

## **CUPE bus rolls into town**

Peterborough Examiner (ON)

Thu 13 Sep 2007

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Section: Front

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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."

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Illustration:

- 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.
- Bruce Fitzpatrick
- Dave Nickle