

Belles Strike ?? first in 64 years

TORONTO (CUP)

Bell Telephone employees will probably strike implementing the mandate given the union by a strike vote taken among Bell's 8,000 Ontario and Quebec telephone operators.

Bell was last struck legally in 1907 when women complained about being knocked unconscious several times a day by electrical shocks from their switchboards. Mackenzie King, later elected Prime Minister of Canada, was outspoken in his sympathy for the operators.

Since then, an originally passive and subservient "company union", the Traffic Employees' Association (TEA), was formed. But in the last 10 years it has developed into an increasingly militant bargaining unit for the operators.

UNGRATEFUL LADIES

For the past 10 weeks, these employees have been doing much to alter the company's carefully cultivated image of "Mother Bell", a company any nice young lady would be grateful to work for.

These ladies were ungrateful enough to stage a wildcat strike in October, to the complete surprise of TEA's leader, Mary Lennox.

Five months of bargaining sessions lasting up to 21 hours a day have resulted in some concessions to the union, but many major grievances remain deadlocked.

There are still several points of dispute between the union and Bell, one of which is job security. Workers are upset about arbitrary firings and job classifications.

One woman has been classified as temporary, with fewer fringe benefits and no security, for 34 years.

Workers are also angry about management harassment and constant pressure to increase efficiency. The Ontario and Quebec Bell operators' efficiency is already about the highest in North America.

However, they are electronically monitored to gauge their efficiency.

TEA is also upset about the use of non-union personnel (including management) to fill in vacant slots on switchboards.

Another longstanding complaint is Bell's famous wage survey of 80,000 which Bell claims is the only legitimate yardstick by which to make wage offers.

The survey is largely comprised of unorganized office workers, most of them underpaid women. Bell offers only the average wage of the workers surveyed, and dismisses union efforts to include profits and productivity in wage determination. Any standard higher than the average is said to destroy the company's "good neighbour" policy towards the

other corporate participants on the survey, and those who use it in bargaining.

The Ontario and Quebec workers' efficiency is higher than that of British Columbia workers, and they are asking for parity with B.C. Ontario wages now start as low as \$50 a week, and will soon average \$30 less than the Pacific province. The highest rate in Ontario is \$104.75, while in B.C. the comparable rate will be \$135 in January.

Bell's 1970 profits were a record \$133 million, but Bell's financial position is so strong that the company's 1970 annual report admitted that "in a generally depressed market", Bell was to conduct "the largest equity financing effort in Canadian history...on terms which will be to the continuing advantage of the holders of Bell's shares."

Bell received permission, while its profits were rising, to raise rates in Ontario and Quebec by 3.75 per cent in January. It is now asking for a further increase of about nine per cent.

Much of the bitterness in the negotiations stems from the company's paternalistic attitude. Union-nominated conciliator Fisher wrote, "It was rare for me to meet a management so certain of its own righteousness."

He also said, "Some of the patronizing attitude (toward the mostly female workers) is male chauvinism in its most blinkered and fatuous state."

If a strike occurs, the operators are expected to ask for support from sympathetic persons.

By-law rescinded - Gazette dispute solved

Last night's Council approved the first reading of a motion to rescind the Gazette by-law.

The by-law, if acted upon, would force the Gateway to publish up to one half page per issue of information supplied by Council. The Gateway has refused to comply to it more than once since it was originally passed.

McKenzie said that the by-law was to be replaced with an agreement reached by Gateway editor Bob Beal and himself.

The agreement said that the Gazette would be run not more than once a week in the Gateway paid as advertising by Council. The Gazette will be

a maximum one half page. This half page will be in addition to the regular content of the Gateway. It will be approved by the editor of the Gateway, but may not be censored by him except on the grounds that it is libelous, in poor taste, or discriminatory.

McKenzie later said that it was 50-50 whether council or Gateway got the better part of the Gazette deal. He said that Gateway had gotten out from underneath the compulsory idea of the by-law, but that council had gotten half of the space it wanted.

He said also that there was "no question" whether council could have won a DIE

(Discipline, Interpretation, and Enforcement) Board hearing against Gateway. "...Council has power and there's nothing in the by-laws saying Council couldn't do it," he said.

The only question regarding repeal of the by-law was raised by Academic Vice-president Dave Biltek. The by-law would have been binding on Council and Gateway until the by-law was repealed. He asked if the agreement will be binding on next year's council or next year's Gateway editor.

McKenzie replied that council would just have to go on trust.

The motion to rescind the by-law passed first reading 17/0/3.

Forum!

The Ethnic Studies Programme and the Department of Canadian Studies at Grant McEwan Junior College will sponsor a forum on Native Education Tuesday, November 23, at 8 p.m. at the old Scona campus, 10523 - 84 Avenue.

Attention will be directed to past problems in native education and recommendations will be made for future implementation. The panel will feature a panel discussion with Father Rhuauneu, who has been involved with native education problems for the past 20 years, Mr. Clive Linkletter of the educational division of the Alberta Indian Association, Mr. Tagok Curly, president of the Eskimo Inuit Weraisit, Mr. Arnold Strynadka, president of a public relations firm dealing with Indian problems and Mr. Marcel Piche, a student.

A question and open discussion will follow the panel.

'360' PLAN



Buy your first new 1972 Volkswagen from Southgate and you pay only \$73 down and \$73 a month. After 36 months you will receive \$360 in cash, plus a brand new Volkswagen, while you simply continue to pay only \$73 a month.

5220
Calgary
Trail
435-4821

SOUTHGATE

VOLKSWAGEN

GRADUATING IN 1972?

ARTS AND COMMERCE STUDENTS
INTERESTED IN CAREERS IN

● SALES AND SALES MANAGEMENT

will be interviewed at the Placement Office

Monday, November 29, 1971

Tuesday, November 30, 1971

 **Metropolitan
Life**

We sell life insurance
But our business is life

Ernie's STEAK PIT LTD

Licensed Dining Lounge

Licensed Lounge

Banquets to 200

Noon Luncheon Served Daily

reservations: 469-7149

40 Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre

CALGARY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

invites applicants for
teaching positions for
September 1973

Interviews arranged at
Canada Manpower Centre
November 29 - December 3