

Ontario Council Dec 2 & 3, 2016.

Dec 18/2016

National Unifor President Jerry Dias addressed Council with his opening remarks; "At the end of a year it's time to reflect are we meeting our political & social objectives?" "We are proud of Unifors role as a third party battling the Conservatives and our ongoing support for the Truth and Reconciliation commission on Aboriginals and Syrian Refugee support."

Jerry commented on the recent female Conservative MLA that joined with the NDP Alberta government when she was harassed while trying to run in the Conservative leadership race.

Jerry declared the \$1.5 billion in negotiated investment in Detroit Three Ontario Assembly plants as critical in securing the auto footprint. "Despite the difficult competitive conditions we succeeded in monetary gains that have not been seen in almost a decade."

In the newspaper industry, our members are facing real challenges with widespread restructuring and job losses. Post Media's, 77 years old CEO Paul Godfrey secured his \$900,000 bonus from the \$2.3 million set aside for the five executives during this recent layoff announcements. Jerry Dias personally called him out on his greed, or lack of sharing skills.

Presently everyone has something to say on Donald Trump. Jerry commented that Republican Mitt Romney had more votes than Trump in 2012 and Hillary Clinton lost the election with million plus more votes. "There is no denying people voted for Trump because they've had it with a system that does nothing for working class citizens." Donald Trump will continue to be anti-union without repercussion as the Democrats abandoned working people with their trade deals years ago. Trump wanted the presidency and he connected with enough Americans when he trashed new and old trade deals in a way that former third party candidate Ross Pero couldn't. "If NAFTA is passed you will hear one big sucking sound of job loss at the Texas border," claimed Pero. Jerry noted how poorly the TPP was negotiated by Harper and the Conservatives in comparison to more favourable terms for the Americans. Jerry stated he should employ UNIFOR staff to negotiate on behalf of Canada as we at least understand what is in the interest of Canadians.

Jerry stated, 2017 is show time for Justin Trudeau and the Federal Liberals. **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau** campaigned that his electoral reform would result in the first past the post voting system replaced. This rigged system that shifts voters true intentions over to one majority party rule must end if we are ever to have real democracy in Canada. Unifor intends to hold the Liberals accountable on all their

election promises. The vast majority of countries with the highest standard of living have a system of proportional representation.

At Ontario council there was a “Peace by Chocolate” presentation by **Syrian Refugee, Tareq Hadhad** who settled in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Before they lost everything their family ran a very successful chocolate factory in Damascus that exported even to Germany. They have restarted this business in Canada in a small way. Their business motto is “Our home is freedom and our dream is peace by chocolates.” Their first year of profits was donated to the Fort McMurray Red Cross relief. Tareq stated to council, “we may be coming to one of the coldest countries on earth but we are being welcomed by people with the warmest hearts.”

www.peacebychocolate.ca

The organizing department one year update included 16,000 new members (9,800 from Ontario) of which 70% were female.

All three Ontario Council resolutions and six recommendations were passed by delegates. Topics discussed and voted on include the following: **Armoured Car safety** and **School Bus Unifor Campaign**. In both cases the industry is flipping contracts, lowering standards as they race to the bottom on wages and safety. Companies can save money by removing the armoured car driver forcing security to enter and leave buildings with no designated driver watching out for their safety. This Fall Ontario had a mass shortage of school bus drivers. The wages for part time seasonal work is kept low under the bidding system, which also results in chronic employee turnover. Other topics included **Accessibility Legislation, Paid leave for Victims of Domestic Violence, Employment Insurance/EFAP & Addictions/Workers Compensation and Pension Plan Committees, Cap and Trade and Psychological Wellness**. The **Make it Fair Campaign** garnered some media attention on Dec 3 with a ‘Holiday Caroling Action’ at Toronto’s Dundas Square. In addition to the fight for \$15 minimum wage, the goal is to educate government and public on the consequences of an unfair labour market on Canadians. “Part-time, temporary and contract work is becoming the new normal in today’s job market. Too often, it means precarious employment, short-changed hours, wage theft and exploitive temp agencies.” “Far too many workers face barriers to joining a union and are threatened with job loss every time a contract is flipped.” www.MakeItFair.ca

www.WeOwnIt.ca does a great job in explaining the disadvantages of giving up public ownership when replaced by, for profit private service. For example, our highways are less safe during the winter since privatization because it takes more than double the time to clear after a storm. P3 private hospitals provide less beds at a much higher cost. Privatizing Hydro will generate more provincial Liberal donations and higher electricity rates for you. Remarkably Hamilton Ontario residents rallied and pushed the city to take back ownership of water treatment services. Hamilton

had suffered its worst sewage spill under the management of a private company that left the public to pay the clean-up costs.

Ontario Council had the pleasure of witnessing Victoria Maxwell act out a portion of her real life to illustrate her bipolar, anxiety and psychosis disorders.

www.victoriamaxwell.com Victoria has been using her writing & acting skills to become a leading educator on mental illness. “Bipolar affective disorder is mental illness under the sub-category of mood disorders. Its neurological brain disorder, characterized by alternating periods of extreme depression and mania, with normal mood intervals occurring in between.” Even if you know this, its Victoria’s insider perspective dramatized for you that bring a better understanding of the condition. In 2013 Canada became the first country in the world to establish a national standard for Psychological Health & Safety in the workplace.

In Solidarity Maurice Kenny