

OPSEU



Frontlines

April 13, 2002

Old way or new day?

A new day? or the old way?

Thousands of striking OPSEU members will converge peacefully on Queen's Park Monday to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Premier Ernie Eves.

Buses carrying strikers will arrive in Toronto from all parts of the province. They will assemble near the provincial courthouse at 361 University Ave. and march to Queen's Park in time for the 2:30 p.m. ceremony.

OPSEU has been on strike since March 13. OPSEU President Leah Casselman said Ontarians are expecting to see a moderation in the stance of the government, as Eves promised during his leadership campaign.

"We are going to introduce Ernie Eves to many of his employees on Monday," she said. "We are looking to normalize labour relations.

"It can be a new day, or the old

way. It can either be a welcoming party for a premier determined to make a difference, or it can be a continuation of the belligerent relationship perpetrated by his predecessor," Casselman said.

"It's his choice."

Make Ernie feel at ease

Members of Local 224 in Owen Sound thought it might be nice to make Ernie feel comfortable with OPSEU members.

As diamond tie pins and \$1,600 suits are out of most pickets' range, how about at least slicking back the hair?

Local 224 suggests a good supply of hair gel on the buses would let Ernie know he can identify with us. A little dab'll do ya!

Want to reach Ernie?

Here's how:

Ernie@ErnieEves.com

163 First Street,
Orangeville, ON L9W 3J8

Phone: 519-941-1255

Toll-Free: 1-866-225-3837

Strike support

Local 560, the faculty at Seneca College, has made a donation of \$10,500 to the Region 5 hardship fund.

"It's important for the sectors of the union to stand together in solidarity with each other's battles," said local president Ted Montgomery.

There are more strike support messages on Page 4

'Mr. Eves, Call off your goons'

NDP Leader Howard Hampton has written Premier Mike Harris and Premier-elect Ernie Eves about two serious instances in which their staff assaulted OPSEU members picketing at the Whitney Block.

"The first incident involves Scott Munnoch – who we understand is working from the Progressive Conservative Party headquarters as a member of Ernie Eves' transition

team. On April 9, Mr. Munnoch – after refusing to show his identity pass to striking OPSEU workers according to the agreed protocol – shoved 5-foot Rosie Rodrigues as he attempted to plough through the picket line. Ms. Rodrigues suffered painful injuries to her knee and is asking the police to investigate and lay charges."

On April 10, Jason Lietaer, of

Harris's office, pushed another OPSEU worker to the ground after refusing to show his identity badge. Fortunately, Leroy Kugel was not hurt.

"Mr. Eves, is this your idea of a kinder, gentler government? It is time to call off your goons."

Hampton called for the two employees to be suspended without pay.

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

Our important work

Who says we aren't busy?

From Local 713's website comes a detailed list of MNR projects cancelled or on hold during the strike.

These are the cancelled ones:

Summer Jobs for Students; Lake Superior Commercial Fish Quota Setting; McIntyre River Rainbow Trout Assessment; Lake Superior Coaster Brook Trout Rehabilitation; Lake Superior Sturgeon Rehabilitation Assessment; Black Bay Walleye Rehabilitation Plan; Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area Negotiations; Inland Brook Trout Stocking; Arrow Lake Walleye Spawning Survey; Thunder Bay Cape Bird Observatory Hawk Banding; Squeers Lake Experimental Fishery; Spring Walleye Fishery Enforcement;

Commercial Fisheries Assessment; Commercial Fisheries Enforcement; Crown Land Work Permits; New Park Regulations; *My Summer Holidays*; Forest Compliance Audits and Orders; Timber Check Scaling; Removal of Winter Bridges; Monitoring of Environmental Damage; Annual Work Schedule Public Consultation; Kam River Dam Proposal Environmental Review.

Dog Lake Stocking Assessment; Spring Bear Hunt; Ontario's Living Legacy Implementation; Completing Parks System; Forest Operations Compliance Inspections; Lac Des Mille Lac Walleye Telementary Study.

Project Peregrine; Caribou Recovery Project; Forest Values Mapping/Protection; Crown Land and Infrastructure Improvements;

Portage Creek Rainbow Trout Population Recovery Monitoring; Regional Fisheries Management Action Plan; Community Fisheries Improvement Program and Community Wildlife Improvement Program; Wildlife Population Index; Northern Boreal Initiative; Provincial Fire Management Strategy; Roads and Water Crossing Initiative; Water Management Plans; Hydro Power Relicensing,

Natural Heritage Education Program; Regional Wood Supply Analysis; Mill Licenses; Biodiversity Gap Analysis; Scientific Collector's Permits for Research; Spring Lake Trout Index Netting; Lake Superior State of the Lake Report; Kam River Sturgeon Telementary Study; Stream Classification Protocol Development; Streamlining Fisheries Regulations; Fish Habitat Protection Guidelines Development Shoreline Development Proposal Review; Lake Superior Forage Fish Trawling; Zebra Mussels Monitoring; and Stream Assessments.

And as far as nuisance bears go, you are on your own.

And here's their website:
<http://www.norlink.net/~opseu713/>

Stand strong

We will not sacrifice our values to crumble to the hands of the infamous Tory Regime. We have fought strong and hard over the past 4+ weeks not to sell out. In the days to come we will find out whether our fight will be fruitful! Stand Strong!!

– Mike Peshko, Local 270

Weakest may not survive

In spite of a blackout during negotiations, an "internal government memo" is leaked to the media by Management Board. This is a strategic move to demoralize the same people they honour through Amethyst Awards and ACE awards for excellent public service.

In the interim it is all staged to suit public opinion. Managers are seen as the victims. In this memo they are thanked for their "hard work, dedication, commitment and the personal sacrifices" and yet they are being well paid for the work. Management Board is not likely to leak that memo.

Lest we forget ... vulnerable individuals and their families are truly suffering from the absence of public service in schools, hospitals, treatment facilities, etc.

These folks are coping as best they can, quietly in their own homes or in provincial institutions, many unable to present their situation to the media, others fearful of making a statement in case they jeopardize their situation.

The public conscience is salved with the belief that essential services are providing the care for them. Wherever possible these people are at home with their families.

Those who remain in the institutions are the most vulnerable. They are receiving essential services, the basics, to maintain life. They are deteriorating due to lack of stimulating rehabilitation programming. The measure of a society is how it treats the weakest members. Right now, the government is not measuring up.

– Angela Marley
Social Worker, Local 331

Fire line to picket line

Letter to Mr. David Tsubouchi

Dear Sir:

I have been a forest fire fighter in Ontario for many years. Every year I go to the line for the people of Ontario. When I go to the line I fight mosquitoes, black flies and other pests. I get out of helicopters hovering six feet above a waist-deep swamp. After getting out, I slog through the frigid water and carry back breaking loads of hose, pumps, tents and provisions for up to a half-mile and then begin the walk into what some describe as hell itself. I stay in the bush for weeks cooking my own food, washing in frigid waters and doing my laundry with the water from the nearest river, lake or stream and then letting it dry in the sun. I then sleep in the cold of a tent, and then get up, pull on my wet boots, and repeat my work, day in and day out, all summer long.

I work for, and with, the exceptional people in MNR and when doing this job my thoughts are always for safety. The safety of my crew (for if your own crew is not safe, then all others safety is also compromised) and the safety of the people of Ontario and her visitors.

To do my job, I am required to have the equivalent of a college education and pass a fitness test yearly. For this, I am paid a wage just slightly above the grocery clerk at the local market but still below the fellow who cleans the ice at the local rink. I also received the benefit of reasonable job security and the assurance of a dental and health plan, that will protect myself and my family from a devastating economic blow, should a misfortune come our way.

You see sir the reason I do the job is not only because of the simple wages and benefits I draw. It is for the rewards of a job well done that are only seen at my level of public service.

I know that the large pulp and paper mills who provide needed jobs to the people of Ontario use the forests I protect. I also know that these mills pour millions of dollars into the local and the provincial economy, which benefits us all. The extraction of the forest resources opens up thousands of kilometres of road, which allows fishers, hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy this province. The dollars that they spend in their leisure activity are important and they also provide needed jobs and income to the people of Ontario.

Every year I go to the line for the people of Ontario. I have done so during the “wage and price controls” of the late 70s, the “Social Contract” of the early 90s, and by settling for some minimal yearly wage increases, but this year I have been forced to go to a different line and that is the picket line.

You see, sir, when you come to me after many years and say that I may not have the benefit of an early retirement because you want my pension fund, or that now that I am getting older and may require a full dental and health plan and am therefore a potential liability, or that the service that I have given this great Province for the past many years may be up for bid to the lowest bidder, I must take a stand and walk a new line. I thank you for your time and consideration.

– *Your humble servant,*
A Fire Fighter, Local 727

Hot off the press? You betcha!

Deciding to take advantage of the fine spring weather, Local 547 pickets each kicked in a few dollars to purchase the necessary items for a lunchtime BBQ.

Imagine the surprise of Cindy and Mary who had volunteered to do the shopping when they handed over the money at the local grocery store only to be told that one of the fivers was counterfeit!

Not quite believing, they tried to use the bill at the drug store, only to be told the same again. We’re a creative group of folks at Thistletown Regional Centre, but counterfeiters we’re not!

Anyone need change for a \$10?

Tories days are numbered

More than 200 striking OPSEU members rallied in downtown Peterborough Thursday to hear CUPE Ontario Leader, Sid Ryan.

“The Tories’ days are numbered,” he told the cheering group outside the licence bureau beside the Chamber of Commerce office on George Street.

“The tide has turned and public opinion is running against this government,” Ryan said.

“Stay strong, not just for yourselves but for the entire labour movement,” he said. “You will have the renewal, respect and decent wages you deserve.”

Restricted to five pickets at the MNR office in Peterborough, the strikers have been choosing other targets and distributing information on the downtown streets.

Support from many quarters

Applaud resolve

On behalf of the provincial Executive of OSSTF and 50,000 teachers and educational workers in Ontario, I extend our support and solidarity.

We applaud your resolve to protect and preserve public services and social programs that have been hard-fought and won in this province. Teachers and education workers have been fighting the destructive slash and burn policies of this Tory government for the past five years and a win for this government is a loss for all of us.

Please accept the enclosed cheque for \$10,000.

– *Earl Manners,*
President, OSSTF

Dark before dawn

The Elementary Teachers in Dufferin-Peel know well how it feels to be targeted and forced into job action in order to be heard by a special interest government. Enclosed is a modest donation. Take heart. It's always darkest before the dawn.

– *Krystyna Peever, President,*
Dufferin-Peel Elementary Unit
Ontario English Catholic
Teachers Association

Staff's best interests

David Tsubouchi:

I would like to express my disappointment that OPSEU has had to resort to a strike to resolve their labour issues. It impedes my business as I rely heavily on the services and expertise of the Small Claims Court clerks.

While legal claims are a small part of my company's ongoing business, I am greatly

inconvenienced by this situation. I can imagine that there are thousands of paralegals, court advocates, lawyers and law clerks that have suffered greatly over the past month and that ultimately, the economy of Ontario will be damaged if this strike continues.

I commend the court workers of Hamilton who have been nothing less than pleasant, supportive, and professional in their dealings with my office over the past six years, and I trust that you have their best interests and well-being in mind as you resolve the labour issues at stake here.

– *Blair Wetlaufer*
for Inter Canada Credit

Important issues

On behalf of the members of OSSTF, District 12, Toronto, I am enclosing a cheque in the amount of \$1,000 to assist your members in the strike.

The issues in your strike are important to all workers and we support your determination to achieve a fair and equitable settlement.

– *Jim McQueen*
President, District 12, OSSTF

Difficult times

Enclosed is a cheque for \$1,350 in support of OPSEU members during these difficult times.

On behalf of 2,700 York Catholic Teachers, we wish you every success and hope this strike can be resolved quickly, to the satisfaction of the OPSEU members.

– *Julie Pauletig,*
President,
York Catholic Teachers

Quiche, even!

Jan de Serres, a strike marshall at the Whitney Block sends thanks to the inside workers there who provide coffee, tea, hot chocolate, quiches and other goodies daily.

“Knowing every day that someone will come out and do something nice for us is great.”

And chicken, too

Local 584 is grateful to the staff at the school near the Lakeview Water Treatment Plant for taking up a collection and buying the line a chicken lunch.

Many happies

And Local 362 sends birthday greetings to Heather Bickle who is running their terrific web page. (<http://www.littlesquares.com/362/>)

Heather just turned 39. Again.

Watch 'em go

Province of Ontario Savings Office clerks from Brantford Local 219 joined with Woodstock Local 117 to do a workplace inspection of the Woodstock branch that was sending a scab to work their Brantford office.

They wore custom buttons with the names of two scabs on them. The two named staff fled the office. One of them is a Woodstock city councillor. It is great to give a politician the runs.

– *Phil Dunbar, Local 219*

Best wishes for a speedy recovery

Local 130 members send their thoughts and prayers to Colin Pritchard and his family. Pritchard, a manager at the Chatham Courthouse, was involved in a serious two-vehicle collision on Wednesday.