

CUPE Ontario's Election Campaign

Putting public service issues first

Almost daily, CUPE Ontario sent out news releases on issues important to CUPE members as our election campaign bus appeared in communities across the province. Our issues gained significant media attention in every town visited by the bus. Our focussed media conferences on health care and education as key election issues, as well as our very visible presence at the Vote Out Poverty rally on October 1, made a real difference—from what the leaders were saying, to media coverage of our candidates and our issues. Here is just a small sample of the newspaper coverage that CUPE Ontario received, in addition to significant radio and TV coverage in every city visited by our election bus.

CUPE bus rolls into town

(Peterborough Examiner- September 13, 2007) There's no real difference between the Tories and the Liberals, they're different sides of the same coin, the **Canadian Union of Public Employees** says. The Ontario branch of the union brought the message to Peterborough yesterday in a campaign bus covered with caricatures of Premier Dalton McGuinty and Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory that's travelling across the province during the provincial election campaign.

Peterborough riding NDP candidate Dave Nickle, Toronto federal NDP MP Olivia Chow and provincial NDP Leader Howard Hampton made stops at the bus in the Holiday Inn parking lot on George Street. "We believe that the NDP has it right on all of the issues - many of the issues that both the Tories and the Liberals have failed on," said Candace Rennick, the Ontario second vice-president for CUPE. "People in Ontario need a better government."

Rennick mentioned several similarities that CUPE sees between the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives. The Conservatives implemented three private-public partnership hospitals and the Liberals promised to get rid of those deals, Rennick said. Instead, the Liberals encouraged and implemented several more private-public partnership hospitals. Then there's the

minimum wage, Rennick said. The Conservatives froze the minimum wage when they were in power from 1995 to 2003, she said. The Liberals promised to bring it up to \$10 an hour but now say it won't reach that level until 2010 - even though they gave themselves a pay raise equal to what somebody on minimum wage would earn in an entire year.

CUPE will follow the provincial leaders with its campaign bus to take the message to people before they head to the polls Oct. 10. The union's members work in nursing homes, libraries and schools. They collect garbage and they're city workers. It has 230,000 members in the province. "CUPE is the community," Rennick said.

The bus was in Peterborough the same day Hampton promised to scrap much of the health tax implemented by the Liberal government. In addition, the NDP leader said a New Democrat government would make corporations and people making at least \$150,000 a year pay more tax.

New Democrats have always stood for fairness, Nickle said. "We need to go back to a progressive tax system where if you are making over \$150,000 a year, an extra two per cent in tax is not going to hurt you," he said. "We have banks that alone made in excess of \$18 billion last year. For them to have to pay an extra \$400 million, pardon me but I don't have an awful lot of sympathy. "The health tax was a

hugely regressive tax. It put an unfair burden on low- and middle-income Ontarians."

Peterborough riding Progressive Conservative candidate Bruce Fitzpatrick shot back at the CUPE attack. Their comparisons of the Conservatives and Liberals are focused on the past, Fitzpatrick said. "We're talking about now," he said. "Dalton McGuinty and John Tory are very different people with different styles. "They (voters) have to be looking at John Tory and Bruce Fitzpatrick because that's what's on the ballot right now."



- NDP Leader Howard Hampton steps out of the **Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)** bus painted with images of Premier Dalton McGuinty and Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory during a campaign stop at the Holiday Inn on George Street

A magnet for politicians and media

Byline: Roy Macgregor Dateline: PETERBOROUGH, ONT.

(The Globe And Mail - September 14, 2007) The face of the Ontario election is neither the leaders nor is it hidden in veils. It is, rather, this charming little city that brackets the banks of the Otonabee River and spreads far into the rolling countryside beyond. Very white and as much rural as urban, this Central Ontario riding does not fit the provincial demographic - yet fits almost perfectly into the ballot box...

On Wednesday, the **CUPE** bus parked by the downtown Holiday Inn to lend union support to Nickle's campaign. The bus is openly promoting the NDP but features only Premier McGuinty and PC Leader John Tory on the sides; Tory with his hands around Bay Street money, McGuinty with a beak that makes Pinocchio look like a snub nose. "Two sides of the same coin," reads the sign over them.

Staff shortages hurt elder care, union says

(The Windsor Star September 26, 2007)

Elderly residents of Ontario's long-term care homes are getting "assembly line care" because of staff shortages, according to the **Canadian Union of Public Employees** Ontario. On Tuesday, the union released a survey that shows 86 per cent of Ontario's long-term care workers have "worked short" (short-staffed) between one and 20 times per month. The union has accused the provincial governing Liberals of backing off from a promise to institute minimum care standards for the frail and elderly, saying that residents in these facilities need at least 3.5 hours of care per day, which matches the standard in Alberta. To reach these levels, the union says, staffing must be increased.

"Your working conditions are the living conditions of seniors," Fred Hahn, the union's secretary treasurer, told dozens of CUPE members gathered

around the union's election campaign bus in Dieppe Gardens. "We know that seniors deserve proper care."

The survey was released by the union as 250 members of CUPE Ontario's Health Care Workers Co-ordinating Committee met in Windsor for their annual conference.

Because of a funding shortfall and resulting lower staffing levels, long-term care residents are treated to "assembly line care," said Diane Cormier, a health care aide from St. Catharines. Staff come in early and leave late, skip breaks and barely have enough time to provide care such as bathing, she said. "They should increase staffing levels. Right now, it's assembly line care."

Sue Schmidt, the co-ordinating committee's chair, said injuries are on the increase and stress levels are high among overstretched workers. "The residents are older, frailer. They don't come in walking anymore," Schmidt said. "I don't believe any of the residents are getting poor care. But it can't go on any longer."

James Egan, administrator of Extendicare -- a long-term care facility in Tecumseh where Monday an ailing amputee resident staged a one-man demonstration to protest deteriorating care he blames on cuts to nursing hours -- said his site receives a provincial subsidy of \$2.5 million, and residents or their families pay another \$2.8 million. He has 140 employees.



Illustration:

• Colour Photo: Nick Brancaccio, Star photo / STRESSED WORKFORCE: CUPE members Pam Smith, left, Charlotte Drinkwater, Karen Thoburn and Maureen Smith emphasize a point during a rally to protest inadequate levels of staffing in Ontario nursing homes.

Egan agreed staff in these homes are often scrambling, and said his and other facilities would love to see a funding increase so they can increase staff levels. "There's no doubt of that," Egan said. "Staff in every home are run off

their feet, and every home desires to hire more staff." He said if someone calls in sick, other workers are asked to work overtime on that shift or the tasks such as bathing of residents are done by the next day. Often, a worker will be called in just to do bathing.

Long-term care facilities badly understaffed - union (North Bay Nugget (On) Wednesday, September 26, 2007)

Workers at long-term care facilities in Ontario are being "run off their feet" due to a staff shortage, according to their union.

CUPE Ontario says 86 per cent of the front-line workers in the facilities are short-handed up to 20 times a month.

CUPE Ontario secretary-treasurer Fred Hahn says the government promised to implement minimum staffing levels in long-term care facilities eight months ago, but this has not happened.

He says employers do not replace workers who are ill or on vacation.

Education assistant cutbacks assailed; Ontario needs 6,000 more to serve disabled, CUPE report says

(The Toronto Star- October 4, 2007)

Ontario schools have 6,000 fewer education assistants than they need to help the province's most needy children, the physically disabled, autistic and students with extreme behavioural problems, according to a report released yesterday by the **Canadian Union of Public Employees**.

Despite a \$20 million boost in August from Queen's Park to hike the salaries of education assistants, it would take \$189 million more for schools to hire the education assistants the funding formula is supposed to provide, said CUPE vice-president Fred Hahn at a news conference in Toronto yesterday. Only the New Democratic Party has pledged an immediate review of the school funding formula that is short-changing the province's most vulnerable children, he said.

The Liberals have promised a review by 2010 and the Progressive Conservatives, who designed the formula, have not set a date for an overhaul. "The government announced a whole bunch of money for education assistants this summer, which was welcome and it sounded really good, but in reality, it's a fraction of what we need to stem the layoffs of hundreds of education assistants," said Hahn.

A report prepared for CUPE by economist Hugh Mackenzie said Premier Dalton McGuinty pledged \$20 million in August to boost the salaries of the education assistants across the province who work with often severely disabled children, as well a kindergarten students in large inner-city classrooms. "While the funding formula suggests there should be nearly 28,000 education assistants in schools, there are barely 21,000," said Mackenzie, because the province gives school boards much less to pay the workers than the boards actually pay, so school boards make up the difference with layoffs.

CUPE estimates up to 300 educational assistants have been laid off or had their hours reduced in the past year. "The government claimed it was increasing salary benchmarks by 22 per cent, but it actually works out to only about 2.4 per cent more, which leaves school boards without the funding to actually hire the number they need," said McKenzie.

At Toronto's Beverly School for the disabled, education assistant Bonnie Dineen often is bitten or hit as she works to help students struggling with physical and behavioural challenges. "Many are non-verbal, and our jobs are so important to helping these little kids try to learn in very different ways." Because of funding cuts, Dineen only works half-time with a class that she used to assist each day. Said Nancy Arnott, education assistance at Toronto's Sunny View School: "I used to be able to work with (children) on math and academics full-time, but now many education assistants run from class to class helping unload children from buses and juggling academic and personal care."

CUPE likes NDP water stance

(Sudbury Star- October 2, 2007) A **Canadian Union of Public Employees** bus travelling across the province to shore up votes for the New Democrat Party made a stop outside a bottled water forum in Sudbury on Sunday. "We did a clear assessment of the political parties, what their records are and what they stand for," said Fred Hahn, secretary-treasurer of CUPE Ontario. "There is only one party that we can recommend to our members and that's the NDP."

Hahn was standing outside the bus, displaying pictures of Premier Dalton McGuinty with a Pinocchio nose and Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory holding a fist full of \$100 bills. The bus was at the water forum, cosponsored by CUPE. "If you look at the party platforms on water, it's crystal clear," Hahn said. "The Tories are only interested in letting business take whatever they can to make a profit off it. The Liberals are really no better. They have done very little around the regulation of taking public water and selling it." He said the NDP is the only party "that understands and recognizes that water is a human right."

Wyman MacKinnon, president of CUPE Local 4705, was a panellist at the water forum at Tom Davies Square. He said municipal infrastructures are aging and local governments are strapped for money. Water companies are working to convince the province to have more public-private partnerships for water delivery. "If the provincial government allows this trend to continue, we will see many services, from drinking water to waste management, to expensive infrastructure like sewers and water mains - that were built with taxpayers'

dollars - sold off to the lowest bidder," MacKinnon said.

NDP candidates Dave Battaino, for Sudbury Riding, and France Gelinis, for Nickel Belt, both attended the event. "In our 'Due North Plan,' we want to protect the natural resources in Northern Ontario. One of the natural resources is the water," Battaino said. "We believe in nothing but public ownership. We don't want to give businesses any leg room to take our water and turn it into a private industry."

Gelinis said the NDP sees protecting water as serving a public good. "It belongs to the people of Ontario. It should not belong to the few select who make money off of it," Gelinis said.

University workers bearing brunt of provincial under-funding; two more campuses may see strikes.

Guelph- October 5, 2007 – University workers are bearing the brunt of continued underfunding of post-secondary education by the Ontario government, which could lead to strikes at two more universities this month, according to the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario. It says that university issues have been largely ignored by Ontario's political leaders during the election, despite a strike last month by workers at Carlton University.

Workers at the University of Guelph have overwhelmingly voted in favour of strike action while strike ballots for Trent University workers are in the mail, says Fred Hahn, Secretary-Treasurer of CUPE Ontario, the province's largest union representing



University Workers contd...

20,000 university workers. "These and other university workers will not bear the brunt of successive policies by the Liberal and Conservative governments that have led to Ontario being ranked second-last in provincial funding for post-secondary education. Universities work because our members work."

Hahn says that the Tory government made deep funding cuts to post-secondary education, cuts which the McGuinty Liberals have failed to reverse. "The Liberals and Conservatives are two sides of the same coin, he says. "They have starved universities of funds, leading administrations to privatize services, contract out work, defer maintenance and short-change university workers when it comes to wages."

The University of Guelph is trying to force members of CUPE 1334 to accept claw-backs in their benefits, pensions, sick leave and wages. Meanwhile, members of CUPE 3908 part-time faculty at Trent University are rejecting substantially lower wages than those paid to counterparts doing the same work in the sector.

Hahn says that CUPE Ontario is pushing for a provincial government that will put people first and work to ensure that universities and other public services including schools, health care, social services and municipal services are adequately funded to meet the needs of Ontarians.

Union official promotes 'real option'

(North Bay Nugget- October 1, 2007)

The Liberals and Tories are two sides of the same coin, Fred Hahn, secretary and treasurer for **Canadian Union of Public Employees** of Ontario, said in a stop in North Bay Saturday.

"The Tories pave a disastrous path. They support private clinics and health care, they provide no money for cities and they were the party that froze the minimum wage," said Hahn, visiting Nipissing NDP candidate Henri Giroux's campaign office on Cassells Street.

Tory is for Bay Street. He's an advocate for the business people. They're the ones who make the most money in the province, not the residents in Nipissing," he said.

The Liberals are no better, Hahn said. "In the four years they've been in power they've done nothing," he said, adding the caricature of McGuinty on the bus being driven across the province shows him with a long nose. "Dalton can't be trusted. He's Pinocchio. His nose grows with every lie he tells."

In addition to criticizing the Tories and Grits, Hahn said the message he wants to bring to Nipissing is voters have a real choice Oct. 10. "We have a candidate who knows the issues and understands them," he said. "He works in long-term care where there are many concerns. He knows about the downloading of services and the problem with property taxes, but these are the issues not being discussed.



Illustration:

- Fred Hahn, secretary-treasurer for CUPE Ontario with the bus

"The Tories have done a brilliant job of putting all the attention on their faith-based school funding promises." Hahn said voters should be asking candidates about the faulty education funding formula and the job losses this community has endured - such as more than 30 at the Near North District School Board and 26 at the Nipissing Joint Hospital Laundry. "This riding goes back and forth from Liberal to Conservative, but there's a real option here," Hahn said.

Giroux isn't too concerned NDP Leader Howard Hampton hasn't visited the city, even though Conservative

candidate Bill Vrebosch greeted Tory Leader John Tory Friday and Liberal incumbent Monique Smith welcomed Health Minister George Smitherman Sunday. "It's not about the party's top leader, it's about the candidate," he said.

"Howard isn't going to come here to save jobs. That will be the responsibility of the Nipissing riding candidate. He has his own riding to take care of."

Politicians as far as eye could see

Brockville Recorder And Times
Wednesday, September 19, 2007
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Section: News

Byline: BY KIM LUNMAN, STAFF WRITER

Dateline: CROSBY

Politicians cropped up everywhere Tuesday at the opening of the International Plowing Match and Country Festival as leaders of the provincial parties courted the rural vote in the Ontario election campaign. Federal, provincial and civic politicians glad-handed visitors to the five-day festival, waved to spectators from parade floats and gave speeches at the opening ceremonies...

A bus on tour from the **Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)** was idling after it was banned from appearing in Tuesday's festivities. CUPE organizers said the bus - featuring caricatures of McGuinty and Tory with the slogan "Two sides of the same coin," was barred for being too political. Campaign buses for the provincial Tories, Liberals and NDP were parked in a field near the tented city.