

Thousands of farmers demonstrate against federal farm policy, Regina Inn, summer, '69

N.F.U. Strikes Back

Fred Guodmondson
Organization Director for the
National Farmers Union.

*"National Policy is shaped by
multi-national corporations."*

(a spokesman for the N.F.U.)

By the spring of 1969 farmers throughout western Canada had had enough.

A 1,000 farmers per month were being forced off their land, bled dry by a handful of American food monopolies who controlled virtually every aspect of food processing, distribution, and transportation; and squeezed the farmers for everything they had not only in the selling market (wheat, beef etc.) but also in the buying market (farm machinery, fertilizer, etc.) aided by their friends in the government marketing agencies.

Ridiculed and antagonized by a Federal government task force referring to farmers as being "inefficient producers, and generally quite naive" whose prim recommendation centered

around the removal of two-thirds of Canada's farm families from their land by 1980, to make way for commercial and corporate farming agencies.

Lied about and slandered by a media who placed the blame for high food prices at the door step of the farmer.

The farmers retaliated by a series of mass rallies and tractor demonstrations in Saskatchewan culminating in the formation of the National Farmers Union in July of 1969 with Roy Atkinson as their first president elect. Farmers quickly realized that if they were to take the bull by the horns organization was needed, not just a talking lobby for the members of parliament, but an organization prepared and willing to take action on behalf of farmers and the consumer.

For nearly three years now the N.F.U. has expanded their numbers both east and west of the prairies, including today fruit growers from B.C. to potato farmers in P.E.I., and has become an inextricable thorn in the sides of agribusiness and the government.

U.F.A.W. Organize Fishermen

Homer Stevens - Pres. of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union.

"All the equipment we use is made in England. The fish are sold in the U.S.A. and the money goes back to England. There's nothing left for the Canadian Workers."

(an imprisoned fisherman)

To be a fisherman in Nova Scotia is to live and work under conditions that according to our politicians and their statistics were not supposed to exist in the Canada of the 1960's.

At sea twelve out of every fourteen days, working upward from sixteen hours daily and earning as little as \$2500 per year. Accidents on ship are a frequent occurrence, and medical services don't exist. To step out of line with the company can get you blacklisted from 10 days to as much as 99 years, where even a short period of unemployment can put you and your family out on the streets. Your work only seems to further enrich the company and further deprive your family of the basic

necessities of life.

In 1967 the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union tried to change this situation, and by early 1970 had organized a total of 235 fishermen at the British-owned Acadia Fisheries plants at Mulgrave and Canso and the American-owned Booth Fisheries plant at Petit de Grat.

What ensued was probably one of the most heroic struggles on the part of poor working people to improve their conditions in all of Canada.

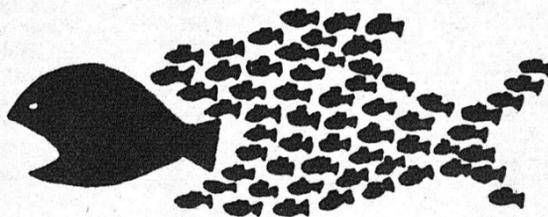
For seven long months the fishermen persevered in their strike, faced by foreign corporations who under no circumstances were prepared to recognize or even negotiate the just demands of the Fishermen's union. A government who after subsidizing these corporations with nearly \$45 million worth of provincial and Federal tax-payers dollars were more than willing to do the companies bidding by throwing the fishermen in jail and refusing certification of their union. And the bureaucrats from the

American trade unions who raided the U.F.A.W., refusing financial assistance, and signing contracts with the companies behind the backs of the fishermen, in fear that the militancy and rank and file democracy of the fishermen's union might spread to their own membership.

When the men were in jail the women and children organized the picket lines. Soon thousands of construction and mine workers were walking off their jobs in sympathy with the cause of the fishermen.

By November 1st, the companies and the government had at least been forced into recognizing the U.F.A.W. as the union chosen by the fishermen to act as their bargaining agent, yet the struggle was far from being over. The companies continued their policy of firing militant fishermen while the American unions raided U.F.A.W. locals. But the fishermen didn't give up. They have continued their fight right down to the present day.

IN UNITY



THERE IS STRENGTH

SUPPORT

THE

FISHERMEN!

A Decent Life for Canadians

Poverty. You know what it is. You see it when you walk down ninety-seventh street. You see it at Cold Lake when you watch TV. You see it all over South and Latin America, Africa, the Near East, the Middle East and Asia.

You remember what your mother told you about the starving millions in China and you give generously. And when you've done that you go to buy your own groceries only to find out that it's going to be another hamburger month because the rent just went up again. You think about last Christmas and how things weren't like they used to be since your folks got laid off or the crop didn't sell. And you begin to wonder.

What's it all about? What causes poverty? And why me? To begin with-it's becoming more and more apparent that the rest of the world does not have a monopoly on poverty and that many Canadians are being forced to take another look at themselves, their bank-books and their government. Unemployment figures grow higher every year. Advanced technology has phased out many jobs and corporate business is in the midst of a massive layoff campaign. The value of your dollar has declined over the years and since August 15, 1971 has plunged. It's not the five-cent cigar anymore its the \$.85 per pound hamburger. (Just who by the way, was the first to break the 6% guideline?) It's no surprise vegetarianism is a growing concern. Your buying power has decreased, wages have not increased at an equal rate, and in general, Canadians are becoming poorer not richer.

Who is responsible for this? Specifically it is the combined power of government and Big Business. Because of the continentalist policy which this nation embarked on at the close of World War II - a policy which bound us economically and politically with the United States - we have shared equally the times of America's prosperity and her depression. Now that the U.S. has been

soundly defeated in South-East Asia -- and is in fact losing ground all over the world -- we are being saddled with her enormous war debts. Thus the U.S. attempted to export her deepening depression to Canada - via the August 15 wage and trade freeze. Thus the CIC, Waffle and other left groups began to call for Canadian Independence.

What does this mean to you-the worker and student? Since Big Business is not prepared to forego any of its upper-profits, and since the government is not prepared to tax corporations for their very large share, this depression -- this inflation, unemployment and poverty -- falls on you. It means that student loans are hard to get. It means that grants and subsidies are done away with. It means cuts in education, health, and welfare. It means layoffs, unemployment and high prices.

It means vicious attacks on labour both

in negotiations and in law. Attempts to emasculate and smash organized labour by denying the right to strike. Calls for voluntary and compulsory binding arbitration are only a thinly disguised step towards Mussolini's corporate state. For unorganized labour it means minimum wage and child labour laws that place 5 million Canadian people below the Poverty line (ref. Economic Council of Canada.) That is to say: of the 5 million people who spend 70% of their income (or more) on housing, food and clothing, 2/3 are wage earners. In short it means that you pay the shot.

Well -- what can you do? What can we do? The first step is obvious. We must recognize that we're being had and that the Liberal government is not prepared to stand up for our rights. This is important in view of the forthcoming federal election. Secondly, we must fight for the right of labour to strike. In conjunction

with this we must organize the unorganized and unemployed to demand their right to jobs and decent wages. Thirdly, we must organize ourselves, the students, to demand grants, loans, and stipends during the school year, and jobs during the summer months. We must work hand in hand with the labour movement in order to avoid scabbing and strike-breaking which will only give support to government and Big Business enterprises which oppose us.

Finally we must put the blame of poverty, unemployment and inflation on the people who brought it to us -- U.S. and Canadian monopoly. We ourselves must fight for our rights -- obviously Trudeau and Co. will not.

A decent life for Canadians!

Liz Rowley (Co-op Housing)
The Poverty Conference

Ian Adams to speak at Poverty Conference

"To be poor is our society is to suffer the most outrageous kind of violence perpetrated by human beings on other human beings."
(From the introduction to the Real Poverty Report.)

Ian Adams is a free lance writer who in the last few years has taken a profound interest in the problems of poverty in Canada.

He is the author of the *Poverty Wall*, a study of poor people in Eastern Canada, and *The Trudeau Papers*, a novel examining the after effects of a nuclear explosion in Canada.

In 1970 he was approached by the Special Senate Committee on Poverty to participate in an inquiry as to the causes of poverty in Canada. But it soon became apparent that this commission had actually no intention of examining any of the institutions that make and keep people poor, or to provide any sound and practical solutions that might alleviate poverty in this country. It saw instead as its task the mere repetition of worn-out phrases about bad housing, poor food, and a lack of jobs with its subsequent series of watered-down solutions that

were intended more to provide fire-power for the politicians than to give the poor a comprehensive understanding of their problems.

By April of 1971, when the platitudes and hypocrisy of the government senators became too much to stomach, Ian Adams along with William Cameron, Brian Hill, and Peter Penz left the study, and formed the "renegade" commission and presented their own publication; *The Real Poverty Report*.