

SPECTRUM

The Left Job

Take the Highway
by Nik Carrier

A magazine article I read recently stated, "The super-information highway will have the same effect on the 21st century that the railways had on the 19th century." As well a TV advertisement stated that "The Internet is today's version of the industrial revolution."

Well, really. Virtually every modern town in the world was built around the local railway. No town is ever going to be built because its possible to contact a student in New York who has a list of every character who's ever been in Star Trek.

This article is being written on a computer, so I hope it doesn't sound as if I'm anti-technology. But surely for most domestic use a basic machine is perfectly adequate. People keep talking about how marvelous they are. One person, shivering with excitement stated that "You can even do pie charts on them." What possible purpose does a pie chart serve in an average household? Did this person go running down the street shouting, "Guess what, 12 percent of the surface area of my house is in the kitchen?"

Someone once told me that "I can contact people in Moncton." They have obviously never heard tell of the telephone. Rational thinking has been abandoned by fans of the net, as they marvel at the prospect that it is possible to do shopping by e-mail. As one person has pointed out "This is no different to the 1960's, when we could ring the local grocer with an order which he would deliver that day."

Of course the Internet is an advance.



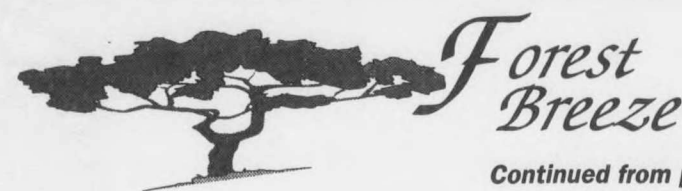
But claims that it is revolutionizing our lives are connected to the notion that we live in new times, making the old idea that society is divided by class out of date.

We are told that we will soon be able to work from home. But how will anyone build buildings or grow food on the Internet? How will road sweepers work from home? Will they have a large dustpan and brush on a long piece of elastic?

The truth is that up to now computer technology has not changed our lives as much as the innovations at the beginning of the century such as electricity. Our domestic lives have altered less as a result of "Windows" than they did with the arrival of fridges, televisions, etc.

Would someone who died fifty years ago, who came back to life today, be interested in the "super-information highway?" Probably not, as for most people it amounts to no more than a hobby. It is little more, for most people, than a way to spend the evening playing with pages of UFO sightings. It really ought to be renamed the "worthless information highway."

If you would like to have a real discussion with real people come to the International Socialists meetings on March 5 on "The Working Class History of International Women's Day" and March 12 on the topic "Are All Men Sexist?" They will be held at McLaggan Hall Rm 109, at 7:00 PM. All Are Welcome. For more information call 454-9233.



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for timber production and employment. Compare that with New Brunswick's meager size, and additional land restrictions pose a huge threat to our economy. In order to remain competitive in a global market, every possible hectare of Crown Land in this province should be included in a long term harvest plan of a licensee. There is already more than enough parks in this province of a very large size (Mount Carleton, Fundy, etc.), and if anything, to survive, we need fewer parks, subdivisions, malls, parking lots - anything that takes away from productive forest land.

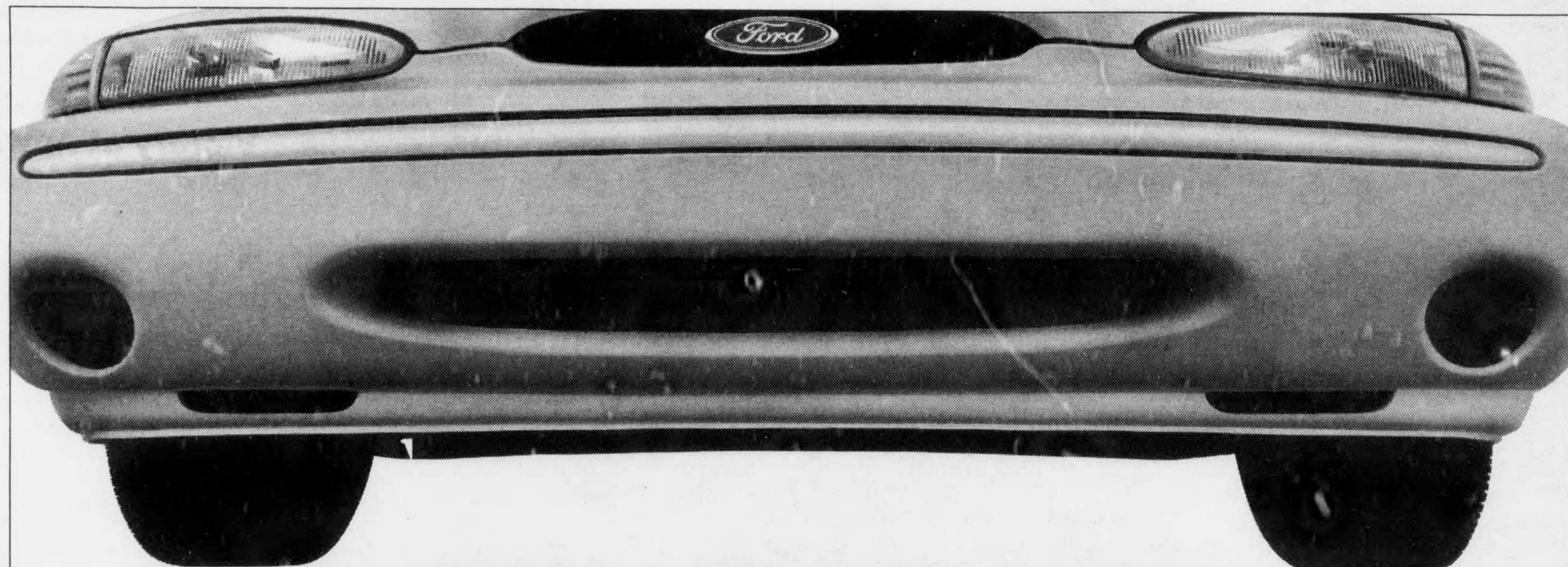
Opponents of this idea always point to the recent study done which shows the majority of New Brunswickers want more parks. People seem to want everything. The same people who are demonstrating on a daily basis about lack of employment and changes to the UI system are often the same ones who cry "Save the trees! Save the planet!". Be they right or wrong about UI changes they are right about the fact that each and every job we can find in NB is too valuable to be overshadowed by the agenda of some wildlife organization based in Ontario or Quebec. In this province, there is not room for huge ecological reserves and a reduced

allowable cut! Either there will be people working and producing money from Crown Lands through stumpage revenues, taxes, etc., or there will be huge losses incurred by reserves, public parks and wildlife areas - all of which cost more to run than they bring in to the government in revenue. Like it or not, money dictates what must be done in this province, and we'd better learn to deal with it, instead of whining and crying for the pipe dreams of parks the size of Jasper or Yellowstone!

As for the "Friends of the Christmas Mountains", I would like to say that I have to agree with Conway Elkins article about a month ago. The interests of this group should not even be considered - blockading logging roads and making statements such as "We should trash this hype from the forest industry". They are a group of misinformed students from Mount Allison who really should get their act together and do something productive to help New Brunswickers deal with these issues.

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