Advertising.

Sadly, he didn't do it. But that doesn't mean he still can't. There's still plenty of time to make things right.

Minister of Advertising would not be one of those back-water portfolios that nobody really knows or cares about (you know, like Culture, Tourism, Elevator Licensing, Poultry Examination, Environment) but one of the biggies. Right up there with Health, or Finance, and not just because the province's advertising budget consumes a great deal of our finances.

There's a pretty solid argument for a Minister of Advertising. Consider:

- ◆ In the last three years, the Tories have spent nearly \$190 million on advertising. This is, according to Dalton McGuinty (he is the Liberal leader, for those of you who have only lived in Ontario for the last 20 years or so) \$27 million more than the environment ministry's annual budget.

- ◆ Since the Walkerton disaster in May, the province has spent \$12 million on advertising. It has spent \$6 million on fixing the water problem. Now, some people might say that's a bit like rushing out to buy new wallpaper when your house bursts into flames, but those would be the same people who don't understand anything about priorities.

It makes you crazy to think that we would waste money on a salary for a Minister of Environment, and NOT be paying anyone to be the Minister of

Advertising. It's nothing short of a provincial scandal. (The easiest thing might be to move Dan Newman out of the environment post – it could be phased out altogether – and over to the advertising portfolio right away so he could start earning his pay-cheque.)

- ◆ Last week, we received in the mail the 12-page *Learning for Life* flyer which explains how much better the education system is today. Now, think back five years or more, when students still had extracurricular activities, when teachers strikes and protests were rare, when special-needs kids were able to get extra help without having to jump through hoops, when children could start school in September without wondering how this year's chaos would differ from last year's. We didn't get flyers at our door back then telling us how great the education system was, so we know it must have been pretty bad. Today, just when we think the school system is collapsing, we receive flyers assuring us to the contrary.

This is why advertising is so important.

Once we had a Minister of Advertising, with his own ministry and hundreds of staff and a honkingly huge budget, it wouldn't be long before we had television commercials, not unlike those ones about standardized testing, telling us about the good work this new ministry was doing.

The ads for the advertising ministry could go like this: Mike Harris voice-over: "It used to be taxpayers could go years without knowing which issues their government feared it was fumbling the worst. But now, the Ontario government has committed millions of dollars to produce television and radio commercials, and door-to-door flyers, designed to persuade voters that it knows what it's doing in areas where it really hasn't got a clue. And we're doing it (dramatic pause) for you. A message from the Ontario Ministry of Advertising."

Cue Trillium logo. ☺



Buying paint



CEP 298 Newsletter/CALM

Buying paint from a hardware store:

Customer: Hi. How much is your paint?

Clerk: We have regular quality for \$12 a gallon and premium for \$18. How many gallons would you like?

Customer: Five gallons of regular quality, please.

Clerk: Great. That will be \$60 plus tax.

Buying paint from an airline:

Customer: Hi. How much is your paint?

Clerk: Well, sir, that depends.

Customer: Depends on what?

Clerk: Actually, a lot of things.

Customer: How about giving me an average price.

Clerk: Wow, that's too hard a question. The lowest price is \$9 a gallon, and we have 150 different prices up to \$200 a gallon.

Customer: What's the difference in the paint?

Clerk: Oh, there isn't any difference. It's all the same paint.

Customer: Well, then, I'd like some of that \$9 paint.

Clerk: Well, first, I need to ask you a few questions. When do you intend to use it?

Customer: I want to paint tomorrow, on my day off.

Clerk: Sir, the paint for tomorrow is the \$200-a-gallon paint.

Customer: What? When would I have to paint in order to get the \$9 paint.

Clerk: That would be in three weeks, but you will also have to agree to start painting before Friday of that week and continue painting until at least Sunday.

Customer: You've got to be kidding!

Clerk: Sir, we don't kid around here. Of course, I'll have to check to see if we have any of that paint available before I can sell it to you.

Customer: What do you mean check to see if you can sell it to me? You have shelves full of that stuff; I can see it right there.

Clerk: Just because you can see it doesn't mean that we have it. It may be the same paint, but we only sell

a certain number of gallons on any given weekend. Oh, and by the way, the price just went to \$12 a gallon.

Customer: You mean the price went up while we were talking?

Clerk: Yes, sir. You see, we change prices and rules thousands of times a day, and since you haven't actually walked out of the store with your paint yet, we just decided to change. Unless you want the same thing to happen again, I would suggest that you get on with the purchase. How many gallons do you want?

Customer: I don't know exactly. Maybe five gallons. Maybe I should buy six gallons just make sure I have enough.

Clerk: Oh no, sir, you can't do that. If you buy the paint and then you don't use it, you will be liable for penalties and possible confiscation of the paint you already have.

Customer:: What?

Clerk: That's right. We can sell you enough paint to do your kitchen, bathroom, hall and north bedroom, but if you stop painting before you do the bedroom, you will be in violation of our tariffs.

Customer:: But what does it matter to you whether I use all the paint? I already paid you for it!

Clerk: Sir, there is no point in getting upset; that is just the way it is. We make plans based on the idea that you will use all the paint, and when you don't, it just causes us all sorts of problems.

Customer: This is crazy! I suppose something terrible will happen if I don't keep painting until after Saturday night!

Clerk: Yes, sir, it will.

Customer: Well, that does it! I'm going somewhere else to buy my paint.

Clerk: That won't do any good, sir. We all have the same rules. Thanks for painting with our airline. ☹

Herald strike ends

CEP 630/Paper Break/CALM

Striking journalists at the *Calgary Herald* have voted to end their eight-month strike. Members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union Local 115A voted by 68 per cent to accept a back-to-work agreement that provides job security for returning workers and enhanced buy-out packages for workers who choose not to return. The agreement also provides for a disbanding of the bargaining unit. Ninety-eight per cent of the striking journalists voted.

“A large number of our members have decided not to return to work at the *Calgary Herald*,” explained local union president Andy Marshall. “We have chosen to end this dispute with dignity, rather than sign a contract without normal job security and seniority provisions.”

“Our members are proud of the struggle they have waged for fairness and responsible journalism. Our decision today is recognition that we cannot remain on strike forever against an employer that apparently will never agree to recognize the rights of its employees, regardless of the costs. Many of our members now wish to get on with their lives elsewhere. Those who return to the *Herald* do so with honour. They have demonstrated their professionalism and integrity.”

“We express our sincere gratitude to the many thousands of Calgarians and others across Canada who have supported us over the past eight months.”

Sweatshop Barbie

Steel shots (Steelworkers Local 1005)

Low wages, harsh, unhealthy working conditions, and abusive management practices have continued at China’s factories producing Barbie’s, Teletubbies, Tomy toys and give-aways from McDonalds. Many of the multi-nationals have codes of conduct that look good on paper, but have no effect on their sub-contractors.

The Hong Kong based Asia Monitor Resource Centre reports that workers’ low wages are cut by heavy fines. Work weeks are usually six days long. Compulsory overtime of two, three and four hours every day is common and workers complain they get as little as four hours sleep when being pushed to fill production orders. Factories are very hot, the air is stifling and where paints are used, the fumes are poisonous. Workers at some factories must live in over-crowded dormitories and pay for tainted food.

Canadian labour activists are taking on *Mattel* to highlight terrible working conditions at two factories in China making the doll for the North American market.

Mattel has a code of conduct for its sub-contractors, but working conditions are bad, hours are long, and pay low for the women working there. Workers aren’t free to resign because they forfeit both wages owed, and ‘deposits’ worth 20 to 30 days wages.

Despite the penalties many run away to escape brutal management. Consumers are being asked to call *Mattel* and demand the company enforce its own code.

To view the full report on toy factories visit the “Sweatshop” section on the Canadian Labour Congress web site at: www.clc-ctc.ca ☺



Campaign for Labor Rights

Campaign for Labor Rights/Internet

Although this interview is not directly connected with any current campaign, it is well worth posting because of its eloquent portrayal of the struggles faced by sweatshop workers and union organizers throughout Mexico. Also, the state of Tamaulipas is the location of Duro Manufacturing – the focus of one of CLR's two current Mexico sweatshop campaigns.

The do-nothing unions mentioned by Omar Gil are the government-controlled unions, which usually resist and help to repress independent union activity. David Bacon, who conducted this interview, is an outstanding photojournalist based in California. A number of his articles deal with immigration issues in the U.S. To subscribe to his listserve, write to him at dbacon@igc.org.

I come from Mexico City. My father had a business there, a small bookstore, until I was 11 years old. Then, because of the devaluation of the peso, his store went broke. My parents looked for work in Mexico City, but they couldn't find any, so they decided to come here to the border, to Nuevo Laredo. We came here looking for a way to subsist so I went to school on the border. When I finished preparatory school, my plan was to go back to Mexico City, to the university, to study physics and mathematics or law. I could not continue because we didn't have the money. I had to go to work.

At first I began taking classes in air conditioning, so that I could get some training for a better job. It wasn't my intention to work full time, but to study and work at the same time. But working in the maquiladoras – it's not really possible to go to school, mainly because of time. Also, the pay is low, and my job is very insecure.

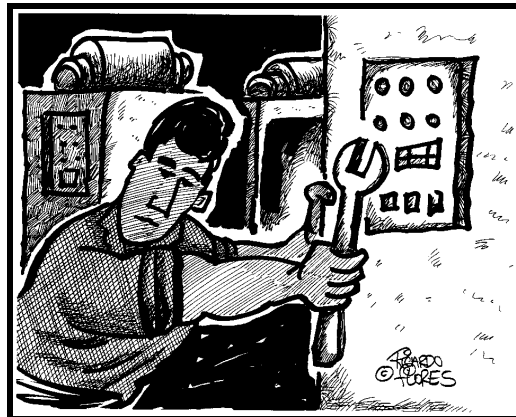
Despite all this, I haven't lost hope yet that I'll be able to go back. It's just that I'm not 100 per cent sure anymore. Now there are other factors as well. I don't have any time to rest, and I'm getting physically exhausted. It's very hard.

I've been in these factories since I was 19 years old, and now I'm 26. I've gotten more and more worried, because I don't have time for any kind of personal life. I leave work so tired that on the weekends I don't want to even leave the house to go anywhere. I just want to rest. All my personal development has been put on hold so that I can rest, just so I'll be able to work. I feel like my youth has passed me by.

In 1993, I got my first job in a maquiladora, at Delphi Auto Parts. They paid 360 pesos a week (about \$40). There was a lot of pressure from the foremen on the assembly lines to work hard and produce, and there were a lot of accidents because of the bad design of the lines. The company didn't give us adequate protective equipment to deal with the chemicals – we didn't really have any idea of the dangers, or how we should protect ourselves. The union there did nothing to protect us.

From Delphi, I went to another company, National Auto Parts. In that plant we made car radiators for Cadillacs and Camaros, and there was a lot of sickness and accidents there too. I worked in the area with the metal presses. There were no ventilators to take the fumes out of the plant, and they didn't give us any gloves. We had to handle the parts with our bare hands, and people got cut up a lot. I worked in an area with a lot of lead. If you work with lead, you're supposed to have special clothing and your clothes should be washed separately. The company didn't give us any of that. We had to work in our street

(Continued on page 19)



Campaign for Labor Rights

(Continued from page 18)

clothes. They paid 400 pesos a week (about \$43). We had no union, and there was the same pressure for production from the foremen and the group leaders as I saw at Delphi.

Now I work at TRW, where I've been for about a month and a half. There's really no difference in the conditions in any of these plants. If anything, my situation now is even worse. You could say it's forced labor, considering how the foremen talk to the workers, and how much psychological pressure they put on people.

We work an average of 14-15 hours a day. There's no transport service to and from work, and we get off shift at four o'clock in the morning. Usually we have to wait until 7 a.m. before we can catch a public bus. When a bus does come, getting home costs 20 pesos. That makes a very big dent in your take-home pay of 380 to 400 pesos a week (\$40-43).

My job is bending steel cables for seatbelts for GM, Ford and some European car models. The cable is about a centimeter thick, and I have to bend about 3,500 a day. Because of what's passing through my hands every day, I can hardly sleep at night – the pain is so bad. Then I have to get up in the morning to do it again.

In the future, I know that I can get carpal tunnel problems, which is a very scary idea. I've asked to change to another position, but no one wants to change because whoever works in this job gets a lot of pain in their wrists.

I feel that in three or four years my hands are going to be useless. I've been thinking that I'll have to get another job. What else can I do?

They say work in the maquiladoras is the best paid work here in the city. But there's not much difference from one factory to another. This is all just normal – the standard. Really, I'm leaving my whole life in the factory. Because of the time and money pressure, I have no ability to develop myself even as a worker, much less as a human being.

After I had been working in Delphi for a year, I was invited to join a group that was trying to learn

about workers' rights. People in this group said that things needed to be changed and better protections given to us, but that the companies didn't want to do it. At first I was undecided, because I thought that I could get into a lot of trouble if I got involved.

I thought I would get fired – or even worse things would happen to me. I heard about the movement in 1994, when Martha Ojeda, (currently director of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras) and others tried to democratize the union at Sony, to make it one which represented the workers and fought for their rights.

For many years, Martha was a non-company union leader in Nuevo Laredo. Union leaders in Mexico City refused to recognize her. In 1994 the union general secretary here called her an agitator and a Communist, and she was forced to leave. She became well-known

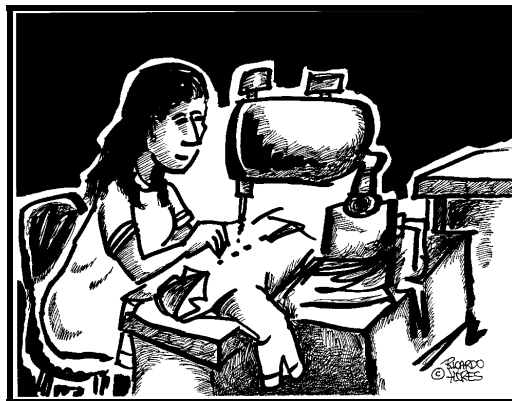
among the workers because she tried to help them at other plants too. It seemed the whole world painted Martha Ojeda as a ghost to scare people, and used her as an example of what could happen if you got involved.

A couple of years later, when I was invited to join one of the groups again, I decided to go. They invited me to a workshop about health and safety – the

problems you could suffer because of repetitive motion. I realized that it was ridiculous to believe that it was bad to show workers the dangers in their jobs. The companies and the newspapers say we're putting the maquiladoras in danger, but we're just showing workers what's wrong with the way the work is organized.

When I understood that, I decided to become a voluntary organizer, and we've been working together ever since. Everything I learn I try to pass on, so that it will help everyone else.

Every movement starts with just a small group, but they evolve and get bigger and bigger. Lots of people say you're just wasting your time because you'll never be able to change anything. But I say no. Nothing will ever change if we just sit on our hands. You have to keep trying and trying. ☺



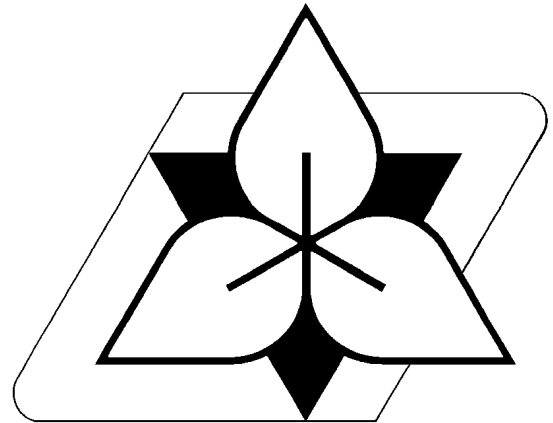
Labour organizes campaign to stop Tories increasing work week

OFL/CALM

“If the Tory government isn’t stopped, Ontario workers will be facing a 60-hour work week, be forced to take their holidays a day at a time, and overtime pay will become a thing of the past,” says Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) president Wayne Samuelson.

“Proposed changes to the current *Employment Standards Act* spell nothing but trouble for all workers,” Samuelson says. “The reality is most workers in Ontario don’t have the right now to say no to their bosses, but if workplace standards are cut even more workers will have absolutely no say.”

In September, the Executive Board of OFL approved the most comprehensive workplace-focused campaign in the federation’s history. The federation’s unions intend to make the government’s worker-bashing agenda the prime topic of discussion in every workplace in every corner of the province.



OFL/FTO

Polling* over the last 12 months has shown a 43 per cent increase in the number of non-union workers who would vote for a union if they could. “If you’re not in a union now, look out,” says Samuelson.

* *Vector Research + Development National Polls, July 2000* ☺

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