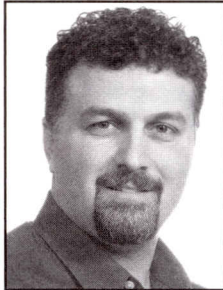


Pensions

By
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We have placed a large deal of emphasis on the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) discussion papers and proposal to double Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Quebec Pension Plan (QPP). We also recommend the need to make significant changes to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), while helping to manage and maintain our Old Age Security (OAS). We further request improvements to our provincial run Pension Benefits Guaranteed Fund (PBGF), and have already secured changes from the Liberal Provincial Government, in order to maintain its viability for the future.

Pensions are one of the most fundamental pieces of social policy and we cannot afford to let our guard down and relinquish any gains we could otherwise improve upon. Currently, there are more people asking questions about their future and what can be expected from a plan that should be able to support a standard of living with dignity and respect. Individuals should not have to choose between keeping food on the table or paying their hydro bill. The recent economic problems experienced around the world have displayed the importance of a viable pension program, having enough cheques and balances, that make sure retirees at least live at ease and know their next pension payment is forthcoming.

Workers today, are finding it difficult to invest into any savings program. Those who can put their hard earned cash into RRSPs, find out how much of a dismal failure it really was, especially after experiencing double-digit investment losses. As Labour, we have to continue pushing the needle forward to help tow the line through Provincial and Federal levels of Government. Our demonstrations, rallies and forums have helped Governments focus on how to make savings and planning for retirement easier, more affordable and more secure. We now need to ensure that all Governments are responsive to pension improvements. Our combined efforts will make sure they continue to take the initial steps to help all taxpayers and future

retirees enjoy the years they have remaining, especially after workers have provided a lifetime of work to an employer, in this country, for the betterment of all working people.

Our combined efforts must take into consideration OAS which becomes available to all Canadians at age 65, and the GIS which is an additional amount allowing for dignity to be had for low income seniors. Both combined are the corner stone to afford respect and dignity for all retirees. While focusing on these two initiatives, we must express the importance for successful increases on the Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Old Age Security, because if we are not successful, the cost of widespread poverty in retirement will be far worse.

Another important pillar of this great country is our Canada/Quebec Pension Plan (CPP/QPP). These are the monthly benefits that are paid to the people who have made contributions to the plan over their working lives. Although the Canada Pension Plan is one of the most secure, we have continued to see evidence displaying that many of us are not saving enough to maintain our standard of living in retirement. This insecurity is another stressor that Canadians feel and it makes them uncertain about their financial future for retirement. That's why it's so important we continue to fight for the doubling of our beloved Canada/Quebec Pension Plan as explained in the CLC's booklet "Labour's Plan for an improved Canada Pension Plan".

Knowing that we have one of the most efficiently run Pension Programs in the world, we should now continue to endorse and request the support of the provincial and territorial Finance Ministers, as the labour movement continues to lobby all levels of government to win National and Provincial support to write a new chapter in making possible the collaboration needed for constitutional change.

I believe we can secure our future but I also realize it cannot be done by Labour alone. Our efforts have not gone unnoticed, Lobbying of our Municipal, Provincial and Federal politicians has garnered friends for the cause and it has given an understanding that is required to push ahead and allow our own Minister of Finance, Dwight Duncan to see the importance of a

- i) Publicly Funded Income Security Program for Seniors;
- ii) Improvements to The Canada/Quebec Pension Plan;
- iii) a Supplemental Plan supporting Low Income Retirees.

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PENSION REPORT

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The Plan has been captured through reports made public by the Honorable Minister Dwight Duncan. It states that:

Ontario has a comprehensive plan to improve retirement income security for Ontarians. The plan consists of three key elements:

(1) Supporting a modest, fully funded and gradual increase to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) to ensure that working Canadians have an improved pension. The Province is requesting feedback on possible approaches to a modest expansion of the CPP by November 29, 2010. This feedback will help inform Ontario's position at the federal-provincial-territorial finance ministers' meeting on December 20, 2010;

(2) Working with other governments and pension partners to develop new and innovative ways to expand the range of institutions that can set up pension plans and the range of people who can access them, including the self-employed; and

(3) Modernizing Ontario's Pension Benefits Act to enhance reliability, security and affordability of employment-based defined benefit pension plans.

Minister Duncan further elaborates on his vision for future retirements:

"First, we need to update our own employment pension laws. These rules have been neglected for over two decades, despite major economic and labour-market changes. Based on the advice of the Ontario Expert Commission on Pensions, our gov-

ernment is moving to modernize and strengthen pension legislation. One major reform bill has been passed and another has recently been introduced.

"Second, we must build on the strengths of the CPP through a modest expansion of benefits.

"The CPP is secure, efficient, portable and fiscally sustainable but there will be increasing pressure on it as the population ages. In Ontario, over the next 20 years, the number of people over age 65 will nearly double. A modest enhancement to the CPP now would provide a significant benefit to these workers when they retire. I believe such an enhancement is affordable if contribution rates are phased in gradually, particularly in light of the over \$8 billion in annual tax relief Ontario will be providing to businesses as part of its tax plan.

"Third, we need more pension innovation. I believe we can make regulatory changes to harness Canada's world-leading private-sector expertise to provide more efficient, lower cost retirement options. Current tax and pension rules state that pension plans can only be offered where an employ-

ment relationship exists. This limits the retirement savings options available to the self-employed and those who work for small businesses. By changing these laws, we can expand the range of institutions that can set up pension plans, and the range of people who can access them. Large pools of capital could reduce costs and help improve investment returns."

The Honorable Minister continues to state that he is "confident we will continue to see a retirement income system that enables people to retire with a sense of financial security".

Brothers and Sisters, we will get the job done. What we have started we will see finished and what we initiated through the Labour Movement, Friends and Citizens' Groups, for the necessary improvements to the Canada and Quebec Pension Plan will pay off. June 4th was a pivotal time. Our Provincial and Federal Finance Ministers agreed to a modest CPP expansion. This is our relevance and the story of our success'. We were the underlying factor and should take great pride in the works we have done to take a place in making changes to improve the lives of all Canadians in the Future.



Standing at attention and ready to place a wreath on Remembrance Day at the cenotaph in Windsor for those who have paid the ultimate price for freedom for Canadians are CAW Local 200 Fin. Secretary Dave Crosswell, President Local 444 Rick Laporte and Local 444 1st Vice President Dino Chiodo.