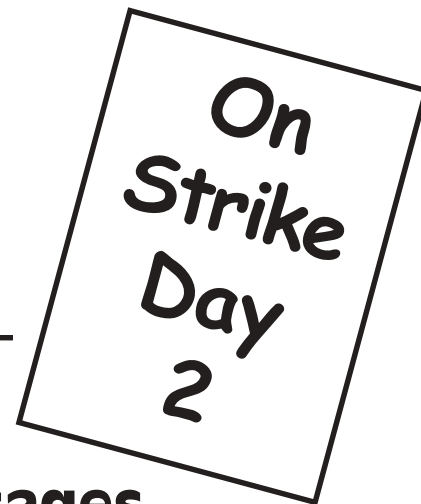




Frontlines

March 14, 2002



A great beginning

This strike is different from 1996.

President Leah Casselman identified one key difference to a cheering crowd outside the big Macdonald block government complex in Toronto Wednesday morning.

“This isn’t Week 1 of our strike,” Leah said. “This is Week 6. We learned a lot in Weeks 1 through 5 in 1996 and we are going into this one with all of that knowledge.

“We’re not starting at Week 1 this time. We are starting at Week 6.”

One of the big differences is that this time the strike includes all members. Obviously essential services must continue to be provided, but that does not necessarily mean business as usual.

For example, in the Whitney Block, where Mike Harris has his

office, two inside picket captains did a full workplace inspection.

They turned up a number of temporary employees that had been hidden away, and were being pressured to perform non-essential work. The picket captains put an end to that.

In some institutions, managers went out of their way to live up to the letter of the essential services agreements. But in others, they acted as if they didn’t need our members at all, and even went so far as to lock out essential services workers at some facilities!

These lock-outs seem to have made a mockery of the essential service agreements: If they really don’t need us to run the facilities, why did they bother to negotiate essential services agreements in the first place?

The situation became even more ludicrous as **Frontlines** went to press yesterday: The government made an application at the Labour Board, alleging that OPSEU violated essential service agreements.

We’ll report in more detail in tomorrow’s edition.

Please share your stories and successes. Email them to kfitzrandolph@opseu.org. Give her an email contact for your local who can print a pdf of each edition that you can circulate on the lines.

Messages of support

More power to you

“Congratulations to all of you. You took the right stand. We’re all in the same boat. It’s a real struggle for all of us in public services. More power to you!” – *David Adair, a CUPE member in Peel*

Electrifying

“Having Leah visit us bordered on electrifying. It was great. Wonderful camaraderie and nobody is crossing.” – *Paul FitzGerald at the Science Centre (Local 549)*

PEI solidarity

“Please convey to your members the solidarity of our Union and what ever is required for you and your members to be successful.” – *Sandy MacKay, President, Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees*

Teachers’ support

“We support your call for a reinvestment in public services and the committed women and men across the province who provide them... It is time for this government to put the needs of this province ahead of ideology, ahead of tax cuts and ahead of the blind angst of privatization.” – *Earl Manners, President, Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation*

No justice! No jeans!

A court worker whose job was declared essential was told today that she really wasn’t essential after all.

Why? She was wearing jeans.

Can justice not be done in denim-clad legs? Or is there something wrong with this picture?

Check the web: www.opseu.org has the latest on everything.