



Frontlines

April 21-22, 2002

2%
is
a
dairy
product

Union moves to speed pace of bargaining

This weekend, we gave the employer a comprehensive offer for settlement.

This is an offer that covers all the areas in dispute.

It is a significant move, because if the employer were to agree to the union's position, we would be on our way to a new collective agreement.

Negotiations have been moving at a snail's pace for the past two weeks, under a media information blackout imposed by the mediator.

We made our move this weekend in a sincere effort to move talks along.

Putting together a comprehensive offer for settlement involves taking a good hard look at each issue in dispute and deciding what moves the union can make in an effort to find an agreement.

It is not an easy process and it requires a tough

analysis of the relative importance of every issue on the table.

However, a significant move such as this has one major impact:

It puts the ball clearly in the centre of the employer's court.

It forces the government to reveal its hand. If the government chooses to respond with crumbs, it makes it clear that the government has absolutely no interest in reaching a settlement at this time.

However, if the employer decides to respond with substantive moves, the effort will have succeeded in kick-starting a faster pace in

negotiations.

Bargaining remains, very much, a two-way street. "It takes two to tango."

Given the genuine hardship felt by many citizens of the province because of the strike, that would be a telling indictment of the government's inability and/or unwillingness to serve the citizens that elected it.

OPSEU members have been strong in support of our teams in these tough negotiations. We are determined that we will be able to achieve a fair settlement that achieves justice for all.

– A message from your Central Bargaining Team.

Want to reach Ernie?

Here's how:

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Stylin' pickets at Local 527

Local 527 president Rod Sawyer reports on a major fashion show Thursday.

Outfits included a clown, a Disco Dude, and a frilly dress, as well as regular picketing duds. The catwalk used the 400 University Ave. stairs and part of the sidewalk.

Judges scored the picket models using flip cards in a modified ice skating system while a DJ picket provided music and Applause and Groan signs. All models walked away with prizes.

A bullhorn permitted fashion commentary: "This combination of fabric, colour and elan mean only one thing: the 1.95 solution is no solution at all." (See others below.)

Other lines targeted various Tories. "Liz Witmer's Conservative clogs and clothes just can't compete; this picket has it all and says it with style!" or "Confronted with this combination of beauty, grace and style, Ernie's only reaction is to put on more hair gel and wish he could have half the class."

Eat your hearts out, Paris and Milan!

Edgy fashion commentary

- This is the look that says: *Hands off Our Pensions.*
- This fashion statement is unmistakable: *Give us Fair Benefits, Now!*
- This picket's layers show she can adapt to anything the Tories throw at us.
- Our picket's sense of style does not hide her message: *Don't Mess with Factor 80!*
- This Picket's sense of style reflects her sense of Fair Play: *Justice*

Around Ontario

IWA joins Hearst line

The Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada Local 2995 (IWA) joined us on the line last Thursday, writes Suzanne Morin.

Executive board members, staff from different locals and plywood mill representatives accompanied Local 2995 President Damien Roy.

They strongly believe in fighting for employees' rights, putting an end to injustice and improving their members' lives.

They were in Hearst on a plywood wage conference and getting ready to negotiate contracts from Longlac to Kirkland Lake. We were extremely grateful to them for taking time to join us in solidarity and provide support.

Then on Friday, winter returned with a vengeance. Cold, snow and a wind that wrecked the tarp at the picket shelter, forcing a redesign of the shelter's architecture.

- for Unclassifieds!*
- This Picket's Clothes clearly say: *Renew our Public Services – and Keep them Public!*
- Despite bad weather and a rotten contract offer, our picket says: *Enough is enough and shines through in this classy, yet practical, picketing outfit.*
- This look makes a clear statement: *Give me an 'A' Contract*
- This look says it all: *Show us the money.*

Science Centre Flying squad tackles Film Review Board

Local 549 (Ontario Science Centre) has a Flying Squad watching over the Ontario Film Review Board.

Every piece of commercial film or video that is shown in Ontario has to pass through a nondescript one-story brick building at 1075 Millwood Rd., where it is reviewed and classified.

Seven members of Local 516 handle film projection and clerical duties there. During the 1996 strike, and so far during this one, they have gone to work as usual. So the Flying Squad stepped into the breach. As long as we have pickets at the driveway, trucks from Brinks, to Canpar will not cross.

Local 516 has appointed two Local 549 members as worksite reps for 1075 Millwood. This allows us to carry our picket line inside the building. When a Canpar driver, with a box of video tapes, saw us in the reception area, he said, "You guys should be outside. I wouldn't have crossed your line. We turn everything back for the Science Centre."

So there it is. If we build it, they will not cross. Even though we may not be able to keep the scabs out, if no mail, videos, advertising material, or films arrive or leave, there will be little for them to do.

For as long as this strike continues, the Local 549 Flying Squad is at the Film Review Board, on the driveway with our picket signs, and inside with our concern for the health and safety of OPSEU members, scabs though they may be.

Can we talk about fairness?

Mr. Eves:

Your party committed \$2.2 billion to corporate tax cuts this year. It gave a consultant \$200 million to design a computer system that doesn't work. Another \$2 million is being spent on the OPSEU strike. People who can afford to send their children to private schools will get \$300 million in tax credits. And you spent \$2 million in severance to privatize air ambulance.

What about the social costs? Are Ipperwash and Walkerton acceptable casualties of the Common Sense Revolution?

Mr. Tsubouchi boasts that the Province is saving \$7.5 million a day during our strike. Are bonus-rich managers giving value for money?

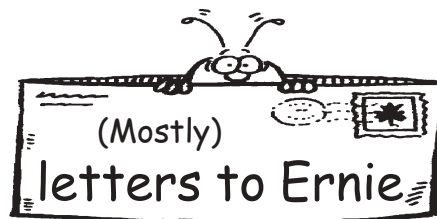
Since 1994, the cost of living has risen 14.5 per cent. MPPs pay is up 36.6 per cent; provincial judges got a 40 per cent increase and Crown Attorneys, 30 per cent. When Mike Harris turned 55, he qualified for a pension of \$67,000 a year, after 18 years of service.

In the same period, OPSEU members received a 4.3 per cent wage increase. The average OPSEU worker retires with a pension of \$17,000 after 26.5 years of service. Early retirement reduces our pension unless our age and years of service add up to 85.

You want to cut \$13 million from our benefit package, but will add \$3 million in new benefits. The specifics would only be known after our acceptance. Talk about the blind date from hell!

What would be fair, Mr. Eves?

— *Lorraine L. Ménard, Local 468*



Warm hearts in Thunder Bay

Local 737 (Thunder Bay Jail) had an opportunity to play Good Samaritan about 4 a.m. Friday when a homeless man dropped by, reports Jim Kusmack.

Jim and five others were on the line when Terry Jacobs appeared.

“It was raining lightly and a little on the cold side. Terry told me that he hadn't eaten or slept for two days and had nowhere to go.

“He was shaking, so we told him to come and warm up by the fire, and gave him a couple bowls of soup, and a couple of buns and a pop.

“Darren Kondreska also gave him a toque and a pair of mitts that he had in his truck. After eating and warming up Terry went off into the night.”

Too bad the Tories don't care as much about their fellow citizens.

Repair the social structure

Mr. Eves,

Please direct your negotiators to end this strike immediately. Insist that they bargain fairly and in good faith. It makes sense to keep the 80 factor. It makes sense to preserve public safety, the public trust and employment. Quit using public monies for Tory promotion and start reinvesting in the province that has supported you so well for so long.

Parole officers say that they now only have 15 minutes a month to spend with hardened criminals. They say they have been reduced to data entry clerks. The streets are

Another blowhard Tory?

What sort of province do we live in when a premier is applauded for allocating money so students have textbooks. Has our “common sense” become so perverted that we regard basic items of social infrastructure as luxuries? We should be asking how the Tories let things slide this far.

It seems to me, with the civil service on strike, this is nothing more than words. Until he resolves the OPSEU strike, is his government in a position to do anything other than proclaim good intentions?

I've always been told that actions speak louder than words. If Eves wants to mend fences, a good place to start would be his own yard. Ending the war against his own employees would show that he really does want to rebuild Ontario. Unless he does that, he's just another blowhard Tory laying the groundwork for the educational equivalent of Walkerton.

— *Gary Dale, Local 504*

unsafe. Meat inspectors have been laid off. Our produce inspectors have been eliminated. Our education standards have suffered. Walkerton is the tip of the iceberg. Tourism is the main industry in many areas of Ontario and the cuts are hurting our attractions and having an impact on the economy.

Mike Harris left you an unfortunate legacy, which you have the opportunity to rectify.

It is time to repair the social structure of Ontario. Start with the public service.

— *Susan Pearson*

Setting the struggle to music

By Charles Faust, Local 724

Born during the 1996 OPS strike, the Flying Pickets have added their voices to the fight for respect for working people, whether on a picket line or labour-oriented social gathering. The present strike has given them an opportunity once again to pay a light-hearted visit to picket lines in the Thunder Bay area, bringing their special kind of good cheer.

Their repertoire is a mix of traditional labour songs and popular songs with words revised to suit the occasion..

Their reputation spread like wildfire across Region 7. Many a cold picket line has felt the warmth of music and humour as this merry band made the rounds.

In 1998, the group was revived with the support of OPSEU's Thunder Bay Area Council under the guidance of Peter Lang and Michelle McColl.

New members included Stewart Mainville, Isabel Mercier, Shirley Shepherd, Greg Snider, June Montgomery and singer/songwriter, Rodney Brown.

The "Pickets" have become regulars at Labour Day events and other labour struggles.

According to McColl, "We don't always have beautiful voices, but we try our best to lift spirits and hearts at times when a little cheer goes a long way. I am proud to know each and every member. They are social activists with huge hearts."

Wherever there's a struggle, you'll find the Flying Pickets. "They don't play no radio music!"

Bye Bye, Jobs

(revised by Louise Fisher)

Chorus:

Bye bye, jobs! Bye bye, benefits!
This deal is the pits! I think I'm a-
gonna cry.

Bye bye house! Bye bye summer
camp!

Hello welfare stamps. I feel like
gettin' high.

Bye bye, my world, goodbye.

There goes my pension, and
severance pay.

They once were ours, folks – 'til
yesterday.

They gave us comfort, 'til he stepped
in,

Aloha, good life that might have
been!

Chorus

We're through with Mikey – we're
through for good.

We're sick and tired of that Tory
hood!

And here's the reason that we're so
mad:

Thanks to that Tory, we've all been
had.

Chorus

Yesterday

Yesterday, all the Tories were so far
away

Now it looks as if they're here to stay
O, I believe in yesterday.

Suddenly,

Ontario's not the place it used to be.

With the Tories chopping foolishly
O, I believe in yesterday.

Why they voted them in, I don't
know, I couldn't say.

They say the NDP did something
wrong – Yesterday ay ay ay

Yesterday, all the cutting was so far
away

Now we long for programs here to stay

They were created, yesterday.

O, I believe in yesterday....

And Tommy Douglas

Solidarity Forever

When the union's inspiration through
the workers' blood shall run

There can be no power greater
anywhere beneath the sun

Yet what force on earth is weaker
than the feeble strength of one?

But the Union makes us strong.

Chorus:

Solidarity Forever!

Solidarity Forever!

Solidarity Forever!

For the Union makes us strong!

They have taken untold millions that
they never toiled to earn,

But without our brain and muscle
not a single wheel could turn.

We can break their haughty power,
gain our freedom, when we learn,

That the Union makes us strong!

Chorus:

In our hands is placed a power

greater than their hoarded gold;

Greater than the might of armies
magnified a thousandfold.

We can bring to birth a new world
from the ashes of the old

For the Union makes us strong!.

Chorus:

It's the women of the union who

know just how to fight;

Who know of women's issues, how
they add to workers' rights.

As the workers fight for freedom
and for justice over might,

Women make the union strong.

Chorus:

OPSEU has had
problems with
some of its phone
lines.

They are working.