

## Labour Day 2010 – A Political Pulse Editorial

Monday, September 06, 2010 is Labour Day in Canada.

Traditionally, for trade unionists, Labour Day is a time to celebrate our accomplishments, take stock of the health of our movement and look ahead to the challenges of the coming year.

In 2010, while we face no shortage of challenges, CUPE members can be proud of the work we continue to do to defend our members on the job and in the community. We are now more than 230,000 strong, making us the largest union in Ontario. That wouldn't be true if CUPE wasn't making a positive difference for families, in every community in Ontario.



Of course Labour Day isn't just about CUPE. One of the biggest battles faced by workers in Ontario in 2010 was the strike at Vale-Inco. When the giant Brazilian multinational attacked workers and their families in Sudbury and Port Colborne, CUPE members like you showed their support. When we filled buses to go to Rallies in Sudbury, you showed the solidarity that trade unionism is all about. Standing together with men and women from many unions and many communities, we made it clear: when big companies decide to throw workers rights out the window – somebody has to take a stand.

In 2010 CUPE worked with Moms and Dads across Ontario to fight for access to decent, affordable childcare. Our efforts paid off big-time when we forced the Ontario government to add \$63.5 million to the provincial budget to protect childcare. It was another example of how unions make a positive difference for so many, union members and non union members alike.

Challenges in 2010? You bet. This is a municipal election year in Ontario and already some politicians are promising to contract out the public services that Ontarians value and depend upon. We know Ontarians value public services. In polling we did just last July, Ontarians told us that for many, public services are a priority. In fact, 33% said they would even accept a tax increase if it was necessary to maintain services at current levels. Either way, the Municipal Elections are vitally important and we want to help you get involved. (see p.4)

Another challenge? Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan says he's going to save money and protect public services by freezing public sector wages. Hah! If the government was serious about saving money to bring down the deficit, they wouldn't be giving away over \$4.6 billion in corporate tax cuts for the banks and big corporations. So when someone tells you we all have to do our part, ask them about the corporate tax cut. Ask them when the banks and CEO's are planning to do their part.

There are many reasons why Labour Day is important. So on September 6th, when union members in your community come together for a parade or a picnic, we hope to see you there too!

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<b><u>LABOUR DAY EVENTS:</u></b>	<b><u>Details</u></b>
Kenora	Monday September 6 <sup>th</sup> – 11am-2pm Picnic at Beatty Park Activities include: BBQ, guest speakers, games & entertainment for all.
Peterborough	Monday Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> – 12pm-3pm Picnic at the Pavilion at Nicholls Oval Park. Corner of Park Rd. and Armour Rd. Activities include: BBQ, music & displays – fun-filled free events for all ages!
Sudbury	Monday Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> - 10am Parade at Memorial Park & 12pm grand opening picnic at Mine Mill CAW Camp-grounds Richard Lake, Off Hwy 69 South Activities include: Family fun day & delicious food
St. Catharines	Monday Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> - 11am Gather at CAW Hall in St. Catharine's - Parade to Lyons Community Park Activities include: BBQ and evening events in CAW Hall in St. Catharine's
Durham/Oshawa	Monday Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> - 11am-3pm BBQ in Memorial Park in Oshawa - Corner of Simcoe St. & John St. Activities include: Live music entertainment, kids face painting, radio control cars and track, hot dogs & hamburgers
Windsor	Monday September 6 <sup>th</sup> – 10am Parade departs from CAW Hall Local 200/400, march to the Fogolar Furlan Club. Activities include: Entertainment, pony rides, live music, free food
Hamilton	Monday Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> – 10:30am Parade starting at York St., South of Queen to Dundurn Activities include: Parade and park picnic/BBQ being held by Local 5167.
Sault Ste. Marie	Monday Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> - 12pm -4pm Family fun day at Bellevue Park Activities include: Barbeque, carnival and games. All food & refreshments will be provided free.
London	Monday Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> – 1pm Thames Park – Rideout St. South of Horton Activities include: Picnic, entertainment and music
Kingston	Monday Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> – 10 am Parade and Picnic at McBurney Park Activities include: Meet at 10am for speakers. Parade leaves at 10:30am followed by a picnic and music back at McBurney Park.
North Bay	Monday Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> – 11:30 am Parade and Family Fun BBQ Activity details: Parade leaving Kenrock parking lot at 11:30am parade route is on Memorial Drive. Family fun day BBQ from 12pm to 3pm at Waterfront Park
Ottawa	Monday Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> – 12pm – 4:30pm Activity details: Parade starting at City Hall from 12pm marching to McNabb Park for BBQ & family fun day from 1pm to 4:30pm

## The Ontario Wage Freeze

Our message to union members, the media and the general public.

- What does CUPE want?** CUPE wants what's good for Ontario, but freezing wages will slow down consumer spending and by slowing down the economic recovery, a wage freeze hurts everyone.
- But isn't the government serious about saving money and reducing the deficit?** No. If they were, they wouldn't be giving away more than \$4 billion in corporate tax cuts to the banks and big corporations.
- The wage freeze will not reduce the deficit. Why?** Because for every \$1 the government hopes to save through the wage freeze, they plan to give away \$2 through corporate tax cuts.
- What's the wage freeze really about?** It's about votes. The Ontario McGuinty Liberals are unpopular thanks to the HST and ECO fees. This seems to be more about trying to win back support by acting "deficit-tough" and demonizing public sector workers than it is about balancing the books.
- Don't CUPE members know the economy is in trouble?** CUPE members recognize the serious economic challenges facing all of us. But while talking about a wage freeze might have an emotional appeal to some people, freezing wages will lead families to postpone spending decisions they might otherwise have made. Not buying the new car, new house, new fridge and stove? That hurts the whole economy, which hurts everyone, union and non union, private sector and public sector. It's a bad idea.
- Time to do your part?** When is it time for CEOs and the banks to do their part? Why is McGuinty letting them off the hook and cutting their taxes by over \$4 billion? Shouldn't the people who caused the economic crisis in the first place be the first in line to "do their part" to fix it?
- Is it fair?** Is it fair to single out 11% of the population, a majority of whom are low-end earners, women and single parents and freeze their pay while leaving the bankers and Bay Street brokers untouched? No. Whose side is Dalton McGuinty on anyway?
- Want to help the economy?** Cancel the corporate tax cuts and invest the money in new job creation, that's the single best way to pay down the deficit.



## Do you know what October 25, 2010 is?

It's the one day in 4 four years when you get to help choose who decides if your community has recreational programs and long-term care homes, if your local school stays open and offers extended child care for children, if policing, fire and paramedical services are there when you need them and if electricity is publically provided in an affordable and accountable manner. These are the issues that affect you and your family, every day.

October 25th is when mayors, councillors and school board trustees will be elected in every community.

At CUPE Ontario, we think that's a big deal. Why? Firstly, because we all live in those communities. Second, because as a union CUPE represents thousands of people who work for a municipality or school board.

All over this province, municipalities and school boards today are struggling with tight budgets and big community needs and some voices want the election to be about selling the assets that your parents and grandparents paid for and privatizing the public services that you and your children depend on. That's why the 2010 municipal and school board elections matter so much.

Here another reason we're concerned.

A majority of people in Ontario, even most union members, don't actually vote in their municipal and school board elections, even though they are entitled to. In the last Ontario municipal elections in 2006 in Mississauga, for example, less than one in four eligible voters took time to cast a ballot. In Oshawa only 25.1% cast their vote.

We all want CUPE to have a positive impact on public policy, but why should anybody listen to us if most CUPE members don't use their vote to do the same thing?

CUPE believes we're all better off when Ontarians actually cast their vote to elect the mayors, councillors and school boards trustees whose decisions affect so much of our lives.

CUPE Ontario is getting involved in the 2010 elections to accomplish three things:

1. Help elect more progressive mayors, councillors and school trustees across the province, candidates who respect public services and public employees.
2. Help influence the public debate about what's at stake in the 2010 elections. The issue isn't how to sell the streetlights and close the swimming pools, it's how to better provide good, green, reliable service, in an accountable manner at a reasonable cost and treat public employees with respect.
3. Help make sure CUPE members get out and vote. And, we'll also aim to have a greater number of CUPE Ontario members volunteer on a local campaign.

**Can we do it?**

**We can if you help.**

And you can start helping right now by getting our downloadable Municipal Election Tool Kit at <http://www.cupe.on.ca>

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