

2012

CONVENTION UPDATE

Number 2 - April 20, 2012

President warns of tumultuous road ahead



President Warren (Smokey) Thomas welcomed attendees to OPSEU's Annual Convention 2012 Thursday morning. In his address, Thomas reflected on challenges OPSEU faced over the past year, the changing labour environment and the battles which lie ahead. He also called for an action plan to promote social change and to ensure sustainable jobs and public services for future generations.

It's been a tough year

"Since our last convention, we have fought against wage restraints, faced public service cuts and austerity measures," said Thomas. "We have run

information pickets and other campaigns. And we have done all the stuff that some people will call old school. It is tried and true, and we will never give that up."

OPSEU promoted member participation in the provincial election, resulting in a Liberal minority. If the Liberal budget from March is defeated, the province may face another election. A majority government, Conservative or Liberal, is bad news for members, their families and their communities as austerity measures will be deep and unchallenged.

"The economy is still in the tank. Nothing in the provincial budget leads me to believe we are on the road to job creation to enhance fairness," said Thomas.

"Though we do have a tremendous fight on our hands, we are up to the challenge."

Forging strong alliances to promote change

OPSEU was involved in many campaigns this past year. These included the Occupy Movement and the creation of a partnership with the Public Services Foundation of Canada to respond to the Drummond Commission. OPSEU has also forged partnerships with First Nations groups, social agencies, and farmers' groups. These continued partnerships with community groups, equity groups and

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associations are allowing OPSEU to be the voice for social change.

“Our union is changing the way unions are viewed in this province. We have become a leader in the provincial labour movement through our partnerships and work with community groups, equity groups, and other associations, like the Occupy Movement and the Ontario Harness Horse Association, to promote positive social change,” said Thomas.

Thomas spoke strongly in support of the temporary dues levy. Such an increase would ensure the union had the resources to implement a strong action plan and to ensure the strength of activism, solidarity, unity and expertise within the organization.

Creating a plan

On Day 2 of Convention, delegates will debate an action plan that will focus on ensuring income equality, human vitality and spending power after retirement, fully-funded and supported pensions, and quality jobs.

“We don’t go looking for fights, but we consider it a very provocative act if you cut services,” said Thomas. “We will challenge every cut in every service everywhere in this province. We would rather sit in a room and negotiate fair collective agreements and good, quality public services for all the people of Ontario,” said Thomas. “Dalton McGuinty, if you want a fight, may the force be with you. We will give you a fight like you have never seen.”



Who is here?

Delegates	897
Alternates	452
Observers	169
Retirees	6
EBMs	20
Committees	39
Solidarity Guests	18
Guests	14
Total	1615



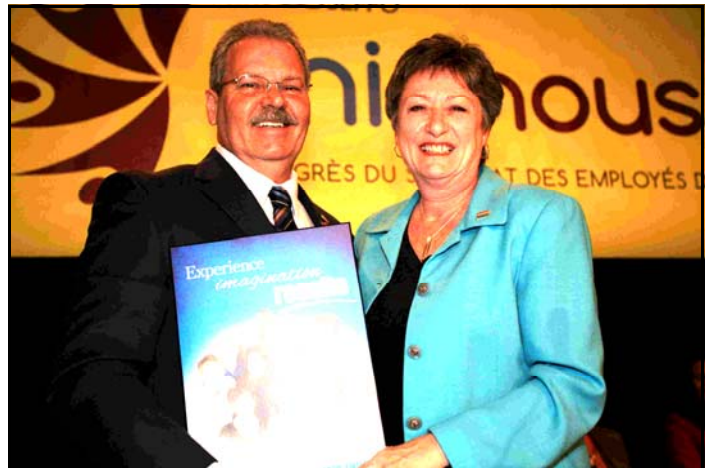
Toronto welcomes OPSEU

Marie Clarke Walker, Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour of Congress, welcomed us to this year's Convention. She noted that this is a challenging time for labour and condemned Harper's "heavy handed attacks" and urged us to support Ontario's NDP.

Denise Wiese from Tourism Toronto returned for her second year. Tourism Toronto is a not-for-profit organization.

Wiese said that OPSEU's Convention brings to Toronto over \$1 million in food, beverage purchases, and 4,000 hotel room nights. She treated Convention attendees to a comedic video featuring Jann Arden and Rick Mercer which followed their adventure walk on the top of the CN Tower. On behalf of Tourism Toronto, Wiese presented a \$10,000 cheque to OPSEU's Social Justice Fund also donated a gift certificate for the CN Tower "Edge Walk" to the Silent Auction. Proceeds from the Silent Auction (Room 104D) go to the Solidarity Fund.

Toronto Councillor Janet Davis welcomed OPSEU back on behalf of the City of Toronto. "Your union is making a difference," she said. "We saw the most activism we've ever seen over the past year. It's given us hope. The people in this city want and value public services and are willing to pay more taxes for them."



Smokey Thomas presents Janet Davis, Toronto Councillor, with our new Organizing poster



Denise Wiese of Tourism Toronto presents a \$10,000 cheque to support the OPSEU Social Justice Fund



Marie Clarke Walker, Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour of Congress

Resolution and Constitutional Amendments

Dues levy defeated after much debate

A motion for a temporary dues levy of 0.125 per cent was defeated Thursday afternoon after nearly two hours of debate and a standing vote count. Had the levy passed, member dues would have increased to 1.5 per cent until the 2014 Convention.

The rationale for the motion was to increase operating revenues to thwart attacks under the provincial austerity measures and other threats to this union, the labour movement as a whole and social equality.



Dave Lundy, Executive Board Member (RVP), Region 4 speaks in favour of the temporary dues levy.

Delegates say NO to electronic balloting

Delegates defeated the constitutional amendment to allow unit and local elections to be conducted using a secure electronic balloting system. Members in favour argued electronic balloting would encourage membership involvement and would allow the

members in composite and remote locals to save time and money on travel. Delegates opposing the amendment spoke on the possibility of hackers skewing the results and the lack of face-to-face activism.



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CONGRÈS DU SYNDICAT DES EMPLOYÉS DE LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE DE L'ONTARIO

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