

News from the Society of Energy Professionals

New nuclear on the way for Darlington



National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine (l) and CLC President Ken Georgetti. (See article, p. 9)

The first new nuclear construction since Darlington's first four units were completed will take place on the Darlington site.

Energy Minister Gerry Phillips announced in the legislature building yesterday that two new units would be built at Darlington, and OPG will run them. He also said that Bruce Power continues to be in his playbook. "We, in conjunction with Bruce, have to make a decision on whether Bruce B is refurbished or a new unit is built there."

He stated that the government supports Bruce Power continuing to run the 6300MW capacity of the site (when the two non-operational units at Bruce A are included).

Rumours that the decision would go this way had been circulating for weeks, so Society President **Rod Sheppard** said it was no surprise. "Ontario's going to need a lot of clean, baseload power in the next two decades," he said. "New nuclear at both Darlington and Bruce is inevitable, so the Energy Minister needs to plan for both."

The Minister noted that one factor in the decision had been what is perceived to be a transmission bottleneck between the Bruce area and southern Ontario. "The transmission capability is just not there, so as we analyzed it, (it was) a relatively clear cut decision for Darlington," he said.

While Sheppard noted that the transmission concern shouldn't rule out new build at Bruce, he said the planned new line would open a lot of options.

"We'd recommend the Energy Minister pull out all the stops to get more transmission built between the Bruce site and where the electricity is needed," Sheppard said. "The transmission bottleneck is a long-standing concern—it's not just holding up nuclear power, it's holding up a whole raft of green power projects."

The Ontario Power Authority's Integrated Power System Plan (IPSP) calls for more than 14,000 MW of nuclear power to be running in 2025. The Society says that estimate may well turn out to be low—much of the natural gas-fired generation called for in the IPSP may not materialize, and what does will be very, very expensive.

The new units at Darlington will have a total generating capacity of between 2,000 and 3,500 megawatts.

Three firms are bidding to design the power plants: Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., which makes the existing CANDU reactors; U.S.-based Westinghouse Electric; and Areva of France, the world's largest nuclear reactor company.

Board Highlights, May 6 and June 3, 2008

The Executive Board met on Tuesdays, May 6th and June 3rd, in regular meetings. The following items were discussed, and decisions made.

Recognition: the following were recognized for significant contributions to the Society:

- ◆ The 14 Society members who gave of their time on the May 3rd and 4th weekend to attend a Basic Society Representative training session
- ◆ All Society members who spoke on behalf of the Society during Workers' Day of Mourning activities (see *Newscast* 2008:01)
- ◆ All Board members were recognized for their decorum at Board meetings and their treatment of each other with respect

Financial: The Board approved an increase to the amount previously estimated for the arbitration of a termination grievance. The Board authorized the expenses involved for up to five individuals, including the President and two staff, to observe and staff a booth at the Ontario Liberal Party's Annual General Meeting on June 13th to 15th. The Board approved an increase to the amount previously authorized for new accounting software, to add functionalities involving purchase requisition and expenses administration and documentation.

The following financial decisions were reported to the Board.

- ◆ a Society staff officer will attend an intensive strategic research course at Cornell University

- ◆ additional funds were allotted to the Society's intervention in the Hydro One partial pension wind-up case (see *Newscast* 2008:01)

IPSP Hearings: The Board approved funding for Society participation in upcoming hearings at the Ontario Energy Board into the Integrated Power System Plan (IPSP). The IPSP sets out the plan for procurement, generation, transmission, and conservation and demand management over the next 20 years.

A number of issues before the Energy Board are of great interest to the Society, including:

- ◆ a supply mix that calls for nuclear refurbishment and/or new-build
- ◆ a supply mix that leaves open the possibility of co-firing bio-mass and/or biogas at the coal-plants
- ◆ a renewables plan that calls for a new form of transmission asset, and the real potential for "merchant" transmission
- ◆ significant planned natural-gas fired generation capacity

The Society has intervenor status at the hearings, and has applied to the OEB for assistance with the costs of intervening. (Subsequently, the Society was informed that funding **will** be forthcoming.)

Standing Finance Committee: The Board approved a proposed terms of reference for the Standing Finance Committee (SFC). The SFC was created in conformity with the Audit Action Plan approved by Society Council in April, 2007. The SFC's mandate includes the following duties:

- ◆ Provide advice and support to EVP - Finance
- ◆ Provide advice in preparation of annual Budget
- ◆ Review financial statements
- ◆ Provide advice with respect to major financial decisions, policies and processes
- ◆ Provide experience for EVP - Finance alternates and successors

Office Space: The Board gave the Standing Finance Committee the mandate to explore the Society's future needs



Led by CLC Vice-Presidents Barbara Byers and Marie Clarke Walker, more than one thousand delegates to the CLC Convention marched through downtown Toronto, calling attention to the growing wage gap between Canadian men and women.

for office space. The Society operates in 10,000 square feet of space currently, and the lease on the current space expires in 2012. The SFC will explore all possibilities, including leasing, buying, and building new facilities, for financial appropriateness, with completion and moving (if necessary) dates in 2012.

Trustees: The Executive Board will recommend to Society Council that the Society change the way it appoints officers to bodies that act as trustees for certain Society assets—for example, the numbered Ontario corporations that deal with Bruce Power equity funds. Currently the Society names individuals—certain Principal Officers—

to those bodies. If this recommendation is accepted, all Principal Officers will become officials of the Trustees by virtue of their duties under the Bylaws. A referendum of the membership will not be required.

Staffing: Two labour relations officer positions are open in the Society's staff complement. The hiring process is underway, and the Board appointed OPG unit director **Joseph Fierro** to assist Staff Manager **Dan Kellar** and Executive Committee appointee **Keith Rattai** on the hiring committee.

Staffing Committee: The Board struck a staffing committee, the object of which is to formulate recommenda-

tions for the Board on strategic staffing needs, so that the highest quality of service can continue to be provided. The terms of reference foresee the Committee submitting a final report to the Board in January, 2009.

Referendum: A process is underway to deal with a referendum on constitutional changes that failed to achieve quorum earlier this year (see *Newsblast* 2007.06).

Where a referendum fails to achieve quorum, the Society Constitution requires Society Council to decide the question.

EVP - Member Services **Dennis Minello** reported that he will conduct a vote via e-mail with Society Council representatives, to test the notion of conducting a vote to ratify the Constitutional changes in question via a mail-in ballot. If they approve, then such a vote will be conducted. If not, the question will have to be decided at the Society Council meeting to be held this November.

External Relations: Among other activities (largely reported elsewhere), Society President **Rod Sheppard** and Staff Officer **Matthew Kellway** met with Infrastructure Ontario to discuss the implications of the government's request for proposals for nuclear new-build.

Sheppard and other Society officials have also met with Hydro One to discuss cooperation on regulatory matters involving transmission.

More than one dozen Society officials attended the recent Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress (see articles, below). At the Congress, the Society, along with colleagues from the other IFPTE locals, represented the IFPTE in Canada. IFPTE Canada organizer Bill Fitzpatrick assisted the IFPTE delegation to prepare.

Nuclear Conference, Europe: Platts is sponsoring a conference in London, U.K. in late June on "European nuclear power: Ambitions and realities." The conference will address the full range of nuclear issues that the Society is wrestling with in Ontario, for example, the economics of nuclear power, financing of nuclear power, lessons learned from engineering and construction experience, ensuring

a skilled workforce, domestic content and supply chain, environmental impacts, and managing public opinion.

The Board approved funding for three representatives to attend and participate.

Minutes: Board member **Rob Stanley** presented a proposal for streamlining the format of the minutes of Board meetings, and improving the processes involved in producing, approving, and filing them. His proposal was approved by the Board.

Board Training: Board members will begin to undergo a training course for their positions at the July meeting. Better Board training was integral to the recommendations of the Audit Action Plan approved by Society Council in April, 2007.

OPG, government working together on biomass

The Government of Ontario is "working with" Ontario Power Generation in its effort to reduce the greenhouse gases produced by its coal-fired generators, says Hon. Donna Cansfield, Minister of Natural Resources.

"My ministry is working with the Ministry of Energy and Ontario Power Generation to determine if we can use wood pellets in existing coal-burning plants," she said. "It's an innovative approach, and could help us transition from coal-fired generation to renewable energy while meeting our forest management objectives."

"There's a great deal of interest from the forest industry and other industry sectors in using forest resources as a renewable, alternative feedstock for bioproducts," she added, "[due to] global competition and a higher Canadian dollar."

The Minister was speaking at a conference on "Biomass and Energy for the Great Lakes Economy" at Queen's University on Sunday, June 8th. The conference featured speakers from industry and academia on subjects such as

agriculture and forest biomass; bio-energy systems; and research, policy, and the market.

"I was very glad to hear Minister Cansfield talk about OPG as a partner in improving Ontario air quality," said Society President **Rod Sheppard**. "Since the Ontario Liberal Party came into government, we've argued that they should take advantage of OPG's skills and size in progress toward more renewable energy sources."

Biomass is defined as renewable or sustainable materials of forest, agricultural (plant or animal), or marine origins. It's considered to be carbon-neutral, as the amount of carbon released when burned is equal to the amount removed from the atmosphere while growing.

Jim Twomey, OPG's Executive Vice President – Fossil spoke to conference participants about OPG's testing program and how well the biomass initiative meshes with certain provincial ones, such as the St. Lawrence Forest Initiative. Under that scenario, Ontario's beleaguered forest industry will be re-tooled to the production of alternative products such as the wood pellets that could be used as fuel for biomass burners.

"We're excited about these opportunities," he said. "Following the testing if we have something really exciting then we'll go to government and say we have a realistic biomass option and see where we go from there."

Burning biomass, he noted, is significantly more expensive than burning coal. Current OPA-approved biomass generators are paid significantly more for their electricity than OPG is.

OPG had announced the previous week that it's been testing the burning of such materials as wood pellets, grain screenings, and milling spoils in all four OPG coal-fired generating stations. A storage system has been installed at Nanticoke that allows a 10 per cent (50 MW) energy input on one of its units. Phase 2 will involve incorporating the use of the storage system to achieve longer burns.

OPG does not use food crops in its biomass program. (There has been controversy worldwide in the last few



Dennis Minello

months over the diversion of food crops to ethanol and other fuel programs.)

In May, the Government announced it would require OPG to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by two-thirds by 2011.

"OPG's biomass program shows they could be a major player in developing greener forms of electricity generation," said Sheppard.

Minello appointed EVP - Member Services

Pickering senior nuclear engineer Dennis Minello will serve as Executive Vice President - Member Services until 2010.

Minello, who has served as Acting EVP - Member Services since January, was the only candidate for the position.

The EVP position in question came open permanently when **Rod Sheppard**, the previous EVP, was elected President in April (see *NewsFLASH* 2008:01).

The Society Bylaws set out that the Executive Board must appoint someone to serve out the term of a Principal Officer who resigns.

Pensioners' Chapter membership quintuples, gets new Executives

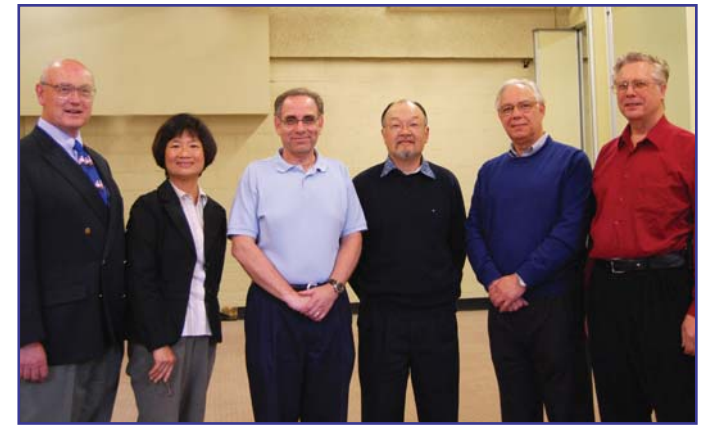
The Pensioners' Chapter's third year was a year of growth and reaching out to other pensioners' groups.

The Chapter met in its fourth Annual General Meeting on May 8th, in St. John's York Mills Anglican Church in Toronto.

There was much good news to report. The membership drive overseen by Chapter Vice President **Dave Jefford** had brought in more than 400 new members. President



Past meets present: Society President Rod Sheppard greets former (1978-79) Society President Len Berk at the Pensioners Chapter AGM



Pensioners Chapter Executive: (l to r) Phil Armstrong, Beverly Wong, David Mintz, Danny Quan, Mark Ammar, and David Jefford

David Mintz noted the Chapter has joined the Canadian Federation of Pensioners, and is now working with them and such other groups as the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) on the proceedings of Ontario's Special Commission on Pensions, and on upcoming changes to pensions legislation.

Mintz commended the work of **Bev Wong**, Chapter Treasurer, for the work she's done over the last year putting the Chapter's books in order, and Secretary **Danny Quan** for his work on improving communications (issuing bi-monthly Updates), establishment of a governance manual, and preparing amendments to the Chapter By-Laws.

The Chapter created two new "at-large" director positions. **Phil Armstrong** and **Mark Ammar** (both retired from OPG) were elected to fill them.

Society President **Rod Sheppard** was in attendance, and gave the Chapter an overview of the activities of the Society since the 2007 Chapter AGM.

Mintz, who also serves (with no vote) on the Society's Executive Board, reported that he had successfully pursued a Society policy that pensioners' complaints against their

cell-phone photo: Matthew Kellway



On June 4th, a group of Society women met to discuss forming a women's caucus. Seated are (l to r) Vertex Local VP Tracy Miller and Staff Officer Lynda Crichton. Standing: New Horizon UD Kathleen Wilcox, Staff Officer Cheri Funston, Bruce Power UD Shirley Hayes, Laura Langmaid, Inergi delegate Diane Mowat, Toronto Hydro Local VP Geetha Daniell, and Inergi Local VP Elaina De Luca.

respective former employers will be treated the same as those from active members.

He said the Society has grappled with great difficulties over the past year, but is now moving forward and addressing key issues. The Chapter Executive is looking forward to working with EVP - Member Services **Dennis Minello** toward a "better relationship," one where the Chapter is "fully integrated into the Society."

Women's Caucus initial meeting

by Tracy Miller

An initial meeting of the Women's Caucus was held at the Society Office on Wednesday, June 4th.

The idea to resurrect the Women's Caucus was that of our Executive VP of Policy, **Leslie Forge**. A note was sent

to actively engaged females within our organization to gather and discuss the idea of populating a Women's Caucus. We discussed the need/desire to have such a committee within our Union and the desired outcomes, impacts, and/or opportunities of populating this Caucus.

We quickly agreed on the purpose of our Caucus to get us started: Advancing Women's Issues in the Workplace, in the Union and in society. More information about the Women's Caucus will be coming to you shortly, including how members can participate.

Feds stealing EI contributions, unions say

Canadian unions are at the Supreme Court of Canada, trying to force the federal government to pay back billions of dollars in Employment Insurance (EI) contributions.

"It's the biggest theft in Canadian history," said federal NDP leader Jack Layton at the convention of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in late May.

The unions argued in court that the Employment Act fund was being siphoned into general revenue and used to pay for things such as debt reduction. As such, they say, it amounts to an unconstitutional indirect tax. The CLC was joined by Quebec unions Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) and Syndicat national des employés de l'aluminium (SNEA).

A combination of contribution raises and stringent strait-jackets placed since 1996 on eligibility for the collecting of benefits has resulted in an EI fund that's ballooned to \$56 billion (from a deficit of more than \$3 billion in 1994). Auditor General Sheila Fraser largely agrees with the unions, having repeatedly slammed the feds over their handling of EI since 1999. She says the surplus size is more than triple what's needed for EI, and that the government is not adhering to the intent of the EI program, the sole purpose of which is as insurance against unemployment for Canadian workers, not as a debt-reduction scam.

photo: Kevin Fung



On June 5th, the Society attended the Ontario Liberal Party's Trillium Heritage Dinner. Pictured are (from left) Hon. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East-Cooksville), Minister of Tourism; EVP Dennis Minello; Inergi UD André Ramsaroop; Premier McGuinty; EVP Bill Jones; Hydro One UD Michelle Byck-Johnston; Hydro One UD John Cameron; and Hon. Margaret Best (Scarborough-Guildwood), Minister of Health Promotion.

"That's money that comes from workers and employers for unemployment insurance. It's not an extra tax, it's not to be spent on other things," said Canadian Labour Congress Vice President Barb Byers.

In the Budget Implementation Bill currently being debated by Parliament, the feds plan to set up an Employment Insurance Financing Board as a Crown Corporation to administer EI. While viewed by many as a positive step—it would take the setting of EI premiums out of the hands of Cabinet, and away from the government's general revenues—the Bill sets out that only \$2 billion of the surplus will be transferred to the new Financing Board. It also stipulates that no future federal government will ever be required to return the money.

Michel Bedard, chief actuary for the federal employment insurance fund through much of the 1990s, says the \$2 billion "cushion" isn't enough, and that the rules being set up would force the Financing Board to raise premiums during a downturn. (In fact, the "cushion" would appear to be a mirage—the rules require the Board to replenish

it every year it's used.) Bedard believes the Board would need more than a \$10 billion cushion.

The CSN lost their case in the Quebec Court of Appeal, which ruled that EI premiums were within the federal government's powers of taxation. The attorneys general of Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, and Quebec have intervened in the case at the Supreme Court, supporting the CSN.

CLC: Here come three more years of action

The Canadian Labour Congress will act on a number of fronts to improve the lot of working people over the next three years.

"Canada has lost a stunning 450,000 manufacturing and resource sector jobs in the past five years, and 132,000 workers lost their livelihoods in 2007 alone!" said CLC President Ken Georgetti. "But the Stephen Harper government has ignored this economic disaster and the effect it has had on the personal lives of so many workers."

The Congress's affiliate unions, he said, will act where the federal government won't, including on the necessary chore of increasing the number of union members in Canada. Why? "Because unionization works!"

Georgetti spoke on Monday, May 26th to more than 1,700 union delegates from across Canada. They represented the more than three million Canadian members of trade unions at the CLC's 25th Constitutional Convention. Convention takes place only once every three years.

Georgetti noted a number of improvements that had been made over the previous three years in which union members can be proud to have participated:

- ◆ The federal government has just set up a Wage Earner Protection Program, to protect workers against the up to \$50 million per year they lose

when their employers go bankrupt (see accompanying article)

- ◆ The fight against the B.C. Government's ripping up collective agreements to privatize health care in that province resulted in a landmark Supreme Court ruling entrenching union membership as a Charter-guaranteed right
- ◆ federal ergonomics regulations have been dramatically improved
- ◆ Regulations against violence and harassment in workplaces have been improved to the point where Canadian efforts to combat them are the best in North America
- ◆ Union members helped elect labour-friendly politicians at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels all over Canada

The CLC came within a hair's breadth of achieving federal anti-scab legislation, an act of Parliament that only failed under a withering business campaign to "intimidate MPs," inducing many to change their votes at the last minute, he said.

Delegates approved on Friday, May 30th an action plan to address the challenges of the next three years. It called on the CLC Executive Council to "develop a detailed Action Plan" ... that will mobilize the affiliates, federations, and labour councils to lead a broad, diverse, and inclusive movement for social change." It addresses the following four areas:

- ◆ **Building and renewing the labour movement:** reducing raiding; dealing with "phony unions;" developing more modern, inclusive organizing strategies; and improving labour laws
- ◆ **Women's economic equality:** increasing minimum wages; gaining improvements to Employment Insurance (see, for example, "Feds stealing EI contributions," above); fight cuts to women's organizations and advocacy groups, etc.
- ◆ **Defending and expanding quality public services:** fighting privatization, deregulation, and public-private partnerships in all their forms; fighting for

pharmacare; opposing the deregulation of Canada Post

- ◆ **Decent jobs, strong, sustainable economy:** mobilize to save manufacturing and forestry jobs; further the development of a strong, democratic, and independent Canadian economy; demand the abrogation of NAFTA, and oppose other such "free trade" agreements; fight for expansion and strict enforcement of health and safety legislation

Congress delegates also called on the federal government to "take immediate steps to end the military occupation of Afghanistan and bring Canadian troops home." In his speech to Congress, Georgetti mourned the most recent Canadian military casualty, paramedic and CUPE member Corporal Michael Starker, of Calgary. "We recognize his sacrifice and that of all soldiers who have been killed or injured serving our country, as we remember that soldiers are workers too."

Even before passing their action plan, CLC delegates began to put it into effect, marching en masse through Toronto's financial district (see photo, p. 3), expressing solidarity with the women of Canada, who still earn 30 per cent, on average, less than men. Recent Statistics Canada analyses have shown that wage gap is, perhaps surprisingly actually increasing.

Many convention documents and policy papers are available on the CLC web-site.

Labour in solidarity with First Nations: CLC

Delegates at the CLC Convention endorsed and expressed solidarity with the Assembly of First Nations Day of Action.

"I want to, once again, express on behalf of First Nations in every part of the country," said National Chief Phil Fontaine, "our deepest appreciation for your support, your understanding, and your commitment to bring about real transformative change that will benefit all Canadians."

Mr. Fontaine spoke to the 1,700 CLC delegates on Tuesday, May 27th, two days before the AFN's day of action. He received a standing ovation, and delegates unanimously approved the CLC's statement of support and the AFN's seven-point action plan (available on the AFN web-site).

First Nations people struggle daily with poverty, exploitation, racism, and disrespect. Last year the CLC joined with the Assembly of First Nations in their call for the Canadian government to seriously address historic wrongs and bring an end to poverty for First Nations. Tragically, little has happened.

"Here's what justice looks like," the statement continued:

- ◆ "We call on governments for fairness in funding for First Nations children
- ◆ We call on governments to end the shameful conditions of overcrowding, unsafe housing, crumbling infrastructure, and lack of access to safe, clean, drinking water
- ◆ We call on the federal government to show respect for First Nations by implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"

(Sadly—outrageously, say many—Canada was one of four United Nations members that refused to sign on to the Declaration. The others were Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.)

The CLC called on its three million members to participate with the AFN "in peaceful events across the country."

Later, in a media release, Mr. Fontaine said he was "encouraged and energized by the thousands of Canadians that marched and rallied at National Day of Action events across the country and the millions more who endorsed the AFN's 7-Point Plan for change.

Federal changes protect workers' wages

Canadian workers no longer have to wait at the end of the line when their employers go belly up.

The Wage Earner Protection Program (WEPP) received Royal Assent on December 17th, 2007. The WEPP will ensure payment to certain employees of bankrupt companies of their unpaid wages and vacation pay, up to \$3,000.

At the Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress in May, CLC President Ken Georgetti was exultant over the new program, calling it a victory for the Congress's three-year campaign to get it.

Today – for the first time ever – we have protection for every worker in Canada whose company goes bankrupt! Because from now on, each year about 20,000 workers will benefit from this new protection and that up to \$50 million will go to workers to cover their unpaid wages and benefits, instead of going into creditors' pockets. Never again – thanks to this law – never again will a judge or a bankruptcy trustee be able to override a collective agreement. Sisters and Brothers this is your victory, for all workers in Canada.

Industry Canada estimates that "97 percent of unpaid wage claims would be fully paid under the WEPP."

In addition, workers' pension contributions now have "super-priority status" in bankruptcy proceedings, and collective agreements cannot be changed or cancelled through the Courts without the consent of the union involved.

Before these changes, workers involved in bankruptcy proceedings were lost among the phalanxes of lawyers and bankers ahead of them in line. They would usually find retrieving their unpaid wages a hopeless cause.

Fight the “growing gap”: economists at the CLC

Income inequality is growing in Canada, and governments are looking the other way, say two prominent Canadian economists.

“[I]t’s official,” said Armine Yalnizyan, Chief Economist of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Inequality is not going away. In fact it’s getting worse, and precisely at a time when it should be getting better. Census Canada results earlier this month showed that over the course of a generation—25 years—the rich got richer, the poor got poorer, and workers in the middle saw their earnings stagnate.

Yalnizyan addressed the CLC Convention on Tuesday, May 27th. She noted that “over the course of the past generation,” the top 10 per cent of families went from making 31 to 82 times what the poorest 10 per cent earned. And this occurred as a “reserve army of labour” —women— entered the workforce, and the economy doubled. Now, she says, “only the minority at the top actually gets meaningful increases in their disposable income,” while at the same time “bid[ding] up prices, primarily in housing markets, and some by playing in the investment markets.”

This cascades down on the rest, she says, as the rest are “getting squeezed—squeezed between paycheques that don’t grow and the soaring costs of living.”

Meanwhile, says Mike McCracken, President of Infromet-rica, storm clouds are on the horizon, with Canada and the U.S. heading into recession, Canadian manufacturing (and the good jobs that go with it), hit hard, productivity falling behind, the price of oil on the rise, and international financial markets in turmoil.

But those that could do something about this, he says, are sitting on their hands.

The federal government could certainly step up on infrastructure spending, they should adopt a full employment objective of at least four per cent or lower,

and they should foster a rising share of wages to GDP instead of just sitting there and worrying about it. More wages means more spending.

More spending on education, more literacy programs, more workplace training, and better social housing is the way to go, he said.

He also recommended that Canadian unions “take the Employment Insurance system back!” The changes to unemployment legislation in the 1990s, he said, especially the changes that rendered those who quit or were fired from collecting benefits. “It’s not just for those who voluntarily quit, it’s for everyone, because it improves your bargaining power within your firm vis-à-vis your employer.”

And, finally, he noted, one shouldn’t overlook the need for higher wages. “Nothing better than a good, healthy dose of stronger wage settlements across this country,” he said, to stimulate demand.

IFPTE endorses Obama for U.S. President

Illinois Senator Barack Obama is the IFPTE’s man for U.S. President.

The IFPTE Executive Council voted without opposition on April 23rd to endorse the Illinois Senator. (Subsequently, of course, Obama became the Democratic candidate.)

IFPTE President Gregory Junemann explained the Council’s decision, saying:

While IFPTE applauds both Democratic candidates, our union’s internal polling results, coupled with Senator Obama’s unblemished record of support for the critical issues facing IFPTE, prompted our action to endorse Senator Obama.

IFPTE’s Executive Council agreed that Senator Obama is the candidate best suited to address the major concerns of America’s working men and women, particularly those issues that directly impact IFPTE’s



IFPTE President Gregory Junemann (l) and candidate for U.S. President Barack Obama, in April

diverse membership. The Senator ... will immediately reverse the last eight years of the union busting promulgated on our nation's Civil Servants; will stand against free trade agreements like NAFTA that fail to protect American workers; will address our nation's dangerous health care crisis; will work to oppose irresponsible privatization schemes in the public and federal sectors; will work to protect the pensions and retirement security of working Americans; and will not only support the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), but will actively use the bully pulpit of

the Presidency to work with Congress in ensuring that this all important labor law reform legislation becomes the law of the land.

Senator Obama released the following statement after learning of IFPTE's endorsement:

I want to thank President Junemann and the membership of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers for their endorsement of our campaign. They're working to make sure that Washington is working for working Americans, and they'll have a partner in the White House when I'm President. I'll fight for organized labor by protecting the right to organize. I'll support vigorous reinvestment in our federal research and development agencies, including NASA, to maintain America's leadership in Science and Technology and to foster economic competitiveness. And I'll stand up to the special interests and unite this country so we can bring about real change in the lives of American families—from passing universal health care, to putting money back in the pockets of middle-class families and making sure every one of our children has the world-class education they deserve.

The IFPTE represents engineers, scientists and technicians at the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Energy (DOE), NASA, and the Boeing Company, among others, in its U.S. affiliates.

Society Newscast 2008:02

Copyright © 2008 [Society of Energy Professionals]. All rights reserved.