



farmers cheesed off



KRAFT

In an age of multi-mega-monstro-efficiency, the gap widens between the little guy and the big cheese. It becomes too easy to milk the independent producer by not paying him equitably for his product. Consequently, every so often a rift occurs, and we are stuck with an impossible situation for everyone. In this case, a boycott.

The villain in this case is the giant Kraftco Corporation, the largest dairy monopoly in North America. Number thirty-two on the President's Christmas Card list, their 1969 sales totalled an impressive \$2.6 billion. They make all kinds of yummy things, including such necessary dietary essentials as Kraft Caramels and Kraft "Teddy Bear" brand Peanut Butter. They are accused of refusing the right of collective bargaining to farmers, in determining the prices of farm products.

The men and women of the National Farmers Union are suggesting a

boycott of all Kraft products, including those sold under the Sealtest and Dominion Dairies labels. They have chosen Kraft because it is the corporation that dominates the field. "If we can get it to the bargaining table we will have made a breakthrough that can be broadened to the rest of the industry," states the policy paper of the N.F.U. "We know urban workers are underpaid and exploited. We hope you know we are too."

Included in the position paper are messages of support from numerous local and national unionists (which makes for impressive reading) and a list of things YOU can do to support their cause. "With your help we will win."

Well, Edmonton has a Kraft Boycott Action Committee that has materialized out of a summer discussion group, who last year had supported the Cold Lake Indian's sit-in at CN Tower.

Spokesman Sam Gerzonawicz: "We're an ad hoc committee--an interim

group until we get more manpower." The KBAC is planning to ask support from the SU, as well as financial support and letters to be forwarded to the National NFU offices, from labour unions and other groups. They also plan "actions" at supermarkets encouraging shoppers to honour the boycott. Apparently the boycott has been in progress in the East for some time, and is just spreading to the West. A public seminar is planned for October 5th.

Well, there is a tendency for people to jump on the milkwagon (heh! heh!) of a good cause and dramatize the issue out of all proportion to its legitimacy. It appears that Kraft is shouldering the blame for the entire industry and in the heat of the battle it is forgotten through the mists of time that at one point in the Great depression, Kraft was the ONLY company that

would guarantee CLEAN cheese. They have built a mega-corporation which represents a large monopoly of the industry, but they do not deserve to be labelled "buggers" by the over zealous activists championing the "good fight" (a sign reading Boycott Kraft-the Buggers, was placed in the lobby of SUB).

No doubt the plight of the farmers is entirely legitimate and a pay hike is probably long over-due. The squeeze is being applied by the N.F.U. but the precedent has been set. All workers have had to fight for union status. Dr. J.N. McCrorie, chairman of the Department of Sociology at the U of S, Regina campus states, "There is a long history of this kind of exploitation of farmers by corporate giants such as Kraft. The actions taken by the NFU to end it are deserving of support. That's why I support the boycott." Cheez qb

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