

NO MORE CUTS

Rebuild our public services!

Information update for OPSEU members in the Ontario Public Service

January 26, 2005

Employer Opening Position

On January 19, 2005 the Ontario government tabled its opening position for this round of OPS bargaining. If you are looking for something new, you won't find it here; this language appears to have been taken right out of the Tory bargaining book. Here's what the McGuinty government said in their opening position...and here's what it probably means:

1. In their **Preamble** the employer uses the terms:

- sustainable public services
- fair and responsible terms and conditions of employment
- ensure that the parties' respective interests are fully understood

Translation? This is code for *affordable*. And that always translates to cuts, layoffs and few improvements for the employees who are left.

2. Under **Term of the agreement**, the employer says:

- Consideration be given to a four (4) year term

Translation? The government does not want to be in bargaining when they try for re-election in October 2007. We wonder why...

3. The employer wants to use **Modern Recruitment Methods** such as:

- Contemporary hiring methods
- Pool and/or pipeline hiring
- Backfilling, secondments, competency-based recruitment
- Developmental assignments, cross-appointments, and web-based recruitment strategies

Translation? The employer will get to decide whether or not seniority is relevant when it comes to hiring, assignments and promotions.

4. The employer talks about **Non-Bargaining Unit Personnel**, such as:

- Appropriate use of non-bargaining unit personnel
- OPS personnel will work in non-OPS workplaces
- Employer flexibility

Translation? There are no more rules on who does our work. As for OPS personnel working in non-OPS workplaces...who would be your employer?

5. The employer wants to implement **In-Placement/Workforce Adjustment Measures**, saying:

- Collective agreement not adequately responsive to the needs of both the employer and employees relating to employment security, rather than to job security
- Current provisions tend to be expensive and inflexible
- Areas which might be examined include redeployment, exit payments, displacement, and re-training

Translation? This one is real easy. There are layoffs coming, and the government wants to make it easier and cheaper to get you out the door.

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6. **Vacation Credits** are on the employer's agenda. They want:

- Newly-hired employees be offered higher levels of vacation than are currently set out in the collective agreement
- Attracting highly-qualified candidates, with considerable work experience, to the public service.

Translation? New hires in the public service will get more vacation than YOU.

7. The employer wants **Sustainable Public Services**:

- Necessary to attract candidates of the highest calibre
- Some staffing provisions in the collective agreement make it ever more difficult to ensure that the right people are in place
- The flexibility to address the business requirements of the future

Translation? Forget about getting a promotion. The government wants to hire from the outside instead of looking at OPS members who have the knowledge and expertise. "Job post...is toast."

8. The employer has targeted **Enhanced Severance** by proposing to:

- Re-examine the circumstances under which enhanced severance is paid in surplus situations

Translation? Once again, there are layoffs coming. The government wants to make it cheaper and eliminate enhanced severance.

9. The employer has also targeted Termination Pay, saying:

- Collective agreement currently provides a generous termination payment

- Explore whether such a payment continues to be appropriate

Translation? Dalton will pick your pocket going out the door...again.

10. Under **Project Work**, the employer says:

- Ensure that the provisions of the collective agreement are responsive to its needs to fill positions
- Complete projects without undue disruption

Translation? The employer gets to decide who works on a special project. Those chosen may have to waive their vacation or other entitlements until the project is completed. What are you willing to give up?

11. The employer wants new language under **Accommodation** because:

- Accommodation and health reassignments can sometimes create challenges, particularly in smaller centres

Translation? You have rights under the Human Rights Code – unless you work for the Ontario government. Apparently the government thinks your rights are dependent upon how many people are at your work location.

12. The employer wants to look at **VDT Issues**, including:

- How frequently and under what criteria a routine eye examination and other related considerations are required for computer operators

Translation? Obviously this government isn't too concerned about employees maintaining the health of their vision. In other words, this is one more way the employer will keep you in the dark.

In summary, the employer's agenda startlingly resembles the Tory agenda during the last three rounds of bargaining. The McGuinty Liberals do not "value your work" or want to "provide better services to the public". They want to continue with the cuts, eliminate protections in the collective agreement and make it cheaper to lay you off.

You can access the full Central opening position on the OPSEU website at www.opseu.org

Authorized for distribution:



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