



LCBO will repatriate some private agency stores, legislative committee told



Consultant Russ Christianson, left, OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas, and LBED Chair Denise Davis, make a presentation to a legislative committee in Trenton on June 27.

The LCBO is prepared to repatriate some of the most profitable privately-owned and operated agency stores, a committee of the Ontario legislature has been told.

The admission, by LCBO Chair Phillip Olsson, represents a giant step forward for LBED's anti-privatization committee which has been campaigning for years to have many agency stores – especially the largest-earning ones – made into “real” LCBO outlets once their contracts expire with the LCBO. In some cases, private agency stores take in annual revenues

of more than \$4 million in communities that could easily support a genuine LCBO retail outlet.

Olsson made the pledge in Trenton on June 27 under questioning from members of the all-party Legislative Committee on Government Agencies, which conducted two days of hearings into the operations of the LCBO. It was the first time in five years that the LCBO had appeared before this special legislative committee. OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas and LBED Chair Denise Davis also appeared before the committee the same day.

“The government has allowed us to double our (capital) budget,” Olsson told the eight-member committee representing the Liberal, Conservative and New Democratic parties. “We’re doubling the number of stores that we’re building...in due course some of these (agency) stores will be repatriated.”

Earlier in the day, Thomas told the committee that tens of millions of dollars that are currently spent in private LCBO agency stores should be, rightfully, going to real LCBO retail stores.

“The numbers are staggering,” Thomas said. “From 2003 to 2007, private agency stores sold close to \$1 billion in retail alcohol. This is nothing more than privatization through the back door. Successive Conservative and Liberal governments have gone along by giving this public money to private businesses.”

From 1962, when the agency store program was introduced to serve remote communities in northern

Ontario, to 1996 when the Harris government attempted to privatize the LCBO, the number of agency stores remained steady at about 80. Since the failed privatization effort, however, the number of private agency stores has grown by more than 140, with almost all located in southern Ontario.

LBED Chair Denise Davis told the committee that making the LCBO more convenient for consumers is the surest way to prevent privatization and to counter efforts by convenience stores to sell beer and wine.

“Consumers require more convenience which is why we propose that LCBO retail stores have their hours extended to offer convenience and have consistent hours in all stores,” Davis said. “More publicly-owned LCBOs mean greater selection, knowledgeable and professional staff and customer service, and a commitment to keep alcohol out of the hands of underage youth and those who are intoxicated.”

Message from the Chair

Pre-bargaining conference first step toward our next contract

June 2 marked another important milestone for us since joining the Ontario Public Service Employees Union seven years ago this month.

The occasion was our pre-bargaining conference in Toronto at which we elected the

bargaining team (and alternates) that will take us into our next round of negotiations with the LCBO. Our current contract expires March 31, 2013.

More than 80 delegates representing the Liquor Board Employees Division (LBED) of OPSEU attended the conference from all regions of the province. With the election of the bargaining team and mobilizers taking almost six hours that day, I can assure all LBED members that your representatives took their work very seriously.

It was a fact that OPSEU Region 5 Vice-President Nancy Pridham reinforced with us when she opened the conference with a reminder that electing a



bargaining team represents the democratic tradition of organized labour inside OPSEU.

“We take democratic decision-making very seriously,” Pridham said. “That much is clear in how all our bargaining units build their organizational, political and bargaining strength from the bottom up – not from the top down.

“Yes, democratic decision-making can be frustrating at times. It can be time-consuming. And it can, on occasion, cause tensions and high drama. But democratic decision-making works because it results in stronger contracts...because it makes our jobs more secure and our workplaces more safe.

“And it works because it builds solidarity whereby every member – whether or not she or he always recognizes it – has a meaningful stake and a voice in how the business of their union is conducted whether it’s at the local level or at the provincial level,” Pridham concluded.

As chair of our division within OPSEU, I am delighted that our new bargaining team includes representation from all of our different division inside the LCBO: retail, distribution and head office. I believe delegates to the conference elected the strongest possible team that will be tough at the bargaining table. This will result in a better and stronger contract than the one we achieved in 2009.

In some ways, electing the team was the easy part of our next bargaining cycle. From here forward it will be tough slogging.

Throughout the summer and into the autumn you will be asked to participate in local demand-setting meetings. I strongly encourage every LBED member to get involved in this process. It’s only through your participation that we can be assured of negotiating a stronger contract next year on behalf of everyone.

With your input from the local level to consider – and with the data we have already collected through our demand-set surveys completed this past spring – we will again meet in Toronto in October for our final demand set meeting. It will be the results of this meeting that help guide your bargaining team into negotiations that I expect will start late next winter.

We have plenty of work ahead of us but I have complete confidence that our efforts will pay off with a stronger contract. I appeal to everyone to lend your hand to your local efforts and to the work ahead for the bargaining team. Together we can do it!

In Solidarity

Denise Davis
Chair,
Liquor Board Employees Division



Your 2012-13 bargaining team. Back row: Jennifer Van Zetten, Local 162; Nick Foti, Local 5109; Julian Benson, Local 5108; Colleen MacLeod, Local 5107. Front row: Jeremy Trainor, Local 378; Denise Davis, Local 378 and LBED Chair, Tracy Vyfschaft, Local 377 and LBED Vice-Chair.

Bargaining Unit Work-enforce your rights!

LBED bargaining unit employees pay union dues which are deducted from earnings. These dues entitle us to bargained rights and contract language found in our collective agreement which go over and above laws and legislation. Some rights may include salary and benefits, job security, pension plans, negotiated wage increases, policies and practices for worker health and safety, better working conditions, bereavement leave, etc. All workers that pay union dues are bargaining unit members.

Bargaining unit work can be described as work, tasks or duties that are normally or regularly completed by bargaining unit members during the duration of their scheduled shift.

At all times we need to pay close attention to the work we do daily and identify what work is normally or regularly performed by bargaining unit members in your particular worksite.

Questions each of us should ask ourselves:

- Was a casual/seasonal not scheduled and, instead, the manager or supervisor picked up the slack?
- Is it the busy season and your manager is picking up or handling cases regularly throughout the day?
- Does it seem like your department is always short-handed and management is pitching in rather than scheduling bargaining unit employees to work the hours?

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes” then you must bring the circumstances to the attention of your union steward or a member of your local executive in order to protect the integrity of our collective agreement. Once contacted, your local president should advise the employer’s manger/ supervisor, district manager or regional director to ensure that the practice is stopped.

In the last round of bargaining we gained the language below in a Memorandum of Agreement in the Collective Agreement.

“This letter shall serve to confirm that it is not the practice or the intention of Management to perform work that is typically performed by bargaining unit employees to avoid the scheduling of that work to bargaining unit employees.

“However, management reserves the right to perform such work as it deems necessary in the interest of customer service, operational efficiency, safety, emergency or other bona fide reasons.”

We must continually enforce our collectively-bargained rights as we all look forward to, and financially rely on, secure work and income to provide for our families.

At all times support and protect your work and the work of your brothers and sisters!

LBED joins liquor board employee reps at Vancouver union conference

With the exception of Alberta, the sale of spirits and wines across Canada still remains largely in the hands of provincially-owned Crown corporations.

But the threat of complete privatization is never entirely off the table.

That was the key message representatives of provincial liquor board unions heard when they gathered in Vancouver May 23-24 at the biannual conference of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), the national organization that represents affiliated public sector unions, including OPSEU.

“These meetings are extremely important when it comes to taking stock of where we stand on maintaining publicly-owned and operated liquor boards across Canada,” said LBED Chair Denise Davis. She led Ontario’s delegation that included anti-privatization committee chair Rick Woodall and OPSEU Region 6 board member Felicia Fahey. “It gives us the opportunity to learn from others in our business where mistakes are made and where opportunities present themselves when it comes to keeping liquor boards in public hands.”

More than 35 representatives of provincial liquor board unions (Quebec excepted) attended the

meeting. Each provincial component provided an update on conditions with their own liquor boards with respect to the threat of privatization, as well as reports on where they are in their collective bargaining cycle.

The hot topic at this year’s meeting was the threatened privatization of the distribution arm of the British Columbia liquor board. The British Columbia Government Employees Union (which represents liquor board employees in that province) has mounted a vigorous fight-back campaign. They sought input from others at the meeting on how their tactics and strategies can be improved based on experiences elsewhere in Canada.

“What’s happening now in B.C. is a lesson to us all,” said Davis. “It shows us that privatization can take different forms. A provincial government that’s determined to sell-off its liquor board can do so in bits and pieces, one step at a time. It’s something that we need to be vigilant about here in Ontario.”

Must Have Numbers

OPSEU Resource Centre

(416) 443-8888
OR
1-800-268-7376

opseu.org

A one-stop information centre for members.

Monday to Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Ministry of Labour Health & Safety Contact Centre

1-877-202-0008

labour.gov.on.ca

Call to report a workplace health and safety incident, critical injury, fatality or work refusal. The public can also call if they suspect unsafe work practices or for general inquiries. The number operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

OPTrust Pension Services

(416) 681-6100
OR
1-800-637-0024

Fax:
(416) 681-6175

optrust.com

Employee Assistance Program

1-800-663-1142

humansolutions.ca

Provided through Human Solutions, a professional and confidential service for employees of the LCBO in order to help them quickly and efficiently resolve a vast range of problems that impact employee work performance, wellness and behaviour.

Member Savings Credit Union

(416) 864-2461,
OR
1-888-560-2218

membersavings.ca

Serving employees and their families of the LCBO, the Credit Union offers a full range of financial products and services.

Employment Equity Committee member needed

APPLY TODAY! - DEADLINE IS August 13, 2012

The Division is currently looking for one (1) member for a position on the Employment Equity Committee. The Employment Equity Committee is composed of the Chair of the Division and two (2) other members as selected by the Executive Officers in accordance with Article 6.4 (b) of the LBED By-Laws.

The mandate for this committee is to advise both the Union and Management at the LCBO on Employment Equity issues and promote an atmosphere and policy framework that will facilitate program development. The committee will review the employment policies and procedures, and recommend measures to promote fairness; to eliminate barriers impacting women, the disabled, francophones, Aboriginals and visible minorities.

The Guidelines and Criteria for Appointing Committee Members according to Appendix "A", Article 6 and Article 6.4 (b) specifically, of the Liquor Board Employees Divisional Bylaws, empowers the Executive Officers to make appointments to positions on some Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees of the Division.

In so doing, the Officers will ensure that the appointing process is as fair, equitable and transparent as possible. To assist in accomplishing this, the Officers are guided by the following criteria in considering members to be appointed:

- Geographical and regional representation
- Occupational representation
- Gender and equity balances
- Search criteria and candidate qualifications
 - Proper notice and posting to membership and locals

- Nomination process, including self-identification of interest
- Submission of resumes
- Committee chair recommendations
- Decision to be communicated to candidates and locals in a timely manner

Interested members should send their resumes by email to the following three officers:

denise.davis@rogers.com ; tcshaft@xplomet.com ; lbedsecretary@rogers.com

If you do not have access to the internet please mail your resume to:

Mirla Alvarado
100 Lesmill Road
North York, Ontario
M3B 3P8.

DEADLINE: August 13, 2012



Proudly brought to you by the LBED Education & Communication Committee

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Editorial Policy

Content comes from our base of activists, staff, other labour sources and our divisional executive.

Where an article has a byline, the views are those of the author and not necessarily the views of OPSEU or LBED.

While we welcome your contributions, we ask that they be constructive. All articles should be signed and include your local number. They should contribute positively to our division, union and its policies.

We encourage thoughtful discussion of all related issues and reserve the right to edit for libel, length, clarity and to reply to those that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the union and its policies.

*Please send articles to:
faheyfelicia@gmail.com
or mail to:*

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Please print and post on union board

The ECHO is authorized for distribution by:

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