

## **PRESIDENT'S MEMO**

Number 6, 1997

Friday September 26, 1997

To: All District 16 Members

From: Paul Rook, District 16 President

### **WE MUST STAND STRONG AND UNITED**

We are in the most critical period in our Federation's history. The Minister has introduced Bill 160 on teachers' negotiations and educational funding.. If this Bill is passed, it would take away our ability to negotiate most of our working conditions and would leave them at the whim of the Minister and Cabinet, through the creation of regulations. It would throw open the door to differentiated staffing, as the Cabinet could allow non-certified personnel to replace teachers in any area it designates including, but not restricted to, library, guidance computers, kindergarten and physical education. This Bill would then remove the ability of the Boards to control their educational funding and raise the amount of money necessary to properly fund their schools. In short this Bill is a blow to both teachers' negotiations and to public education. It will impact negatively upon every teacher and student in Ontario.

**We must stand up to this Government because this Government only responds to strength. Only the united actions of all teachers and educational workers in Ontario can force the Government to back down on this dreadful piece of legislation**

#### **1. MASS RALLY OF ALL MEMBERS OF TEACHERS' FEDERATIONS IN METRO**

Everyone must be at this important meeting which will take place in the early evening.

The basic information is given below. The Steering Committee is in the process of completing the arrangements with Maple Leaf Gardens. I will send a memo at the beginning of next week with the precise details. Please mark the following in your pocket planner

**MONDAY OCTOBER 6, 1997**

#### **MAPLE LEAF GARDENS**

This will be a major media event. It will be an opportunity to show a united front with all our colleagues from across Metro and with teachers from the other four Federations. All five Provincial Affiliate Presidents will be there and speaking.

#### **2. BILL 160 - SNOBELEN'S NEW TOOL KIT**

Snobelen has two goals. He wants to rip one billion dollars out of the public education. He

wants to do these by severely restricting our working conditions and thereby reducing the number of qualified teachers in the classrooms of Ontario. This is a strange goal for someone who claims he wants to improve the quality of education in Ontario. The reality is the costs and restrictions are all that matter to this Minister and Government. They understand the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

Bill 160 would give the Cabinet the right to establish regulations to control the following areas:

- \* the size of classes in the schools
- \* the method of determining class size
- \* restrictions on the amount of prep time
- \* other non-teaching time

The Cabinet would also be able to pass regulations designating jobs as non-teaching positions and prescribing minimum qualifications for people performing these duties (differentiated staffing) They would also control the length of the school day, the length of the school year, school holidays through regulations.

There is a real danger in having these crucial areas controlled by regulations. It means ~~the Cabinet~~ the actual conditions are not in the legislation. They are put in place later by the Cabinet without any public debate or input and can be changed at the whim of a Government. We would not be able to negotiate any of these areas set by regulations.

Last Friday the Minister made two concessions. He said we could still have the right to strike. However there ~~is~~ some restrictions on this right in Bill 160 He has left Principals and Vice-Principals in the Federations. However, he has not moved off his basic agenda Only we can force him off that agenda

### **3. ALL AFFILIATE UNITY DEMONSTRATED AT PRESIDENTS' MEETING**

On Thursday September 25, all the District, Division and Bargaining Unit Presidents from the five teachers affiliates - 700 people - met in Toronto. There was a remarkable show of unity. Each Provincial President spoke strongly about standing up to this Government and taking whatever action is necessary - including closing the schools - to stop this piece of legislation. In the GTA we had a meeting of ~~the~~ all the Affiliate District Presidents from Hamilton through to Durham last Monday. A similar unity of purpose was shown.

The labour movement is also standing with us on these issues. They are providing information to their members about Bill 160 and its negative impact on public education. The union leaders have told the Government that it must not only resolve the issues surrounding Bill 136 but it must also resolve the teachers' concerns about Bill 160.

The Government backed down on Bill 136 because the labour unions stood united and were prepared to take job action. This Government can be forced to back down on Bill 160 if we show similar unity and strength of purpose in the weeks ahead.