

Economic controls hit unions

On Monday night the Canadian public was informed by the Prime Minister that the government would finally take strong action on inflation. It was apparent from Trudeau's speech that the ten Provincial Premiers agreed, if not whole-heartedly then at least in principle, with the federal government's action.

The repercussions of price and wage controls have yet to be felt by the Canadian public but one can only hope that they will work better here than they did in the United States. Though we are not, and do not pretend to be, economists a cursory examination of the government's plan seems to show that it is far more encompassing than the price and wage control program was in the United States. For this reason alone it may fulfill the government's desire to control inflation in Canada.

The crack-down on Labour Unions was a welcome and long overdue action as far as the Gazette is concerned. Though it is not true of all unions many, particularly those in construction and related fields, have outlived their usefulness in this country. Labour has had a stranglehold on our society for far too long.

We do not mean to sound elitist but somehow it does seem totally unjust that unskilled labour in this country often earns more than university graduates. For too long men and especially women in Canada have been penalized for having either a university degree or training school diploma. Often these people are in positions of extreme responsibility (e.g. teachers) but their wages are less than those earned by say a bricklayer. Apparently the self-fulfillment these people (i.e. teachers, nurses) may or may not feel from their jobs is supposed to be remuneration enough. Unfortunately self-fulfillment does not pay the rent or put food on the table.

Unions are only useful in so far as they attempt to promote just treatment for their members. In this sense nursing unions, teacher's unions, etc. are still a necessity whereas trade unions, some not all, are now in a position where they are promoting expectations for their members which our society cannot afford. The old argument that labour in boring or monotonous jobs should be compensated through wages for the nature of their jobs simply doesn't ring true. We have crossed the line between compensation and overcompensation. Further, all jobs are boring at certain times so either everyone should be compensated for this or no one should.

The argument for higher wages as a means of providing labour with the means to purchase more of the consumer luxuries our society provides is also outdated. When many of society's members can barely afford to eat it seems slightly unjust that others are demanding a bigger slice of the limited resource pie for their personal gratification. This of course is why labour unions were established in the first place - to provide workers with a living wage. Now the workers have become the "fat cat"



class and what was once the educated "elite" is now the class that benefits least from society's limited resources.

The desire to consume more and greater luxuries is a fact of life in North American society in 1975. However, we now know that our resources are limited and we cannot afford to consume as we have in the past without suffering dire consequences in the future. It often seems that labour has chosen to ignore this particular fact of life and has an "eat, drink and be merry" complex which Canada can ill afford.

The Prime Minister referred to a "revolution of rising expectations" which may destroy the very fabric of our society. The Prime Minister is right and the powerful unions in this country must be forced to realize the danger inherent in their constantly rising demands. In the long run they will only hurt themselves but unfortunately in the meantime they will take the rest of us down the drain with them.



Letters

To the Gazette:

Dear Jerks (a presumably neutral and non-sexist term.)

I was amused at finding my name associated with Phillip Saunders' imagined scandal over the allocation of University housing in the Gazette's October 9th edition. As I had been without a place to live since August 31st and had been staying in a friend's apartment for the month of September, I naturally jumped at the chance to occupy a remodelled hallway (I'm serious) on the ground floor of that now infamous Seymour Street house. Unlike *Gazette*, however, I had always imagined myself as one of the countless homeless that Mr. Saunders seems so concerned about. If agreeing to rent a room

after desperately searching for four weeks is a demonstration of Student Government corruption then I am undoubtedly guilty. I can not however, say that I am happy about *Gazette's* growing attachment to what the *Rolling Stones'* Timothy Crouse dubbed 'Dingbat Paranoia' (the fanatical belief that behind every lamp-post lies an insidious conspiracy). Mr. Saunders' implication that my residency in a house necessarily bears any relation as to how the lease of that house was secured is absurd. As for Mr. Saunders himself he is obviously an individual who, on the principle that bad wine makes good vinegar has been transformed from a beggarly poltroon to a respectable journalist. For the *Gazette* to allow publication
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Canada's Oldest College Newspaper

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