

Unifor Ontario Council Dec 4-5, 2015

Maurice Kenny, 1st Vice President

In our growing Unifor family we have unionized members working at the **Food Basics** at 227 Vodden Street, Brampton and **Metro** at 180 Sandalwood Parkway, Brampton of which we can support.

It's not too late. We can still www.KeepHydroPublic.ca Please sign the on-line petition. 190 plus town/city councils have passed motions against the Provincial government's decision. Privatization, unless it's stopped, will lead to more public assets sold off and the private companies increasing their influence on public life.

Council members received an update on our **Unifor Social Justice Fund**. "The Social Justice Fund is an expression of Unifor's philosophy of Social Unionism working to improve conditions for other workers, their families and communities, as we would our own." For 25 years the SJF has been a registered charity. Up to 20% of SJF money is used to support projects in Canada like support for youth, homeless people, refugees, food banks and women's shelters. Since 1990 the SJF has supported over 1,100 projects around the world. For example, medical & rehabilitation support for the Rana Plaza clothing factory collapse survivors in Bangladesh; assisting the Petroleum union workers in Colombia and disaster relief in the earth quakes in Nepal and Haiti and the rebuilding of their communities.

One of many topics discussed in the Health Safety & Environment committee had to do with employers introducing "Behavior Based Safety" into the workplace. Employers hide it in pizza days, raffles and even call it peer observations. It becomes a way for employers to blame the workers while taking no responsibility for improving health and safety in the workplace.

The Trans Pacific Partnership agreement has no benefits for working Canadians. In the Auto provisions it will "facilitate more imports from Japan, as Canada's 6.1% tariff is quickly eliminated over just 5 years, yet other countries like the USA have a 20-year phase out and Vietnam 12 years." The vehicle content rule is reduced from 62.5% to 45% and the parts content is reduced from 60% to as low as 35%. The North American auto supply chain will move on this financial incentive to import the parts and cars rather than produce in Canada. Unifor believes 20,000 auto jobs will be eliminated in Canada. Oakville Mayor Rob Burton, who founded the auto mayor council, stated, "the Conservatives had no business on the ice, because they could not skate as negotiators." "The TPP does nothing for Canadians except the 1% and I hope the hell it dies." Mayor Burton believes "manufacturing is key, we need to be an industrial power not a boom or bust resource extracting economy."

For decades elected city councils expected police to charge anyone operating what was called "bandit cabs." Mayors wanted a licenced standard for taxi service that involved public safety & public customer service. UBER the ride-sharing technology is a very topical subject and yet it confounds me how democratic governments lose their ability to remain relevant on this topic. Is it realistic to have both licenced and unlicensed taxi service? I think not, either you have an enforceable standard or walk away and tell Joe public, 'you're on your own'. I'm not convinced a 50 billion dollar American company that sucks the money out of hard working Canadians and destabilizes standards and shifts even more private insurance load cost onto truthful and honest drivers is anything but fair. Former Conservative Leader, Tim Hudak, is championing the UBER way with private members legislation. Go figure!

During, Ontario Council 450 retirees from the auto industry showed up in a solidarity rally to remind delegates that they are the “heart & soul of our union.” Pension cost of living allowance PCOLA started at Chrysler in 1987 and was based on the consumer price index. There are between 70 and 80 thousand retirees who used to receive PCOLA. This, among many auto bargaining issues, is very challenging when you consider most industries never had PCOLA. Currently in auto, new hires pensions have been degraded and active workers go without wage increases and job security is threatened. Pursuing some type of ad hoc pension adjustment for our longest serving retirees is the likely focus for our National Union.

Ontario Minister of Labour, Kevin Flynn addressed Council, and before he spoke National President Jerry Dias stated that if the federal Liberals were reinstating automatic certification card check off back at 50% plus One, then why not here in Ontario? Kevin agreed that Labour reform is long overdue and not relevant enough in the type of labour force that exists today. Unifor has made 43 recommendations that confront the era of precarious, low paying part time jobs. For example, stricter rules on shift schedules, making employers responsible for temp agencies, proactive rather than complaint-driven enforcement of employment standards, electronic union cards and votes in neutral locations, enhanced successor rights and minimum industry standards. To read the full report, go to;

www.Unifor.org/Workplacechanges.

On a final note **Jerry Dias** reminded delegates “that Harpers’ Conservatives despised Unifor because we exposed them for what they were doing to workers.” “During the federal election it felt like it was Labour’s last stand and now we need to make this our comeback”

On Nov 23 & 24 I had the privilege of attending the Ontario Federation of Labour Executive vote as a National Unifor **OFL delegate**. A “Federation Forward” slate comprised of our very own Unifor Chris Buckley for OFL President; Ahmad Gaied from United Food & Commercial Workers for OFL Vice President and Patty Coates from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation for OFL Secretary-Treasurer. They now have a 3-year mandate to make Labour progress for union and non-union working Ontarians.

In Solidarity Ontario Regional Council Delegate

Maurice Kenny