

OPSEU



SEFPO

Frontlines

April 11, 2002

No
justice
no
peace

Time to turn up the heat

The Tories just don't get it yet.

That's the only way to react to the so called "leaked" Management Board memo that says the strike could last another "two or three weeks."

We know the government could settle the strike in 48 hours if it just told its management team to negotiate.

We're putting our wages on the line to save public services in this province, but

what has the government put on the table?

They're still demanding concessions on benefits.

They're still demanding control of our pension surplus.

They're still not doing anything for our part-timers.

They keep telling our team at the bargaining table that they're not "persuaded" to move any further.

So let's persuade them.

It's time to send them a



stronger message:

It's time to take the strike to their known Tory friends in town (if they have any left).

Picket car dealers. Big Tory wheels in town.

Greet Premier Eves

Want a new contract?

Come to the new Premier Ernie Eves' greeting party at Queen's Park on April 15.

Fill those buses. Bring your picket sign. Wear your uniform.

The new Premier Ernie Eves is either a Harris clone or he could settle our strike quickly.

Let's give him a warm OPSEU welcome.

Let's do it!

Sisters Step Up

Top women trade unionists join OPSEU picket lines

Top women trade unionists will join OPSEU picket lines Thursday.

Sisters Step Up events are confirmed for Hamilton, London, Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Windsor and Brockville.

Participants include:

- **Phyllis Benedict**, President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario;
- **Irene Harris**, Executive Vice-President, Ontario Federation of Labour;
- **Kelly Hayes**, Executive Board Member, Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario;

- **Heather Kelley**, Coordinator of Women's Issues and Human Rights, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers;
- **Ethel Burkitt-LaValley**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Labour;
- **Peggy Nash**, Assistant to Canadian Auto Workers president Buzz Hargrove;
- **Evelina Pan**, president, Thunder Bay Labour Council;
- **Nancy Riche**, Secretary-Treasurer, Canadian Labour Congress.

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

Our important work

If a worker dies, does anyone care?

I do. I am an Occupational Health and Safety Officer (OHSO) with the Ministry of Labour.

As an OHSO, commonly called an Inspector, I enforce the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and over 30 regulations under it, including the Construction, Industrial and Mining Regulations, Designated Substances and WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System). These laws protect you while you work.

We investigate fatalities, critical injuries, complaints, and work refusals regarding unsafe working conditions. We audit to ensure that the OHSA is being complied with. There are many employers that take great pride in providing a safe workplace; they are a pleasure to deal with. I wish that were true in all workplaces.

Last year over 300 workers died on the job in Ontario. We were there to piece together what went wrong, to cause such a tragic end to someone's mother, father, sister, or brother's life. We were there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

I am proud to work with my colleagues including our Occupational Hygienists and Ergonomists. Their expertise and dedication are much appreciated. There are approximately 200 OHSOs in this province. Fatalities and critical injuries are increasing, but unfortunately the number of OHSOs has been declining over the past few years. Burnout, stress and retaining highly skilled professionals are key factors.

I am not on strike for a pay raise.

To me this strike is about rebuilding the public service; retaining and attracting highly skilled professionals who are dedicated to serving the public.

During this strike, we are not conducting audits, investigating complaints, accidents or work refusals. We were not deemed an essential service or an emergency service during this strike. Work refusals at correctional facilities and elsewhere are being investigated by Ministry of Labour Managers only.

As this strike lingers on, how many more names will be added to the List. The List of workers who die this year on the job. On April 28, labour's "Day of Mourning," please take the time to reflect on those who gave their life to earn a living.

– Sue Hutchinson, Local 230

Apprentices are stalled

Skilled trades are the responsibility of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

The vast majority of the 250 staff in the Ministry's Apprenticeship Branch are OPSEU members. They work in 26 field offices across Ontario, where. Industrial Training Consultants (ITCs) work directly with employers and apprentices.

Currently more than 50,000 apprentices are working toward their Journeyman certification.

ITCs are responsible for signing up new apprentices and employers, monitoring the workplace to support the individual needs of apprentices, scheduling classroom training and administering the final exams to allow apprentices to become Journeymen.

None of this is happening due to the current labour dispute.

The government has committed to doubling the number of apprentices. The goal is to help keep Ontario industrially competitive and to respond to the current and forecasted skills shortage for many trades. No new apprentices are being registered during the labour dispute. This could have a major impact on Ontario manufacturers and their ability to compete national and internationally.

Weekly, up to 400 new apprentices apply to the Loans for Tools Fund. These loans assist new apprentices purchase the tools required for a career in occupations like auto service technician, electricians, industrial millwrights and carpentry. No loans are being processed during the strike.

Auto industry hampered

The strike is having an affect on the automobile industry too.

My dealer had ordered more Certificates of Mechanical Fitness booklets from MTO before the strike, but they didn't arrive. They sell a lot of used cars as well as new ones. They were able to get a couple of books of certificates but they are very hard to get now.

Registrations and transfers of ownerships of new/used cars is difficult because the dealers have to use the privately operated offices and that slows things down. The people apparently are not allowed to use their computers to access ministry vehicle records complicating things even more.

So, it isn't just the closing of real estate deals that are being inconvenienced.

– Clive Reddin

The money kept coming

by Joe Tisdale, Local 467

On Tuesday, I was walking the picket line at Quinte Detention Centre in Napanee.

The OPP showed up to our line, and we wondered, what now?

This time they weren't there to escort a manager or delivery truck.

The officer got out of his car and began a sad story of a child in our community who has an illness that is going to take his life very soon.

But before he dies he wants to go see WWF wrestling. The OPP were asking for help. They pulled out an autographed hockey jersey, being raffled for \$5 a ticket, to send this child on his dream.

The officers could hardly keep up with the \$5 bills coming at them.

After being on strike for 28 days, our members did not hesitate in digging into their pockets to support a good cause. It made me proud to be a member of OPSEU and employed by the Province of Ontario.

Worth fighting for

Having change thrown at us brings out new qualities and skills in each of us. We have seen a great deal of impressive work from members in the areas of organizing, public relations, communications, construction, culinary arts, visual arts.... We have also had an opportunity to see each other in a different light through unending stories.

Hang in and keep up the good work. Our public service is worth fighting for!

Charles Faust, Local 724

Fight for unclassified

by Gary Dale, Local 504

Gary Lawrence, Paul Chapdelaine and I were in the Ontario Superior Court over an injunction (We got what we wanted). The court reporter told us she felt she should be excused because, as an OPSEU member, she had an inherent conflict of interest in the case. Gary Lawrence told her to stay because he didn't want any scabs recording the proceedings.

After the dues deduction, these people are barely earning more than our strike pay. Tell the bargaining team that we'll stay out as long as it takes to get a better deal for our unclassified members!

Holding strong

by Shirley Sutherland, Local 586

Local 586 strikers at ComSoc on Birchmount Ave. in Toronto are holding strong. Thanks to enthusiasm and a little manpower, we now have The Birchmount Line Shack, to provide shelter and a coffee caddy for the crew.

Many thanks to the passer-by who dropped off several chairs, and special thanks to Brother Jerry for his continued commitment and hard work. Hold the line.

Experienced linesman

Three years of retirement can't stop Mike Burke from joining the lines. The past president of Local 310 received OPSEU's honorary life membership award at this year's convention. He's been a regular on the Newmarket lines since the first day of the 2002 strike, taking on the role of picket captain.

Our sincere condolences

We extend our condolences to Jason Unger of Local 135, on the death Tuesday of his mother.

We also extend our sympathies to Norm Holmes of Local 720 on the loss of his father.

And to Mary Kostynick, also of Local 720, whose husband died recently.

And our thoughts are also with Patsy Brouillette and H el ene Desormeaux of Local 628 on the death of their mother.

And a warm welcome

Local 329, Penetang Mental Health Centre, announces its first strike baby. Fred Janson and his wife are the proud new parents of Mathew Alexander born April 8, weighing in at 8 pounds.

Pothole heaven

by Suzanne Morin, Local 638

One of our picket groups was driving to Hornepayne to support our members with their line and took pictures along the way. In a 70-km stretch, they counted 220 pothole areas.

The transport trucks are driving all over the road trying to dodge these holes. This will be costing taxpayers a lot more money in vehicle repairs than the government is saving from members not being on the job and fixing them.

Where's the common sense here?

Webmaster

Wayne Gott of Local 270 has a website full of St. Catharines and Hamilton pictures. Check out the fun at home.cogeco.ca/~wgott/photos/strike2002/.

A strong line at Quinte

by Bonnie Sweet, Local 429

I have been a government employee for less than a year and this has been a very interesting experience. Thank you for keeping me so well informed about the happenings of OPSEU members around the province.

I am a member of Local 429 in Kingston, but due to the location of my home I am picketing with at the Quinte Detention Centre in Napanee. Over the past several weeks, I have talked with several of the correctional officers who work at Quinte and I must admit to thinking that my job is so easy compared to the challenges they face on a daily basis.

I have seen completely inexperienced managers from other ministries such Health and Finance entering this institution to fulfil the duties of a correctional officer. Some of these “recruits” are so worried about the thought of spending 24/7 in an institution, that they are visibly shaking while waiting to cross the line. We have heard managers tell us that they were forced to come to this institution. I didn’t realize that this government had stooped so low as to force its managers to work in unsafe, volatile situations with absolutely no training. While our picket captains talk with each person that is trying to enter the institution, you can see the fear in the face of many of these managers as the realization of what they are about to encounter hits home. They are asked: “Do you have any experience in an institution? Do you have any self-defence training?” The answer is almost always No.

What is this government thinking by putting these people at risk?

This is an institution with young offenders, female and male inmates.

Having lived in this area most of my life, I am amazed at how little I really knew about the happenings behind the fence at Quinte Detention Centre. I am sure the people who live in this community are unaware of the number of inmates housed in this facility, the number of federal inmates that are held here on a temporary basis or the risks faced every day by the people that work here.

We have built our own little village outside the gates at Quinte, with the a ice fishing hut and an outdoor fireplace (our second). We have a cosy setting. Several of the correctional officers brought bales of hay to the line to use as a windbreak. We have been receiving generous support from the community and while the doughnuts keep coming in on a daily basis, the food being delivered has been fantastic. Several local businesses have donated pizzas; a brother to one of the employees stops by to drop off two or three cases of potato chips each week; staff members bring in chilli, soup and other goodies. Along with correctional staff, we have MNR, Health, Municipal Affairs and MTO people walking the lines at Quinte. It has been a time to chat with old friends, play a few games of cards or ball hockey and enjoy a lot of laughter. We are making the best of this situation and while we all wish for a settlement to the dispute, the commitment to the line has never been stronger.

From Sioux Lookout Strengthen your resolve.

“We are in our bleakest hours of the strike – the media blackout fuels rumours and speculation. Everybody wants to hear news but that won’t help our cause at this time. Rumours weaken our bargaining position and put us on an emotional roller-coaster. The most productive thing we can all do is intensify our strike efforts and patiently await news. Have faith that our negotiators will be able to get the best deal for us by following this protocol. The employer is trying to break our spirits by dragging the negotiations. Don’t succumb to the pressure.”

The contract we deserve

by Lillian Mercer

We are a small picket line of no more than 20 located at the ODSP office on Fairway Rd. in Kitchener.

We set up a tent heater when necessary, a camp stove, and have enjoyed many pots of soup, beef stew, a pasta dish, chili and buns, Jamaican patties (yum yum) and tomorrow is Sausage on a Bun day.

We are on a very busy street, and although we must picket at street level, on grass and mud, we have enjoyed a very positive response from the public in the way of car, bus and transport horns.

Best of all, to date we have only the essential staff working their scheduled hours on the inside and no others, which does make a tremendous difference to the morale. I want to give kudos to the ODSP and Probation staff of Local 246 for remaining strong and united as we continue to fight for the “A” contract we so deserve.