

Madeleine Parent

Madeleine Parent is a small-boned, fine-featured, slim, short woman, formerly of Québec's upper middle class, who was once tried and convicted of seditious conspiracy.

She decided to become a union organizer when she was an undergraduate at McGill University in Montréal. Later, she and her husband, Kent Rowley, were organizers for the United Textile Workers of America (AFL) and, more recently, the founders of the all-Canadian Textile and Chemical Union.

She began union work at a time when ten-year-old children worked for as little as eighteen cents an hour in Québec mills, when adults worked sixty-five hours a week and when there was no job security or seniority benefits. She met Rowley, and together they began organizing the Dominion Textile cotton mills. When the company refused to recognize the union, they led a hundred-day strike of more than five thousand workers. She became the particular target of Maurice Duplessis, the Premier, and had to carry her birth certificate always to disprove the planted rumour that she was a Russian spy brought to Canada by a Russian submarine. During the Lachute strike of 1947, the Duplessis government charged her with seditious conspir-

acy, and she was convicted and sentenced to two years. Fortunately, for her, the court reporter died before he finished transcribing the testimony, and since the conviction was under appeal, a new trial was ordered. The second time she was acquitted.

In 1967 she and Rowley moved to Brantford, Ont., and organized the Canadian Textile and Chemical Union. In 1971 they led the Texpack strike in Brantford and in 1973 the strike at Artistic Woodward in Toronto.

Erna Paris, one of the authors of *Her Own Woman*, soon to be published by Macmillan of Canada, says of Madeleine today: "She continues to work on behalf of the powerless, organizing immigrant women in the textile trades in particular. . . . Neither anger nor passion has failed her, and she's surviving mightily . . . as charismatic and as strong a woman as this Canadian century has known."

Pauline Jewett

Dr. Pauline Jewett earns \$50,000 a year, though she is opposed in principle to high salaries. She is president of Simon Fraser University on the outskirts of Vancouver, and she is paid more or

Madeleine Parent with representatives of textile workers in Brantford.

