

Why unemployment?

Time and time again the question is asked, "Why do we have such high unemployment in the Atlantic provinces?" Despite the presence of some of the finest forestry, fishing and mineral resources in the world, the region continues to be economically depressed and unemployment rates soar.

Too often the answer put forward to this question looks back to Confederation, and claims the Maritimes were "ripped off" by Upper Canada. Today, with the unemployment crisis affecting people from Newfoundland to British Columbia, it is time to delve deeper into the problem.

In 1867, as at the present time, the economy of Canada was geared toward making profits for a small minority of the population. Maritimers such as Samuel Cunard, Izaak Killam and Lord Beaverbrook became wealthy along with others like them in Upper Canada, while the vast majority of Canadian struggled to survive.

Today, the owners of multi-national corporations, lured to Nova Scotia by government guaranteed profits, readily abandon their employees when higher profits can be made in underdeveloped countries. This is happening not only in the Atlantic region with Hawker-Siddeley and Alcan but across the entire country. National corporations such as Canadian National also feel free to pull out of the region when convenient.

The unemployed worker from the Halifax shipyards can no longer accept "Confederation" as the reason for the problems of the economy any more than the unemployed miner from Sudbury can. In the Atlantic provinces we have 112,000 workers officially unemployed and across Canada almost one million, because our economy is geared toward production for profit instead of human necessities.

What is needed in Atlantic Canada is a policy of resource development, controlled democratically, by and for the working people of the region.

—Sharon Reilly

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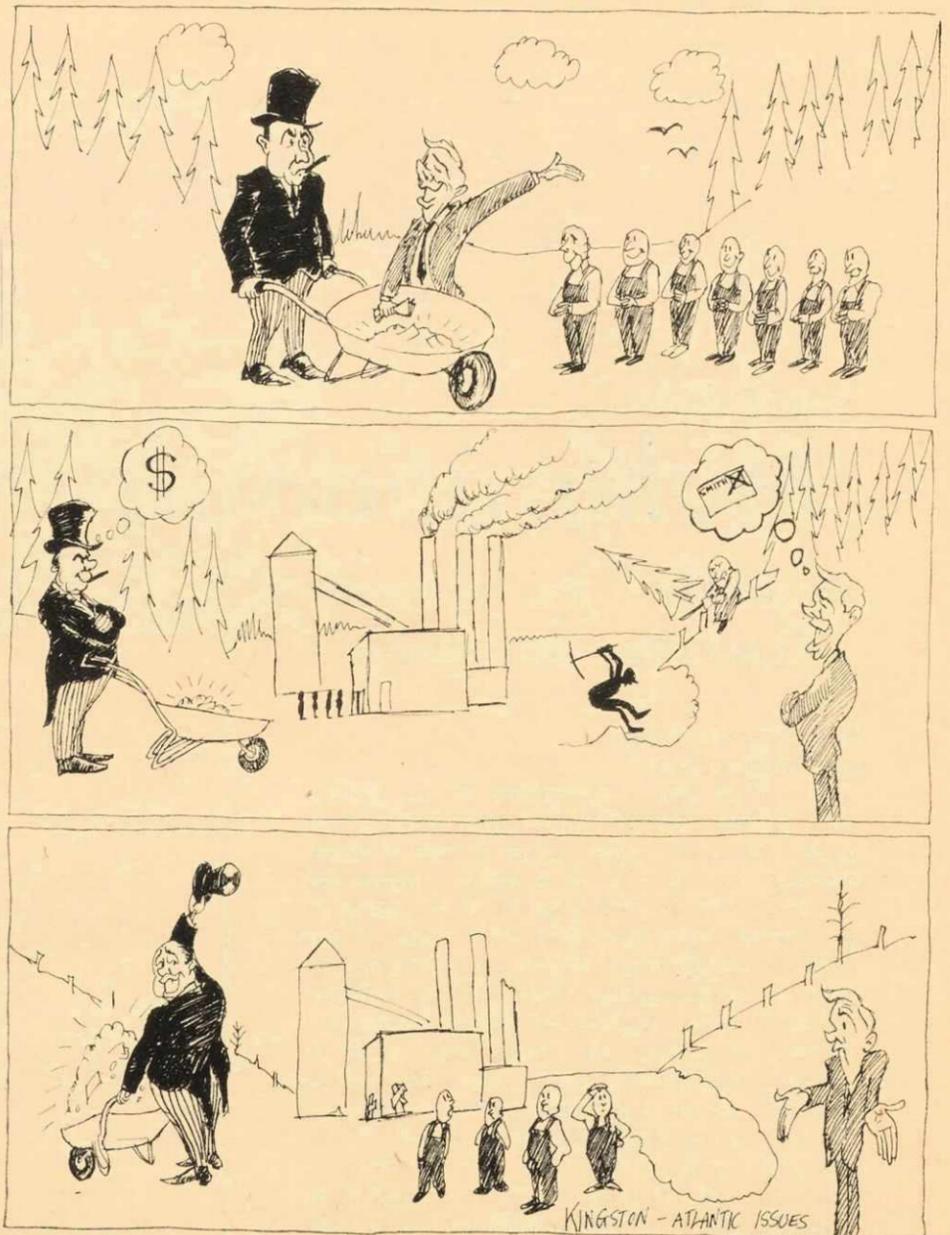
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Letters

To the editors:

The emphasis on the human cost of unemployment was well stated in your articles on this highly regional issue. So often the repetitive announcements of a worsening situation are coldly illustrated only through distorted statistics, the effect on the people themselves, in human terms, is all too rarely portrayed in their own words.

As the articles point out, the problem of high unemployment in the Atlantic provinces has a long history related to the areas' economic development under the control of large usually foreign, corporations. The people of this province have supported these investments through their taxation and are left to bear the burden when these corporations fail or decide to move in the interests of greater profits. The growing frustration, anger and protest of the people against the government, as expressed in the formation of groups of concerned and unemployed persons,

was well presented in your articles which also effectively deal with the sham of government response. A follow up article on the limitations placed on effective action by the government would be extremely useful in analyzing coalitions' strategies. Keep up the good work.

Jim Young,
Dartmouth

To the Editors:

We enjoyed your last issue. Keep up the good work and here is a donation.

M. Andrzejewski
North Vancouver, B.C.

To the editors:

Once again I was very pleased to see your fine publication...your articles are well researched and readable.

Wishing you continued success.
yours,
David Smith,
Ottawa



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