

OPSEU



SEFPO

Frontlines

April 19, 2002

What part
of
88% NO
don't
they
understand?

Leah is on the road

President Leah Casselman was in Region 2 on Thursday, spending time on picket lines and talking to members and media.

During the day she visited the E. C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton, Maplehurst Correctional Centre and the picket line at 1 Stone Road in Guelph.

Since the strike began, she has been criss-crossing the province.

Among the centres she has visited are Sault Ste. Marie, Simcoe, Thunder Bay, Windsor, Chatham, Penetanguishene, Brantford, Oshawa, Newmarket and, of course, Toronto.

First Vice-President/Treasurer Smokey Thomas has been in most of Region 4, plus Millbrook, North

Bay, Toronto, Oshawa and Whitby,

In smaller communities, people have a better grip on how important the work of OPSEU members is, Leah said.

"I've been just so impressed with the strength of our members on the lines in this strike.

"People really understand what is at stake. They have an amazing commitment to rebuilding the services they provide. They know they want to be treated with dignity and respect, and they are prepared to fight hard for what should be theirs by right," she said.

On Monday, Leah will be in Orangeville for the march, rally and barbecue that starts at 11 a.m.

Bruce Davidson of Concerned

Walkerton Citizens is confirmed as one of the speakers at the rally.

The events lead up to the only all-candidates meeting in the riding which Ernie Eves hopes to win. It has been arranged by the Chamber of Commerce, and for "security reasons" they will not permit any questions from the floor.

They CAN back down

Yesterday we reported that the government was violating the collective agreement for essential services workers.

We're happy to report they have backed off on at least one case.

The individual who was denied parental leave with top-up has been told he can have it after all.

If you are essential, and are denied rights under the contract, grieve. Talk to the union.

Fight back. It works. (It's the only thing that does.)

How do I get a job like that?

Ontario Premier Ernie Eves:

- got an \$810,000 lump sum payout when the MPPs' pension plan was redesigned.
- got \$78,007 in severance when he quit being an MPP in 2001.
- has a job that required MPPs to attend the Legislature for just 81 days in the last 16 months.
- will be paid \$148,384 a year as premier.
- will get a three per cent pay raise in 2003, bringing his salary to \$152,836.
- will – if he is still premier after the next election (yipe!), and if current plans do not change – get a 25-per-cent raise and will be paid \$191,046 a year.

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

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

Around Ontario

An exchange of email

Mr. Kevin Wilson,

I am a 26-year employee of MCSS. As such I probably have more seniority than you have with this government. I ask you please!! stop interfering in the process of negotiating a fair collective agreement.

Please cease and desist from any activity that could be perceived by OPSEU members as being demoralizing to the very people our employer should respect, those of us who do the REAL work.

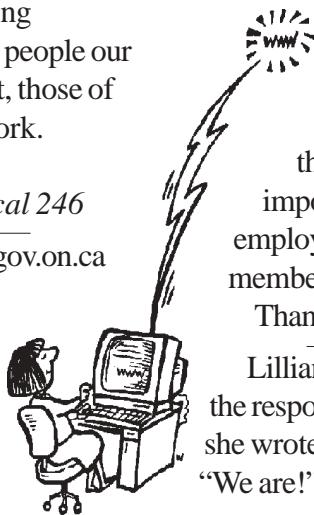
Sincerely,

– Lillian Mercer, Local 246

Kevin.Wilson@mbs.gov.on.ca

Thank you for your e-mail.

Like you, I have 26 years of service with the OPS. As a long term civil servant I have



tremendous respect for all of those who have chosen to work in the OPS and for employees who exercise their right to strike.

The employer supports a speedy completion of the bargaining process and the end of the strike.

Where the union chooses to comment publicly on positions they

claim we have taken in bargaining the employer will, where it deems it necessary, correct its position for the record. I think this is important for our managers, employees and sometimes members of the public.

Thank you for writing.

Lillian was not impressed with the response. “Keep fighting,” she wrote to the bargaining team. “We are!”

Picket line law enforcement

A slightly different angle from most

FRONTlines is slow to report activity on the Local 230 line at the Ministry of Finance in Kitchener.

Police had been called on April 11 when a strikebreaker was yelling at pickets. While police were confirming that everything was fine, they got a call that a fugitive was heading in that direction.

Almost immediately, the fugitive appeared and crossed the line. The pickets, hearing the officers call on the man to stop, took off in pursuit and apprehended the fugitive.

Police expressed thanks and the television station did interviews.

“Once again, OPSEU members responding to the community’s needs,” reported Gib McIlwrath, Local president.

They’re hopping in Kingston

by Lorraine Menard, Local 468

Sharing stories and trading ideas through **Frontlines** is exciting.

Here are some of the things we have been doing. On March 23, we talked our way into an event at a local mall. Right smack in the middle of the Community Bazaar was an OPSEU table. The Enough is Enough video ran continuously and leaflets were available for the public.

The centrepiece was a blow-up of the government’s ad about a “fair and reasonable offer.” At the foot of this *pièce de résistance* was our reply entitled an “unfair and unreasonable offer.” It explained the issues and the reasons why we’re on

strike. This attracted more attention than the video and people came to our table to sign our petition.

At Easter, we collected donations and had Easter goodies for all the children affected by the strike. Some of our managers and AMAPCEO staff even filled Easter baskets for the staff members in their respective areas.

On April 4, we had music on the line and awarded a prize to our best “twister,” and enjoyed a BBQ and treats.

Our strike headquarters is a construction trailer so on April 16, we held a “trailer trash” contest with prizes for the best outfits.

Friday is usually BBQ day, thanks to the generous donations from AMAPCEO, management, other external organizations, businesses and members of the public.

We also have a Member helping Member Food Bank set up for emergency relief.

The lines are still strong and people are still focused on the issues. They will not back down. Pension protection, benefits and unclassified issues are of the utmost concern here.

Keep up the good work on your end and we will continue to apply the necessary pressure.

Fun, laughter, less stress, free time

Leah,

Thank you so much for all your efforts on my behalf to secure a Grade A contract. I very much appreciate everything you're doing. The web site is such a good source of information. Congratulations to the webmaster for an excellent job well done.

Had we been offered a Grade A- contract during the recent blizzards and driving rain, I might have capitulated and said okay. But now that the fine weather's here and the barbeque is out, I'm holding out for a Grade A++ deal. I'm having fun on the line, laughing and



talking with my friends, enjoying the reduced stress and increased free time. In fact, I have the feeling I'm not alone: others seem to be enjoying themselves too. The money may not be as good as my regular job at OHIP in Kingston (49 Place d'Armes) but I'm learning to do more with less, which is always a useful lesson.

It will take quite a bit of

convincing to entice me back inside. I'm counting on you and our bargaining team to do everything in your power to get a first class contract. Thanks again and good luck.

– Gail Knowles, Local 468

We deserve better

As members of Local 221, we respectfully request that you give us a fair and equitable settlement as other areas in the Public Service. We deserve our salary, pension and benefits as much as the MPPs do. It is time to rebuild the public services.

In the early 90s, the government gave us joint control over our pension. It is disgusting that now you are trying to tell us what we can do with our surplus. With joint trust, we have all made money.

Due to the severe cutbacks in the last years, the public has been short-changed in the services they should receive from the government. Our members are doing a lot more with a lot less.

I received 25- and 30-year plaques from your government congratulating me on my dedication and service to Ontario. I find this to be a slap in the face. Since your government came into power, we have seen the MPPs and managers climb higher on the monetary scale while the staff who do the actual work have either lost their jobs or are losing their spending power through the meagre increases we have received over the years. We deserve better than this.

– Diane Stone, Local 221

Treat us fairly and with respect

Dave Tsubouchi:

Please don't think we can be fooled into taking any offer. We are willing to fight for what is necessary.

This just seems to be a repeat of 1996 – the government leaked the same information then as it is now – saying that talks are going to take weeks, that OPSEU had forwarded new demands, etc. Not true. These tactics won't work. We will stay strong! I am glad to hear that negotiations are still going on. I just hope this time, you are willing to negotiate.

This past week was my first week walking the picket line, but only because I have been recovering from surgery. I was on Short Term Sick Leave when the strike occurred, **and was cut off!**

I was told by the union (not the government; they didn't warn me at all) to apply for unemployment sick benefits, and was mailed my

Record of Employment when I hadn't even requested it! I have applied, but so far have not seen any money!

I voted NO to your contract offer, but then it was no offer. There were no negotiations.

You just put forward your offer and nothing else! You can put your ads out and pay thousands of taxpayers' dollars but what good is it doing?

No one believes you any more. People are tired of all this.

Please start to do some real negotiating this time and quit wasting our money with your phony ads.

We are not going back to work without a better contract.

We have given up so much over the years and have lost more than we can ever hope to regain.

We deserve to be treated **fairly** and with **respect**.

– Nancy Leeson, Local 727

We've been there

Local 110, the faculty at Fanshawe College in London, has given \$10,500 to Region 1 locals and toward members of Local 361 who have been locked out by Kennedy House in Uxbridge since June.

"We've been through two strikes and we know how important outside support can be," said Local 110 President Paddy Musson.

If we can return the favour...

Barry O'Neill, president of CUPE's B.C. Division, wrote Leah to thank her for the support of OPSEU members in the demonstration against B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell.

"We heard the premier was a little shaken up by the protest. He now knows that he can't even meet with business people in Toronto without generating a protest.

"Our sincere thanks, If we can ever return the favour, do not hesitate to ask."

Items also of concern to us

OPSEU has received a \$2,000 cheque from the Professional Engineers Government of Ontario.

"PEGO members, individually and in groups, are doing much more than this to provide moral and financial support to OPSEU members across the province. PEGO and its members realize that in your job action, OPSEU is fighting for a number of items that are also of great concern to us."

– Ian D. Cameron, P.Eng.
President, PEGO



Strike Shorts

Tax free

Durham area strikers can get their taxes prepared for free. The offer comes from Liberty Tax Service. Call 905-438-8815 for more information.

A similar offer comes from Robert Hicks at the same firm in Brantford. His letter says:

"We at Liberty Tax appreciate what you (OPSEU) do for us throughout the year. We wish you all the best and a fair settlement."

It's a girl!

Lori McLeod, head of the finance committee at Local 119 (Stratford Jail) went from one labour action direct to another on Wednesday. From the picket line to the hospital to greet her new arrival, Alisa May. All are doing well.

What ARE they thinking?

Charles Faust of Local 624 sends in this nomination for Stupid Manager of The Week

"Some managers just don't get it! A writer from the Canadian Press was looking for information on the spiny water flea (a parasite invading fresh water lakes).

With no one in the Nipigon MNR office who could answer, this manager gave out the home phone numbers of two striking biologists.

"Even if we were working, there are protection of privacy laws to prevent this sort of thing from happening. The fact that we are on strike only adds insult to injury."

New Brunswick gets it

A CBC story out of New Brunswick quotes the environment minister there saying she "wants to avoid the type of disaster that hit Walkerton."

In tabling her budget estimates Wednesday, Kim Jardine said the province had 75 water systems without operating approvals. "That's a gap that has been there and today we're saying we're going to fill in that gap."

She's also budgeting to train people who manage municipal water systems.

Jardine says she doesn't want the Walkerton scenario repeated in New Brunswick.

Stop the downloading

Thunder Bay Mayor Ken Boshcoff, still recovering from knee replacement surgery, strapped on a sign that read "Stop the Downloading" and spent some time on the picket lines Monday.

Targeted picketing

Elliot Lake pickets have targeted private licence issuers and found it rewarding.

It gave them a chance to talk to customers and explain the issues in the strike. "Many were surprised to find that the licence bureau's computer system is down since it is operated and maintained by OPSEU members. Those who did not have an immediate need to do business were glad to turn away, to return when the strike is over.

"We received many comments of support and good wishes," reports the *Northern Picketers*.