



STRENGTH

A message to striking OPS members from Leah Casselman, president

March 28, 2002

Dear sisters and brothers:

I am writing to thank you for your strength.

Since March 13, when our strike began, I have visited scores of picket lines and spoken to hundreds of members. Everywhere I have gone, I have seen the same thing: strong, determined working people who are firm in their resolve to be treated with respect.

Every day I hear new stories of personal courage. Every day I am amazed by the creativity and energy of OPSEU members. Every day I am amazed by the overwhelming solidarity of OPSEU members. You are not alone!

Our strike is having a tremendous impact. With the way this government has cut and privatized jobs in the public service over the last seven years, it's pretty obvious that none of us would even have public service jobs if our work weren't extremely important – even to the Tories.

The withdrawal of services has always been the strongest tool available to working people. The history of the labour movement is the history of working people who have said, "Enough is Enough!" to mistreatment by their employer. When you are walking the picket line, the spirits of generations of workers are walking beside you. Don't ever forget that.

On Tuesday, April 2, trade unionists from across Ontario will be walking beside you in body as well. The Ontario Federation of Labour is sponsoring a Day of Solidarity with OPSEU strikers on that day. Look for friends from our sister unions at a location near you.

In the nearly seven years that the Mike Harris government has been in power, OPSEU members have never been afraid to stand up to the bully. Progressive Ontarians know that. I know

(please turn over)

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Responsibility. Determination. Courage.

our support is wide and deep among the majority of Ontarians who oppose this government's destruction of public services.

Sometimes being on strike can be a frightening experience, I know. I am reminded of the words of Bruce Davidson, spokesperson for Concerned Walkerton Citizens: "Action cures fear."

You are already taking action by walking the picket line, but there is no limit on what you can do to reach out to your fellow Ontarians and put our case before them. Talk to your friends. Leaflet your neighbours. Lobby your MPP. Write letters-to-the-editor. Stage news events. **Pick up the phone today. Call your boss, David Tsubouchi, at (416) 327-2333. Tell him to get back to the bargaining table *now!***

We are on strike for justice. We will not be on strike forever. We only need one thing to win this battle, and that is your strength. I know your bargaining teams can count on you to see us through to our goal: a new collective agreement built not on the government's takeaways, but on real progress for OPSEU members and our families.

Keep the faith. Hang tough. Together we will win.

In solidarity,



Leah Casselman, President

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