



Unfair labour practice

OPSEU has charged government negotiator Kevin Wilson with unfair labour practices stemming from his statements in this round of bargaining.

The charges, before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, request the following remedies:

- a declaration that Wilson has violated the act,
- an order that MBS and Wilson cease and desist from misrepresenting the employer's position on unclassified workers and from attempting to bargain directly with employees, and
- a posting of the order in every relevant workplace and to be sent to every member of the bargaining unit by email.

The Labour Relations Act requires an employer to negotiate with a certified union. This complaint against Wilson, Assistant Deputy Minister of human resources with MBS, charges him with communicating directly with members.

"It is important for MBS to communicate accurately and to avoid undermining the credibility of the union, or to attempt to bargain directly with the employees," OPSEU's charge says. "This is particularly so during the strike and advanced stages thereof."

It zeros in on the government's newspaper ads, its webpage

"calculator," QuickFacts sheets about the offer, and email from Wilson to members.

In all these vehicles, Wilson has not made it clear that large sections of the government offer do not apply to unclassified workers, who make up about a quarter of the bargaining unit. OPSEU charges this is a direct attempt to undermine the union's bargaining teams and to bargain directly and in a misleading way with members in general and unclassified members in particular.

An April 11 QuickFacts – an information sheet circulated to managers and excluded staff – brags of an improved offer to unclassified staff, but fails to mention it applies only to full-time unclassified members.

Even after this error was pointed out in the *Real Deal*, OPSEU's bargaining bulletin to members, Wilson repeated it in an email to a member.

The charges will probably come before the OLRB within the next two weeks.

Want to reach Ernie?

Here's how:

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Ontario's phantom fiscal crisis

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has released a report challenging the key assumption underlying the Eves government's claim that Ontario is on the brink of another fiscal crisis, namely a budget shortfall of between \$3 billion and \$5 billion in fiscal year 2002-3.

The report by Hugh Mackenzie says that, based on the government's own projections, the Tories can expect a budget surplus of \$600 million. Even in a worst case – a \$900 million overestimate of 2001-2 revenue and a collapse of growth in 2002 – the deficit never goes above \$1 billion – less than the contingency funds normally set aside to insure against budget risks.

With the evidence of the jobs numbers that Canada is having a strong first quarter in 2002, neither of these seems likely. The critical risk factor for a deficit, ironically, is completely under the Government's control: corporate income tax cuts at \$1.2 billion. Proceeding with those cuts would turn the \$600 million surplus into a \$600 million deficit.

For the full report, go to www.policyalternatives.ca.

Strike unites people in Kingston

Charly Chiarelli gave a benefit performance of Cu'Fu April 10 to aid striking members. Charly's AMAPCEO family helped organize the show, reports Local 468's Lorraine Ménard.

"This government's strike tactics have done more to unite OPSEU and AMAPCEO, and in some cases OPSEU and management, than any public relations campaign could hope to achieve."

The Member Helping Member Foodbank has taken on a life of its own. It is now the Kingston OPSEU Foodbank. We have adopted Locals 427, 428, 429, 430 and 432, whose members are helping run the joint venture to provide emergency food supplies

Generous support

AMAPCEO's Provincial Council has approved a donation of \$52,000 to OPSEU's hardship fund.

The donation, from the association's contingency fund, represents \$10 per dues paying AMAPCEO member.

The hardship fund helps local members across the province who are experiencing severe financial difficulties as a result of the strike.

"AMAPCEO recognizes that

Algonquin visitors can expect an OPSEU welcome

WHITNEY – Striking OPSEU members are threatening to stop sport anglers and tourists from entering Algonquin Park this weekend.

"If the strike continues, people should not come," said Local 306 president Ed Hovinga. Garbage pick-up will be limited and the

for strikers in various ministries. This is another shining example of how this strike has fostered a community spirit.

CUPE members, led by Sid Ryan, rallied to support the strike last Thursday.

"Some of our members approached me later to express feelings they couldn't quite verbalize, at the sight of this impressive column of supporters marching toward our worksite. My response was: "You should have been in Toronto last Monday. There is nothing like wall-to-wall people sharing the same beliefs to fan the flames of determination and renew the commitment to the reasons why we are still out here."

these funds are more critical now given the length of the dispute and the difficulty OPSEU members may be having in making ends meet," the organization said after its April 17 donation..

"This action supplements the many gestures of support, individually and collectively, taken by AMAPCEO and its membership locally across the province in support of their OPSEU colleagues."

whole park will be under a boil water advisory.

Strikers say it's impossible for a handful of managers to guarantee the safety of 8,500 anglers expected for Saturday's opening of trout season.

The strike has closed the park's visitor centre and campgrounds, but

Around Ontario

Cranking it up and liking it hot

Local 547, Thistletown Regional Centre, won a confrontation with strikebreakers on Thursday. They lined up in front of the only entrance that line-crossers are allowed to use.

"As the management approached to unlock the door, the scabs began to push their way through us," reports Jarrett Harris. "Management said 'Back off the steps now.' The scabs, thinking the management was talking to us, continued to push. There was an incredible sense of satisfaction when the management turned to the scabs and said firmly. 'Didn't you hear me, I said back off the steps.'"

After loitering for most of the morning, and in one instance using the shrubbery in preference to the striker's port-a-potty, they were sent home about 1:30 p.m.

Scentsational!

Hard on the heels of yesterday's fashion report from Toronto, this just in from Sioux Lookout: the fragrance of choice for pickets is clearly *Parfum du Bois Brûlé*.

Highway 60, which runs through the park, is open. The local plans to supplement the pickets at the park's access points with extra pickets from other workplaces.

The park is planning to bring in managers from other parks for the annual influx of anglers.

Machinists slam gov't for employing 'freelancers' to investigate worker's death

The Canadian Vice President of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW), Dave Ritchie, has told Ontario Labour Minister Brad Clark that he has no confidence in two "freelancers" employed to investigate the death of a worker killed on the job in St. Thomas last week.

Duane Young, a member of the IAMAW, was crushed in a press in an industrial accident at the Dana Victor plant.

Ritchie says that because of the OPSEU strike, the investigation is being conducted by a manager from the Pay Equity Division of the Labour Department and a former manager with the Ministry of Transport.

"The family of Mr. Young, his co-workers at Dana Victor and indeed the working people of Ontario deserve a proper investigation by qualified investigators warranted

under the Health and Safety Act," Ritchie says in a letter to the Minister.

"Safety and Health Inspectors have special training and special skills to deal with tragedies of this nature. That you would employ two people with apparently no training and no special skills to perform such a sensitive investigation demonstrates to me that you have no appreciation of the true value of your regular highly competent workforce.

"Your government's apparent inability to satisfactorily resolve issues in dispute between employees of the Ministry of Labour and OPSEU is indefensible. Your government has let this strike drag on now for more than six weeks. As an employer you have the obligation to demonstrate a much greater degree of responsibility in pursuit of a settlement." the letter concludes.

What's wrong with Ontario?

The City of Windsor negotiated for 20 hours last week reaching an agreement with their outside workers represented by CUPE Local 82, avoiding an imminent strike.

Here's what they got!

- 3-year contract
- 3 per cent raise in each of the three years
- no contract concessions
- benefits protected
- wages range from \$17 to \$25 for skilled trades
- seasonal workers earn \$15.41
- job security and new language governing seasonal and part-time

workers

They lost 12 part-time positions.

Not bad for a municipal government whose transfer payments have been reduced in recent years. AMAPCEO received a salary increase of 11.33 per cent over 3 years and Factor 80 extension to March 31, 2004.

Yet OPSEU is forced to strike.

The damage done to the Public Service because of the government's shameful abuse of power will have lasting negative effects. What does the government hope to achieve?

— Gino Franche, Local 130

Media wrong (not the first time)

Media reports that say the "Provincial Schools will re-open," or "Employees of Provincial Schools have been deemed essential," or that "OPSEU agreed" to either of these, are incorrect.

All of these are in the realm of speculation rather than fact.

The OLRB ordered OPSEU to open essential service negotiations with the employer under 30(a) of CECBA because of the evidence that "life, health and safety" of students could be in danger.

OPSEU came prepared to agree to that order rather than having it imposed on us.

To say that the schools will re-open is the government's call, because the government decided unilaterally to close the schools this time (but not in 96).

Our negotiators will be going over each position with a fine-toothed comb with the help of our local presidents and members to see if it meets the test of essentiality under 30(a). If there is no agreement by Wednesday, then it is back to the OLRB and maybe the courts.

No struck work

The AMAPCEO Provincial Council has unanimously adopted a resolution urging its members not to do OPSEU work.

It re-affirmed its position that it is inappropriate for its members to volunteer or agree to be re-assigned to do struck work and committed itself to defending members who might be disciplined for such refusal.

It also decided to explore legal options to sanction against members who ignore the policy.



On the line and on the ball

Members on the line at Rideau Correctional and Treatment Centre were in the right spot at 3 a.m. Sunday.

They were in the right place to spot a former inmate trying to break in with 29 packages of tobacco, 30 packs of rolling papers and 50 grams of marijuana.

He had used bolt-cutters to get through the security fence. Striking Correctional Officers Todd Hockey and Gavin Cunningham detained him, with help from other Local 438 pickets.

Managers called police, who took the fellow away. He had just been released from the centre two days earlier.

Two people who went through the ice at Lake of the Woods in Kenora on Wednesday should be thankful to an OPSEU picket line.

They were pulled out by Sherry Hakala of Local 702, John Roos of Local 702 and Leslie LeFrance of Local 729. The man and woman probably spent about 15 minutes in the frigid water. They were taken to hospital and checked for possible hypothermia.

Many OPS jobs carry this sense of commitment

This poem, author unknown, has been hanging on the wall at the Hamilton dispatch centre for years. Patrick Fry-Smith of Local 201 sent it in.

Who Am I?

I am the voice that calms the mother into breathing life back into her infant son.

I am the invisible hand that holds and comforts the elderly man who woke up this morning to find his wife of 50 years has passed away during the night.

I am the friend who talks the disgruntled teenager out of ending her own life. I sent help when you had your first automobile accident.

I am the ears that listen to the needs of all those I serve.

I have heard the screams of faceless people I never will meet or forget.

I have cried at the atrocities of mankind and rejoiced at the miracles of life.

I have tried to visualize the scene to coincide with the voices I heard.

I usually am not privy to the outcome of a call, and so I wonder...

I am the one who works weekends, night shifts and holidays. Children do not say they want my job when they grow up. Yet, I am at this vocation by choice.

Those I help do not call back to say thank you.

Still there is comfort in the challenge, integrity, and purpose of my employment.

I am thankful to provide such a meaningful service.

I am where you need me and still here when you don't.

I am the lowest paid dispatcher in the province.

I am an OPSEU member, on strike to demand the respect we deserve.

Um... er... Yum?

Local 221's Kevin Buck reports that members at the MTO lift bridge in Port Dover enjoyed a "muskrat dinner" on Friday supplied by striking bridge operator Mark Donnell.

"It was a different sort of treat," he says. With boat season looming, managers will have their hands full satisfying affluent boaters (Tory supporters?) when they demand the bridge be lifted for their Sunday sailboat rides.

"The muskrat will provide us fortitude to hold the line."

How long to make a deal?

Sudbury's strike newsletter says it takes 12 days to make a possum; 19 days for a mouse; 31 for a rabbit; 60 days for cats and dogs; and 112 days for a pig.

"We rejected their 'runt' offer around the time it takes to give birth to a leopard (90 days).

"In 5 days, we'll have been in negotiations long enough to get their goat.

"Let's get ringmaster Eves to end this circus."