

Article originally published by *Kenora Daily Miner & New*

## **Pension Changes in the wind, says keynote speaker**

**Ruth Bowiec**

*Special to OCSO*

A number of positions in response to the government's consulting process, *Securing Our Retirement Future*, with Ontarians on Canada's Retirement Income System were clearly explained by Don Wright, president of the Toronto & York Region area council of the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada, Canadian Labour Congress.

Wright was the keynote speaker at the Jan 12<sup>th</sup> inaugural meeting for the Board of Directors of the Ontario Society (Coalition) of Senior Citizens (OCSCO). He described what changes are in the wind to change Canada's pension plan. The plan was launched in 1925 when McKenzie King was Prime Minister. A law was passed giving monthly pensions of \$40.00 to citizens once they reached the age of 70. Over the years changes have been made including Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, and Canada Pension Plan, which has proved to be wonderful plans for seniors enabling them to live in dignity in their retirement years.

Other business discussed at the meeting included reports from OCSCO board members across the province. Subjects ranged from seniors as contributors to volunteer organizations; women (especially the aged) and housing; privatization and an upcoming Alzheimer's workshop on brain health.

Morris Jesion, the Executive Director of OCSCO, noted the province is gearing up for the 2011 election and seniors should be ready with great input into policies the candidates are considering.

Of great interest to members from Northern Ontario was a health bulletin planned for rural and northern health care. The report contains 12 recommendations for the Ministry of Health to consider in developing the rural and northern health care framework.

It should be noted more than 2.5 million Ontarians live in rural areas of the province; approximately 346,000 live in the north. The government has created more than 80 new Family Health Teams in rural and Northern Ontario. Also when the Northern Ontario School of Medicine opened in September 2005, it became the first new medical school in Canada in over 30 years.