

**RISING
TOGETHER**

DAILY REPORT

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2013

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When it comes to Tim Hudak's attack on labour, he's gonna have a helluva fight on his hands, but labour won't play into the politics of division. Our battle is for the hearts and minds of Ontarians.

Sid Ryan
OFL President

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The OFL's 2013 convention was kicked off with an adrenaline pumping video documenting two years of labour activism against austerity and the attack on collective rights.

The extensive footage depicted an inspired and re-energized labour movement. However, the blasting soundtrack of the OFL's 2013 convention video did not overshadow its weighty content. Drawing from experts like author Linda McQuaig and testimonials from community activists, the video outlined the challenges facing workers and their families while also offering inspiration for how to overcome them.

The video can be viewed and shared online at ofl.ca/convention2013



**ONTARIO
FEDERATION OF
LABOUR**

**12TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 25-29, 2013
TORONTO, ONTARIO**



BROTHER RYAN CALLED FOR UNITY WITH THE COMMUNITY

Hundreds of delegates from across Ontario gathered to kick-off the 12th OFL Biennial Convention. This week, delegates will determine labour's response to the Conservative attack on workers' rights and adopt an action plan to forge a community alliance to improve the livelihoods of every Ontarian.

Delegates were welcomed with an Aboriginal opening by Sisters Wanda Whitebird and Joanne Webb and received greetings from Brother John Cartwright, President of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council. Brother Cartwright urged delegates to look beyond the headlines about Toronto's notorious Mayor Rob Ford to understand that the biggest scandal was the Mayor's vicious anti-worker agenda. Brother Cartwright spoke of the need to not only replace Toronto's Mayor, but to replace his allies at every level of government with politicians who will promote the interests of people over profit. He also urged delegates to adopt the campaign to raise the minimum wage as a top priority. His message to the convention hall was direct and powerful: "our work is not done until we can ensure that having a job lifts people out of poverty and doesn't drive them further into it."

However, the tone for the opening day of convention was set by OFL President Brother Sid Ryan. In a sobering but energizing address, Brother Ryan spoke not only of the successes achieved over the past two years, but of the real threats faced by the labour movement in Canada. Brother Ryan clearly

laid out a vision for fighting back against the dual attacks on social programs and workers' rights. It was a plan rooted in a community alliance that inspires people to work together and aim higher.

Ryan applauded education workers for their militant response to Bill 115 and the solidarity shown through the 30,000 people who responded to the OFL call to protest the Ontario Liberal Leadership Convention. With incredible support from the community, workers were able to force the government to repeal the draconian anti-worker legislation and, in doing so, they toppled a Premier.

Brother Ryan said that founding the Ontario Common Front must only be the beginning. The next step was to expand this community outreach to every corner of the province.

Brother Ryan finished his remarks with a challenge to delegates to reach beyond our membership and to forge community bonds:

"The conservative movement in Canada is built primarily on money, but the strength of the labour movement is people," he thundered to a standing ovation, "... and people power beats money any day of the week."



HUMAN RIGHTS TOPS MANDATE FOR OFL

Author and storyteller Itah Sadu gave life to the OFL's Human Rights Report in an animated spoken word performance that documented two years of labour activism on important equity and human rights issues. Her inspiring delivery laid out a mandate for equity activism that brought the crowd to its feet.

A new cord was struck at the 2013 OFL Convention with the integration of equity and human rights issues directly into the main content of the convention business. At previous conventions, equity issues were typically addressed at evening forums in front of delegates primarily made up of the equity groups affected. However, Monday's Human Rights Forum brought substantive debate on equity and human rights to the convention floor.

OFL Workers of Colour Vice-President Pablo Godoy called for organized labour to defend migrant workers because their exploitation undermines the rights of every worker. "We cannot let our government distinguish between human rights. If migrants are good to work here, they are good enough to live here," he declared.

RESOLUTIONS CORNER

The following resolutions were adopted by Convention:

27 ("Duty to Consult" with Aboriginal Communities); Emergency Resolution 3 (H.J. Heinz Company); 40 (Protection for dependent contractors and non-union workers); 2 (Campaign for Immigration Rather than Migrant Worker Exploitation); 156 (Substitute Resolution: 2014 World Pride); 23 (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance Support); 16 (Employment and Training for Youth of Colour); 28 (Sustainable Funding for the Aboriginal Community); 10 (Solidarity and Pride Educational Kit); 157 (Substitute Resolution: Employment Equity); 143 (Protecting Pensions); 142 (Support Bangladeshi Garment Workers)

FIRST NATIONS CHIEF CALLED OUT HARPER

Chief Stan Beardy brought greetings to delegates on behalf of the Assembly of First Nations and called for support in putting pressure on the Government of Canada to respect treaty rights.

Chief Beardy spoke about the many challenges currently facing First Nations communities, including the lack of access to clean drinking water, high rates of incarceration and an ongoing education crisis that has been created by a lack of resources.

Chief Beardy called out the Federal Government for its refusal to address the existing funding problems and their continuing failure to consult with Aboriginal peoples. He spoke about the strong alignment of interests between First Nations communities and labour

unions in the creation of new opportunities, but noted that employers and government are shamefully absent from these important discussions.

"The Federal Government spent more money last year fighting against First Nations rights than they did pursuing tax cheats," Chief Beardy told the delegates. "They've got their priorities dead wrong."

Chief Beardy called on delegates to support First Nations communities in their ongoing fight for the enforcement of their treaty rights.



DELEGATES TO RALLY FOR MINIMUM WAGE

An emergent theme at the OFL Convention is a commitment to elevating the livelihoods of every worker in Ontario. Delegates geared up to take their Wednesday rally to raise the minimum wage directly to the heart of Toronto's retail sector. A \$14 minimum wage would lift workers 10 percent above the poverty line.

