



PRESIDENT'S **ACTION UPDATE**

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

CANADA'S LARGEST LABOUR
FEDERATION ADVOCATING FOR
ONE MILLION WORKERS

SID RYAN - PRESIDENT

May 20, 2010

A BIG WELCOME TO CANADIAN AUTO WORKERS

The CAW announcement that it will join the OFL June 1 is great news for the Federation and the labour movement. It holds strong promise for our collective capacity to forge change. CAW President Ken Lewenza is a valued leader who has taken on his union's presidency at a difficult time and has met the challenges head on. The OFL will be enriched by his skillful leadership and the progressive voices of CAW members as they take their place on committees and in the daily work of the Federation. In his announcement, Lewenza notes "there is a noticeable change by the grassroots activist base who are sensing the real potential of having the labour movement revitalized in the interest of all workers and those with no power and no voice." We sense that too. Labour unity is a powerful catalyst and produces a resurgence of hope that real change is possible. We extend a very warm welcome to our CAW brothers and sisters.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

G20 Rally and March: 1 p.m., Sat., June 26, Queen's Park

I have been doing numerous media interviews with respect to the CLC-OFL rally highlighting demands for social and economic justice. G20 governments have marshalled trillions of dollars to save banks and the financial industry. The U.S. alone has transferred almost one trillion of the public's money to bail out Wall Street and reward some of the world's most corrupt financial institutions. In a scandalous, but much less publicized move, Harper made a similar gift of \$75 billion to Canada's chartered banks. Proportionally, that amount is equal to the U.S. allocation. The greed and recklessness of the financial sector has prompted a global response and remedy. The "Robin Hood" tax of .05% is a levy on banks and other financial institutions. It would raise money from the richest sector in

society and reduce the risk of another economic meltdown. Canada is actively lobbying to convince G20 countries to sink the idea. I'll also be focusing on our other core demands of women's rights, poverty, good jobs and global warming. I have raised the issue of Harper's refusal to include safe abortions in his so-called maternal health initiative to be presented at the G20 meetings and joined the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics at their "Die-In" last weekend to emphasize our opposition. June 26 is a golden opportunity to raise our crucial issues. The CLC and labour councils have so far confirmed more than 40 buses and 500 international media are already registered.



UFCW Canada launches new campaign in support of agricultural workers

UFCW Canada's pioneering efforts to protect and promote the rights of agricultural workers have been at the forefront of change for more than two decades. Its newest campaign uses education to empower migrant workers and move their fight into the mainstream. Launched last week at a celebration in Toronto, *Education Has No Borders* features national, regional and local education-based initiatives such as the nation-wide *Students Against*



Migrant Exploitation, the UFCW Canada Academic Support Network, a scholarship program and WebCampus demonstrations with special courses for and about migrant and immigrant workers.

May 17, 2010 INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

This week the OFL joined with lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-identified (LGBT)

people and their families to affirm their fundamental human right to live their lives "Out and Proud." As a labour movement, our efforts of the past 40 years have secured important legal rights for LGBT people, but legal rights too often do not translate into social equality. Both in Canada and internationally, we have serious work to do: In more than 80 countries, it is a crime to be gay or lesbian; in seven, homosexuality is punishable by death. We have pledged our strongest possible efforts to challenge discrimination and hate and to support true equality for all LGBT people. See the OFL statement at: www.ofl.ca.



PENSION CATASTROPHE IN THE MAKING

Government and Tory MPPs are supporting a Private Members' Bill hailing it as a solution to the pension crisis. Introduced by Liberal Member for Peterborough, Jeff Leal, it places insurance companies and the mutual fund industry at the centre of a scheme to bolster their profits at the expense of workers who desperately need pension security. The OFL and CLC raised the pension issue with Finance Minister Dwight Duncan and continue to call for meaningful public dialogue. Clearly, we must re-double our efforts to press the government to adopt the Canadian Labour Congress' proposals for an enhanced Canada Pension Plan (CPP) as the most effective

savings vehicle for retirement. Almost every working Canadian is already covered by it – and it is portable no matter where we work or how often we change jobs. To view labour's CPP proposals, go to www.canadianlabour.ca.

HARPER GOVERNMENT ATTACKS WOMEN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Pro-choice activists held a "Die-In" at Conservative cabinet minister Bev Oda's office in Bowmanville. The ugly reality of Harper's G20 maternal health initiative that bars access to safe abortion, means that 70,000 women will continue to die every year and that more than 19 million women will be forced to resort to unsafe abortions. In Canada, the government's alliance with the religious right should keep us on alert. We need a resurgence of a strong and powerful women's movement. The labour movement was instrumental in securing abortion and other equality rights for women. We urge all affiliates' women's committees to make this a priority item.



HEALTH & SAFETY: FALLS-RELATED HAZARDS A MAJOR PROBLEM

Labour Minister Peter Fonseca's media conference announcing the results of the 90-day inspection blitz of construction sites demonstrates the urgent need for much tougher measures. The OFL has called for the ministry to use the full authority of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* to impose significant fines and jail sentences against employers. More than half (56%) of the 3,421 orders issued during the campaign were for violations relating to missing or improper use or maintenance of guardrails, non-suspended scaffolds and fall protection systems; 784 Stop Work Orders were issued.



On April 28th, thousands of workers gathered across Ontario calling for vigorous use of Westray Bill C-45. We must also demand full penalties under the OHSA to prevent injuries and deaths.

Ontario Federation of Labour

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