



May 14, 2005

TableTalk

Bargaining information for OPSEU members
in the Ontario Public Service

Important:
Contract Vote
Information

In this offer, you will lose money – and maybe your job

Dear Friend,

As demanded by your bargaining teams, the employer has tabled a final offer for you to vote on May 25, 26, 27.

This “offer” is really nothing of the sort: It is designed so that you will actually lose money, or worse, your job.



Leah Casselman,
President, OPSEU

Your bargaining teams **unanimously** recommend that you **reject this offer and give them the tools they need** to go back and get you a good collective agreement.

Last year, you sent your teams to the bargaining table with

a comprehensive list of demands. You said you needed:

- better job security;
- improved benefits;
- conversion of unclassified employees to classified jobs;
- a way to solve wage classification disputes;
- extension of Factor 80 for all employees; and
- better wages.

The employer’s May 14 offer ignores **all** of your demands, except for wages. They

have offered 2, 2, and 2 per cent in each successive year of a proposed three-year contract.

Sound good? To some it may. After all, Finance Minister Greg Sorbara said last year that he lived in a “two per cent world.” Two per cent is better than a strike, right? Maybe not.

Compare the two per cent on the table to what’s happening with today’s prices. Inflation is currently running at 2.3 per cent. That means that everything you buy, from the milk in your fridge to the gas in your car, costs 2.3 per cent more than it did last year. A two per cent wage increase actually equals a net loss of at least 0.3 per cent per year. And don’t forget: You have already lost seven per cent due to inflation since 1994.

But this so-called “offer” is not just about money. This is about your very livelihood: **your job.**

The Liberals still plan to cut 6,000 jobs or more out of the OPS. In the May 11 provincial budget, the McGuinty Liberals froze spending in some ministries and cut spending in others by up to 38.5 per cent. **That spells one thing and one thing only: job loss for OPS members.**

What is your job worth to you? The average age of an OPS member is 45 years

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old, with an average of 19 years service. For many, your job is a lifetime investment. For many, the thought of starting over is not a pleasant one.

A kick if you leave...

For those who will lose their jobs, those who have dedicated their lives to providing valuable service to the public, **Dalton McGuinty plans to reward your efforts by stealing money out of your pocket while you go out the door.** He wants to eliminate your separation allowance when he lays you off. This is a benefit we have already paid for. And if you resign, Dalton will hit you again – by eliminating your termination pay.



Marg Simmons, Chair,
Central Bargaining Team

...and a kick if you stay

That's not all. For all of you who remain at your jobs, fighting to do more with less after eight years of Tory destruction, the employer has got some surprises for you.

They refuse to convert the “Max + Merit” increase into a step on the pay grid. Therefore, you must continue to meet their performance expectations in order to receive the additional three per cent.

They want to use “pool hiring” that would place hundreds of employees on stand-by and hire them as jobs become available. If your circumstances change and you need to apply for another position, you are out of luck if you aren't in the pool.

They want to make it almost impossible to redeploy if you are surplus or bumped. Currently, you must be “minimally qualified” to move into another position. The employer wants to change that to read “qualified.” Results: unless you are moving into the **exact** same job you held before, you are out the door.

A final offer? Or testing the waters?

Getting your issues on the table and getting rid of these takeaways will take a lot of effort on our part over the next few weeks. The first thing we need to find out is how serious this *Liberal* government is about settling this contract.

Thanks to three rounds of bargaining with the Tories, we've learned a few things.

First, we've learned bargaining is a power transaction. With power, you make gains. Without it, you don't.

Second, we've learned that the “final” offer is never the “last” offer. More is always put on the table when the first offer is rejected.

Third, we've learned that the government of the day will always wait to see which demands are serious, and which aren't.

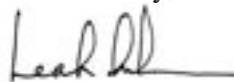
This is where you come in.

The Liberals have been very sly about what they have put in their offer. They know many of you are still affected by the 2002 strike. So what do they do? Throw a little bit of money on the table, slide in some takeaways (that are really nothing more than old Tory demands), completely ignore all of your other demands, sit back, and wait for the results.

The results of your vote will tell the Liberals exactly how much further they must go to get you to ratify a contract. So it is now up to you.

You said loud and clear this was the time for making gains. It's time to say it again. It's time to support our teams, and it's time to support each other. We cannot fail to win; we can only fail to try.

In solidarity,



Leah Casselman, President



Marg Simmons, Chair
Central Bargaining Team

Your demands have been ignored

The purpose of collective bargaining is to make gains in your collective agreement. Last November, you sent your bargaining teams to the table with a specific list of demands – issues that you wanted to see improved in your next collective agreement.

When you look at the employer's May 12 offer, one thing is easy to see: Almost every bargaining demand your teams have tabled were completely ignored by management.

Job Security – Not for YOUR job

The Ontario Public Service has just withstood an 8-year onslaught of contracting out and privatization that destroyed over 20,000 jobs.

One of your No. 1 demands was for job security improvements. You said you wanted an absolute prohibition on the privatization, divestment, transfer and contracting out of bargaining unit work. You also said you wanted a reinstatement of successor rights – the law that used to allow you to keep your union and your contract if your job goes somewhere else. Successor rights were one of the first things stripped away by Mike Harris.

While in opposition, the McGuinty Liberals were the biggest critics of contracting out and privatization. They held up Provincial Auditors' reports showing that contracting out public service work was a huge waste of money (remember the Andersen Consulting fiasco?). They also said that OPSEU losing its successor rights was unfair, and they would restore them.

Fast forward to now. Every demand tabled by your teams that would enhance job security and prevent contracting out has so far been rejected by the McGuinty government. And successor rights? The employer's position so far has been: No comment.

Improvements in benefits – NO

Since 1995, when the Harris Tories took power, OPS members have watched as some of their benefits deteriorated.

In this round of bargaining, you told your bargaining teams *enough!* You said you wanted improvements.

You asked for the removal of dental and drug deductibles. You wanted semi-private hospital coverage that actually pays for the real cost of a semi-private room. You wanted vision care coverage that actually pays for a pair of eyeglasses. You also wanted the employer to pay for the cost of the Ontario Health Premium to stop your wages from falling *even further* behind. Last, but not least, you wanted a convenient drug card.

Instead of addressing these concerns, or even acknowledging that the current benefit package is inadequate, the employer just said no ... to everything.

Remember: Every dollar that your benefit package falls short of actual costs is money out of *your* pocket. That's a wage cut – no matter how you cut it.

Unclassified improvements – IGNORED

If, as an unclassified employee, you think you get little respect at work, compare that to what you have gotten at the bargaining table.

Read the complete offer

This edition of Table Talk is intended as a summary of the employer's contract offer tabled with OPSEU on May 12, 2005. For the full text of the employer's May 12 offer, talk to your OPSEU steward or Local Executive Committee members OR get it from our web site at <http://www.opseu.org/ops/barg2004/index.htm>.

The employer has ignored *each and every one* of the demands your teams put forward for unclassified improvements. No discussions. No contemplation. No “we’ll get back to you on that.” Nothing.

The employer reps have even refused to discuss the implementation of the Attorney General Pilot Project for unclassified court workers that the government itself agrees is beneficial! The employer acts as if unclassified employees and their concerns don’t even exist.

Pay close attention to these numbers: 89 per cent of new hires in the OPS last year were unclassified. Nearly 30 per cent of the entire public service is made up of unclassified members. That’s a lot of people for the government to pretend don’t exist.

The simple truth is this: The employer wants to continue to exploit as many unclassified workers as possible. They call it “flexibility”; we call it exploitation.

Both unclassified and classified members have said this is unacceptable. Don’t let the exploitation continue.

Classification limbo – CONTINUES

If you are one of the 14,000 who claim you are wrongly classified, don’t look for any relief in this offer.

It’s been more than 10 years since OPS classification grievances have been decided by an arbitrator: 4,000 cases are stacked up trying to be resolved by a process designed to fail because an equal number of employer and union reps must agree before a case is resolved, and no access to arbitration.

If the employer doesn’t agree a job should earn more, **nothing happens.**

Most of you have class standards which are decades old. Your job specifications are hopelessly out of date. The bargaining team has a proposal that would fix this ridiculous system. The employer refuses to act on it now, and wants to wait for at least another round of bargaining.

Your job classification and specifications have a huge impact on your working life. Without a neutral third party to decide your complaint, classification limbo continues.

You need 7 per cent...just to break even

Let’s face it. Money lost is money lost. Since 1994, OPSEU members have lost 7 per cent of their income due to rises in inflation. That’s \$2,500 a year for the average OPSEU member.

To put it another way: In order to get a REAL wage increase, you have to get 7 per cent FIRST, and then negotiate a wage settlement.

The money that came out of your pocket was used by the Harris Tories to partially fund huge tax cuts. Those tax cuts have resulted in a provincial deficit. To reduce that deficit, the

McGuinty Liberals want you to pay... again.

Sound fair? It isn’t. Yet the same premier who is demanding fairness from his federal counterparts is refusing to treat his own employees fairly. This is hypocritical, and totally unacceptable.

Your bargaining team has tabled with the employer an extremely modest wage proposal of 3.9 per cent a year. That barely begins to address what you have lost. Our proposal is realistic, restrained...and fair.

Factor 80 – GONE

Over the years, the Factor 80 early retirement plan has helped thousands of OPSEU members leave careers in the public service at an age when they've still got a lot of good years ahead of them.

In this round of bargaining, you said that Factor 80 must stay.

The employer doesn't agree. They don't want you to retire while you still have some living to do. What the employer has offered is "surplus" Factor 80 – and only until Mar. 31, 2006. Surplus Factor 80 only applies to those members who a) receive a surplus notice before Mar. 31, 2006 and b) are eligible for Factor 80. Any member who qualifies for Factor 80 and does not have a surplus notice will NOT get Factor 80.

The employer proposal will only affect surplussed employees. For everyone else who thought they could retire early...think again.

The government has the money in its pension surplus to pay for Factor 80. Enough said.

Other demands – IGNORED

- Contract rights that would allow you to balance work demands with family obligations: *ignored.*
- An extensive review of the current Pay Equity Plan: *ignored.*
- Protect bargaining unit integrity by eliminating high priced consultants, eliminating temp agency workers and stop the transfer of jobs out of the OPSEU bargaining unit: *ignored.*
- Enhancement of current vacation leave entitlements and recognition for religious observance days for all employees: *ignored.*
- Health and safety issues: *ignored.*
- Plans to address the training and development deficiencies identified by the Provincial Auditor: *ignored.*

- Increase to kilometric rates: *ignored.*
- Increase to union leave: *ignored.*

Through the bargaining surveys, you sent a comprehensive list of contract demands to your bargaining teams. The teams tabled those demands with the employer, demands that are reasonable, well thought out and long, long overdue. Your demands deserve more than to be just ignored. Make sure the employer gets that message. **Vote this offer down!**

Vote

May 25, 26, 27

The vote on the employer's May 12 offer will be held in centres across Ontario on May 25, 26, and 27. Not all communities will vote on all three days. Vote dates, times and locations will be posted on the OPSEU website at www.opseu.org before May 20. Check the website, or contact your OPSEU steward or any member of your OPSEU Local Executive Committee (LEC). You can also call your closest OPSEU regional office or the

**OPS Mobilizing Hotline at
1-866-811-7274.**

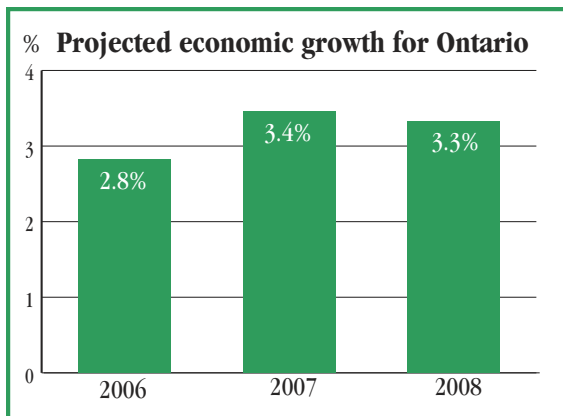
LEC members can also give you details about vote information meetings, where you can examine and discuss the offer in detail.

Revenues increase, payroll drops

Jobs and payroll in the Ontario Public Service have been falling steadily since 1994. What's the result? Last year, the Provincial Auditor reported that government employees were overworked, understaffed and many thousands of us are temporary workers with no job security.

The total payroll for the OPS has fallen steadily over the past 10 years, and the number of jobs has been cut by more than one-third – not counting the 6,000 more jobs the government intends to cut.

The McGuinty Liberals predict provincial tax revenues will increase by 4.1 per cent this year, and an average of 4.9 per cent over the next three years. The province has never had more money than it has now. **Then why is it scrimping on its own employees?**

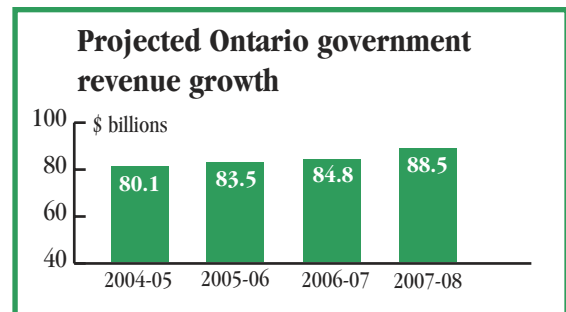


Economy is healthy; OPS is not

The recent provincial budget shows that the Ontario economy is healthy. The budget predicts real economic growth in Ontario (above inflation) will average more than 3 per cent over the next three years. **The government can afford to rebuild public services!**

Members fall behind inflation

Over the past 10 years, OPSEU members have lost more than \$1.5 billion to inflation. The rate of inflation is expected to be 2.3 per cent this year, yet the employer's offer



is only 2 per cent. **Accept this offer, and you'll fall even further behind!**

Each increase of 1 per cent for employees costs the government only \$20 million a year. That's peanuts compared to total government revenues of more than \$80 billion. **It's time to up the offer!**

15 Ministries chopped

In last week's provincial budget, 15 ministries are either being flat-lined or cut. Nine ministries will suffer cuts ranging from 1.3 per cent to 38.5 per cent. That means layoffs for sure. And remember: ministries without decreases are already unable to deliver proper service due to previous cuts. **Nothing in this offer protects your job, and the government now proposes to slash your separation and termination pay if you do lose it!**

Ministry	Change in 2005-06
Intergovernmental Affairs	-38.5%
Management Board Secretariat	-31.7%
Agriculture & Food	-23.1%
Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat	-22.2%
Consumer & Business Services	-11.4%
Tourism & Recreation	-11.4%
Municipal Affairs & Housing	-11.4%
Culture	-6.8%
Finance	-1.3%
Francophone Affairs & Exec. Offices	No increases
Natural Resources, Community Safety & Corrections, Attorney General, Environment	Spending kept below inflation

At the Corrections Table:

Your opportunity to also say “NO”

At the Corrections Bargaining Table, the employer responded to our demands as follows:

- a) Increase in Probation Officers Allowance – **NO**
- b) Appendix 24 (unclassified seniority) rights for Youth Justice Facilities, Oakridge, Probation Officers and Probation and Parole Officers – **NO**
- c) Employer pay for professional fees such as those of the Attendants at Oakridge, Nurses and Practical Nurses working in correctional facilities – **NO**
- d) Pension improvements – **NO**
- e) Cover liability for members facing lawsuits – **NO**
- f) Salary continuance for employees who grieve their unjust dismissal until a Grievance Settlement Board Decision is issued – **NO**
- g) Vacation improvements – **NO**
- h) Improvements to Union Leave – **NO**
- i) Work of the bargaining unit clause (what work is performed by union members) which helps protect our jobs – **NO**
- j) Move Central North Correctional Centre (CNCC) Correctional Officers to the Ontario Public Service (OPS) – **NO**
- k) Wage recovery/service pay: Government offers:



Barry Scanlon
Chair, Corrections
Bargaining Team

- Increase of 2 per cent on Jan.1, 2005; 2 per cent Jan.1 2006; 2 percent on Jan. 1, 2007. Increases to be compounded.

For the same period the private prison operator at the Central North Correctional Centre offered the following to Correctional Officers working there: Jan.1, 2005 – 2.4 per cent; Jan. 1, 2006 – 2.6 per cent; Jan.1, 2007 – 2.75 per cent (7.75 per cent over three years). This offer was *rejected* by OPSEU Local 369 members.

With the 2, 2 and 2 offer, OPS Correctional Officers would be making **nearly \$1,000 less per year than what Correctional Officers in the private jail rejected.**

Similarly, the current offer would mean that Probation Officers would make \$1,140.00 per year *less* than they would if they were to receive the 7.75 per cent CNCC rejected offer.

Do we in the public service deserve less than the private sector? **NO.**

The Corrections Bargaining Team unanimously recommends that members cast a strong **NO** vote to this degrading offer.

“Do we in the public service deserve less than the private sector? NO.”

Political action works

Employer drops some concession demands; some agreement on smaller issues

In January, OPSEU members kicked off a political action campaign with one goal in mind: Get to the vulnerable Liberal MPPs, and turn up the heat.

20,000 post cards have been sent directly to Dalton McGuinty. MPPs have been faxed and phoned. Members in key ridings have made personal visits to their MPP. T-shirts, buttons and signs are appearing in almost every OPS workplace. Members are participating in Black Tuesdays, Blue Thursdays and Red Fridays. Billboards and transit shelter ads remind everyone that the Premier has not lived up to his promises.

The campaign is working.

Since January, the employer has dropped some key concessions from their opening proposal. Here's what's changed, thanks to you:

More vacation for new hires: The employer had proposed that, in order to attract "highly-qualified" people, they would give them extra vacation credits right from the date of hire. This bizarre proposal, which was just as bizarre in 2002, is off the table...again.

Projects for management pets: The employer wanted the "flexibility" to bypass the collective agreement and hire whoever they wanted for special projects. Those chosen could waive their collective agreement entitlements (like vacation) in order to "get the job done." This proposal is off the table.

Accommodation: There has been partial movement on this issue. The employer quickly backed off their earlier proposal to exempt themselves from the Ontario Human Rights Code if accommodating an employee created a "challenge." However, they still want the ability to place an employee with a disability into a lower-paying job.

Special Case Adjustments: The employer has responded with increases for five job classes – Air Engineers, Pharmacist Staff, Ambulance Communication Officers, Forrester & Biologists and Social Workers. That's five out of the over 50 special cases tabled by your team. It's a start, but a very slow one.

Your teams know that none of these gains would have been possible without your hard work and support. We are learning that the McGuinty Liberals are just a little more thin-skinned than their Tory predecessors. They will respond to pressure.

These gains were made **without** a vote. It's time to turn up the heat even more. **Rejecting this offer is the first step to getting to your demands.**

Get connected!

You'll need information in the weeks ahead, both before and after the May 25, 26, 27 vote. Start with talking to your OPSEU steward or other member of your OPSEU Local Executive Committee.

Your OPSEU bargaining teams have been publishing a weekly newsletter since September. *The Source* comes out every Friday, and has information direct from your teams.

For all kinds of information about the vote, or any aspect of OPS bargaining, or to get a complete version of the employer's offer, visit our web site at www.opseu.org.

You can also call our toll-free OPS bargaining information hotline for updates about bargaining:

1-866-811-7274