

OPSEU



SEFPO

Frontlines

April 8, 2002

On
Strike
Days
26-27

Widespread poaching reported

The Ontario Conservation Officers Association has raised a flag about widespread poaching during the strike.

President Bill Fisher (Local 309) said COs are “very concerned by information about poaching that has reached them on the picket lines.”

Fisher drew on striking COs from across the province and gave the MNR a seven-page list of fish and wildlife poaching and other suspicious activities. The list included 67 pieces of information worthy of charges or further investigation.

Fisher said, “Even while COs are on the picket line, the information is coming to them. Imagine what they are missing by not being out there? They normally deal with about

Keep the lines strong

As the story above shows, the strike is hurting in a lot of different ways.

It’s a cumulative effect. As the strike continues, the impact grows.

The Tories have cut so many jobs from the public service, that those which remain are important jobs that have to be done. When they aren’t done, people feel the difference. More so every day.

10,000 offences every year province-wide.”

Reports ranged from illegal gill-netting of walleye on the Bay of Quinte, to poaching of brook trout in Algonquin Provincial Park, to the harvest of 1,000 pounds a day of illegal whitefish from Lake Huron. These reports also included incidents of white-tailed deer, moose, and wild turkey poaching from across the province.

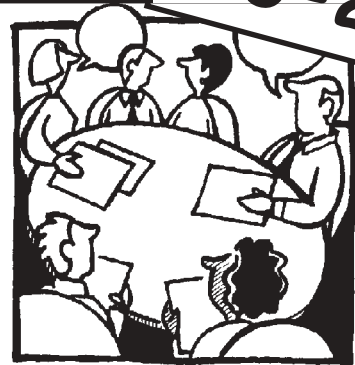
There is more information on the association website: www.ocoa.ca

Greg Belmore of Local 212, an MNR customer service rep who deals with hunting licences echoes the fear about poaching.

His local managed to stop the Niagara office from shipping out hunting and fishing licences to the tackle shops, sporting goods stores and other outlets which normally issue them.

Most affected are the turkey season, which opens April 25, and the draw for the fall moose hunt which usually has a May 15 deadline for applications.

“However, with the COs on strike, does it really matter if people have licences, or will they hunt anyway?” Greg said. “It’s revenue lost to the province on the licences, and of course it is bad for the wildlife.”



More talks; no more news

It’s the same story. Bargaining is continuing with the help of the mediator. And the news blackout remains in effect.

Frustrating? Yes.

What does it mean? At least two things.

1. The parties are still talking. They haven’t broken off and walked away from the table. So they are finding some way to keep the talks moving.

2. The issues are not easy to resolve. But we knew that at the start. If the parties had been 15 minutes away from a settlement on March 12, there wouldn’t have been a strike at all.

A welcome note

Please find enclosed a \$2,000 cheque from Local 613, CEIU, to aid you during your strike against the provincial government.

– Cathy Poulis, president,
Local 613,
Canadian Employment and
Immigration Union

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

Convention 2000

Rebuilding the Strike Fund

This year's Convention tackled the challenge of finding a more automatic way to rebuild the union's Strike Fund after an expensive dispute.

It approved in principle a constitutional amendment that will trigger an automatic 0.2 per cent supplementary dues levy whenever the Strike Fund drops below \$30 million.

The temporary levy would end when the Strike Fund hits \$30 million and all revenue from the levy would go to the Strike Fund.

Because of the dues implication of the amendment, the Convention approved a consultation process. Convention delegates will go back to their locals and discuss the proposal, and a mail-in vote of delegates will be conducted within 60 days of the close of Convention to approve the amendment.

Obviously the OPS strike was a major reason for the change.

Several other large bargaining units will be heading into negotiations next year. The major ones are College Faculty, with about 6,500 members; College

Support Staff with about 6,000 members; and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, with close to 1,900 members.

The Constitution Committee recommended the change "as a means of ensuring that the strike fund stays at a level that can allow OPSEU to use the strike threat as an effective bargaining lever."

Solidarity is not a gamble

OPSEU members working as security guards at Windsor and Fort Erie Raceway Slots, and at casinos in Thunder Bay and Niagara are facing an extremely anti-union management.

The security guards are required to wear ID, which they can have on a Coke or Labatts lanyard, but if they wear an OPSEU lanyard they are disciplined.

So the Convention passed a resolution calling on members visiting any of these areas to wear OPSEU hats, shirts, buttons or other insignia.

The guards would appreciate a handshake from a union brother or sister. The resolution was carried unanimously.

Does it take a tragedy?

"I've come to the conclusion, it takes a tragedy in this town to wake people up," writes Local 225 president Gerry Hope.

While doing a workplace inspection of the Walkerton Courthouse March 27, he found renovations under way.

In the course of the changes, the fire alarm system was disconnected, with no known deadline for completion.

"I spoke to the local fire chief and he told me to contact Bill Dietrich, the person in charge of maintenance at the courthouse. Bill informed me that the construction/upgrade of the alarm system is the province's responsibility and that the county assumes control when construction is completed.

"He seemed unconcerned that the system is currently **non-functional**. He said the court house has gone without a system for 100 years. Why am I so concerned now?"

"I told him I thought it was unsafe if people inside are not aware there is no functional system in place."

No, Steve, it's not like that at all

Local 520's Teresa McCool, in a continuing correspondence with Tory MPP Steve Gilchrist, explained the strike this way:

"This strike is about the rebuilding of the public service, keeping the Tories fingers off of our pensions and survival."

Gilchrist's response shows how little he understands the pension issue:

"The pension trust was, and is, a shared responsibility because both the employer and the employees have obligations (that, fortunately, have recently been relieved due to the excellent investment performance of the plan). The most recent item presented, the Factor 80, was promptly dealt with and approved by the government so I

am at a loss to see what imposition there has been or what justification exists to abrogate our responsibilities to the taxpayers."

His government has reneged on its agreement to the Factor 80 extension to Nov. 30. That means OPSEU must go to arbitration to force the government to live up to the terms of the pension agreement.