



FRONT *lines*

SEFPO

Information for OPSEU members in the Ontario Public Service • November 16, 2006

Day of Action draws attention to plight of “Ministry of No Resources”

Sign our online petition at www.savethemnr.ca

OPSEU members from across the public service can help members in the Ministry of Natural Resources today by signing an online petition at www.savethemnr.ca.

The OPSEU Ministry Enforcement and Renewal Committee (MERC) for the MNR has called a “Day of Action” today to protest ongoing budget cuts to their ministry.

The cuts have intensified in this fiscal year. Operating budgets for Conservation Officers and provincial parks have been particularly hard hit, but all areas of the Ministry are feeling the pressure.

Campaign activities for this first Day of Action will see OPSEU members wear black to work, fasten orange flag tape to car and truck aerials, and sign petitions in their locals for presentation in the Legislature. Rallies and barbecues are also planned at some locations.

“Today is the start of a campaign that I would like to see spread right across the OPS,”

said OPSEU president Leah Casselman. “The McGuinty government campaigned on a promise to rebuild public services, yet the majority of ministries in the OPS have seen their budgets ‘flat-lined’ in the last two years.

“That wasn’t the deal,” she said. “As one of our provincial park workers said this summer, ‘in medical terms, “flat-lined” means you’re dead.’”

On Nov. 1, Ontario Finance Minister Greg Sorbara announced a series of public consultations to prepare for the 2007-08 budget. One of the four questions Sorbara is looking for answers to is, “Are there any programs or services the provincial government provides that are no longer needed?”

“The Liberals’ entire approach as they get ready for the next budget is an insult to every public sector employee in Ontario,” said Casselman. “Does Greg Sorbara really believe that, after 13 years of cuts to public services, there is any public



service anywhere in this province that has not been stripped down to its bare bones?

“With a provincial election less than 11 months away, Sorbara is not making himself many friends among 115,000 OPSEU members,” she said. “It’s enough to make you want to vote for someone else.”

The MNR MERC plans to hand out “Save the MNR” stickers Nov. 25-26 when about 500 OPSEU members in the OPS come to Toronto for their biennial divisional meetings.

(please turn to page 2)

Security checks likely on the way for more areas of the OPS

More OPSEU members in the Ontario Public Service may be subject to security checks under an order issued by the Grievance Settlement Board.

The government is already conducting security checks of OPS employees who work with sensitive identity documents. This includes about 2,600 OPSEU members working with drivers' licenses, health cards, birth certificates, payroll and benefits, and computer systems.

The latest GSB order lets the employer extend the checks to any area of the OPS based on a "threat risk assessment."

The employer has provided no details on which areas are likely to need security checks, said Marg Simmons, the OPSEU Job Security Officer who deals with the issue.

"A major concern we had last year was that the employer would use the security checks to transfer workers out of their jobs because of minor encounters with the law that they might have had in the past," said Simmons. "So far, out of 700 members who have been checked, only one person has not passed the security check.

Members also have the right to appeal the

outcome of the checks, Simmons added.

Under an agreement negotiated by OPSEU in December 2005, these checks are limited to a criminal record check and/or a national security check by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). Originally, the employer had also wanted to be able to check members' credit status and to find out whether they were "known to police." The union forced the employer to drop those demands.

The 2005 agreement spells out the steps involved in the security checks and the job protections available to OPSEU members who are denied security clearance. For a full summary of the deal, see the Dec. 9, 2005 issue of *FRONTlines* at <http://www.opseu.org/ops/frontlines/FRONTlinesDec0905.pdf>.

The employer must provide at least 20 days' notice to the union if a new business area or location will be subject to the checks. For more information about any aspect of the security checks, please call Marg Simmons at 1-800-268-7376 ext. 8643.

MNR

from page 1

For more information, visit the web at www.savethemnr.ca or contact the MNR MERC members as follows:

CHAIR Elaine Bagnall, Local 362, Peterborough

(705) 755-2589; ebagnall_opseu@yahoo.ca

VICE-CHAIR Peter Wall, Local 638, Hearst

(705) 372-2212; peterw@ntl.sympatico.ca

Dave Fluri, Local 635, North Bay

(705) 475-5604; dave.fluri@onlink.net

Ed Evens, Local 703, Sioux Lookout

(807) 737-5056; eevens@gosiouxlookout.com

