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# WE ARE THE SOLUTION NOUS AVONS LA SOLUTION

47th Annual CUPE Ontario Convention - Wednesday May 26th – Saturday May 29th, 2010

Convention Capsule 2

May 28th, 2010

## Ontario Division President's Speech



Immediately following the Convention video, Brother Fred Hahn rose to deliver the CUPE Ontario President's address. Fred's theme? There are challenges facing Ontario and public sector workers – but if we work together “another world is possible.”

Hahn said the Ontario government's public sector wage freeze is a prime example of public sector workers being unfairly blamed for the recession. He said CUPE members meet challenges head-on, and cited record breaking levels of involvement in campaigns. He said one of our challenges is to put our finances in order but stressed: “Let's be clear, the work of this union, the defence of public services, the defence of our collective agreements, will not stop!”

“Will you stand together?” He asked. “Will you support each other? Will you defend public services? If we do, we will be stronger and we will build a better world.”

## Rennick tells it like it is on Ontario Division finances



CUPE Ontario secretary-treasurer Candace Rennick delivered a tell-it-like-it-is report for convention delegates Thursday promising tougher financial controls to get the division's finances on firmer ground.

Noting that the division has run a series of deficits in the past, Rennick says accumulating more debt is no longer a viable option. She warned the financial situation was having “significant impacts on our ability to provide services to members.”

She says the budget to be brought forward Friday by the Ways and Means Committee is a tough plan. And she outlined some of the new financial controls the executive board has put in place like a finance committee and a governance committee to put much needed operational policy and procedures in place.

“We'll get through this and we'll be stronger to take on ever growing attacks that we face,” Rennick says.

## ***Working Together to achieve success – Moist to delegates***

Working together, local unions, the Ontario Division and CUPE National, in good times, and especially in tough times, we are better placed to defend our members on all fronts, said CUPE National President Brother Paul Moist, addressing convention Thursday morning.

Highlighting the challenges we face from employers wanting to sell off public assets, cuts to vital services, funding restraints and concession demands at bargaining tables, Brother Moist stressed the importance of strong solidarity to fight off attacks on public services.

Brother Moist also said that we need the entire labour movement working together to save good pensions and to promote pension plans for all, to ensure that each and every Canadian can retire in dignity with a fair and decent pension plan.

## ***CUPE Ontario Community BBQ a Roaring Success***

CUPE Ontario held a community BBQ, Thursday, May 27, 2010, for all Windsorites and the 1200 delegates at the annual convention.

Under sunny skies and in the beautifully maintained (thanks to CUPE members) Dieppe Park, the BBQ was a tremendous success. Hundreds and hundreds of burgers, hot dogs, cupcakes and cold drinks were served, while the crowds listened to the sounds of Faith Nolan and the CUPE Freedom singers.

The turnout was so great that the District Council who did a wonderful job assisting in facilitating the event had to bring a second BBQ to the site to ensure all were fed. As it was the BBQ, scheduled to end at 2 p.m., went on past 3 o'clock.

Paul Moist, president of CUPE, presented June Muir (a former CUPE member), of the Windsor and Essex Food Bank Association, with a cheque for \$10,000. In thanking him, Ms. Muir explained that food banks suffer from a lack of donations during the summer and CUPE's donation would go a long way to assisting the 19 food banks in the area.

## ***Ontario NDP Leader Keynote Speaker at CUPE Ontario Convention***

Andrea Horwath, leader of the Ontario NDP and MPP for Hamilton East arrived to a rousing standing ovation.

Ms. Horwath told the 1200 delegates that public sector, public services and public employees are the people who keep the wheels of the Ontario economy spinning. "Thank you for making this province work," she told the cheering crowd.

Andrea said Ontarians have the same values and goals as CUPE members: good municipal services; accessible child care; good schools, support for the vulnerable and clean air.

She congratulated CUPE for leading the charge to assure all Canadians have a decent pension.

Calling CUPE the "...moral compass of the province", Horwath concluded by saying "CUPE makes Ontario stronger, the NDP will continue to stand with you and work with you to build a stronger province."

## ***Sound finances help us invest more in activism: Genereux***

On the heels of the CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer's report outlining the Ontario Division's financial challenges, CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Brother Claude Genereux reminded delegates that CUPE National's finances were once in a state of crisis, in 2002, but through restructuring and discipline, taking care of the 'nuts and bolts', this was turned around and today CUPE's national finances are in great shape.

"Getting your financial house in order doesn't mean supporting less activism," said Brother Claude. "On the contrary, having restructured and achieved a sound financial position at the national level has allowed us to invest 18 million dollars in supporting our members in Ontario in 2009 alone, including \$1.5 million dollars for campaigns and political action in Ontario.

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