

between rights and jobs

A handbook given to workers in the province warns an employee not to publicly discuss his or her work and requires that such conversations be reported to a supervisor.

In the beginning secrecy was used to keep the knowledge of the operations from the competitors in the name of quality control. It is now doubted whether Goodyear and Firestone are not familiar with Michelin's techniques of producing radials, but the secrecy has other benefits including providing control over the work force and keeping their operations out of the critical public eye.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Michelin has a long tradition of anti-unionism.

without any of the disadvantages.

Once a week for the first month and monthly thereafter, individuals or small groups meet with supervisors who give them pep talks about production, reprimand them if needed and discuss problems. At these "crew meetings" workers are encouraged to express their true feelings about unionism. If they disagree with the views of management, they are out debated by trained supervisors who have all the company arguments at their fingertips.

Michelin documents detailing management surveillance were obtained when the United Rubber Workers (URW) asked for, and received, a cease and desist injunction

them are also sent to upper management.

When union solicitation picks up, lists containing an evaluation of each workers commitment to the union free policy are circulated among management and floor supervisors.

In addition to Michelin's comprehensive surveillance and anti-union campaigns, there are structural barriers to unionization. Seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 50 weeks a year the Granton and Bridgewater plants are in operation. This continental work week, which requires employees to work weekends on any one of three shifts, is unique to Nova Scotia. In addition to the physical and psychological toll it takes on workers, it makes it nearly im-

management make it a pretty good place to work, he says.

Other workers feel the same way:

"I make good wage here."

"We don't need a union, Michelin has given us everything a union could."

The fact that Michelin is already paying close to union wages, that many of the problems with working conditions would still exist with a union and that workers could well lose money from lost work during strikes seem to be the main reasons against having a union.

Mike Beliveau, information officer for the United Rubber Workers, argues there are a lot of problems inside the Granton and Bridgewater plants which a union can change.

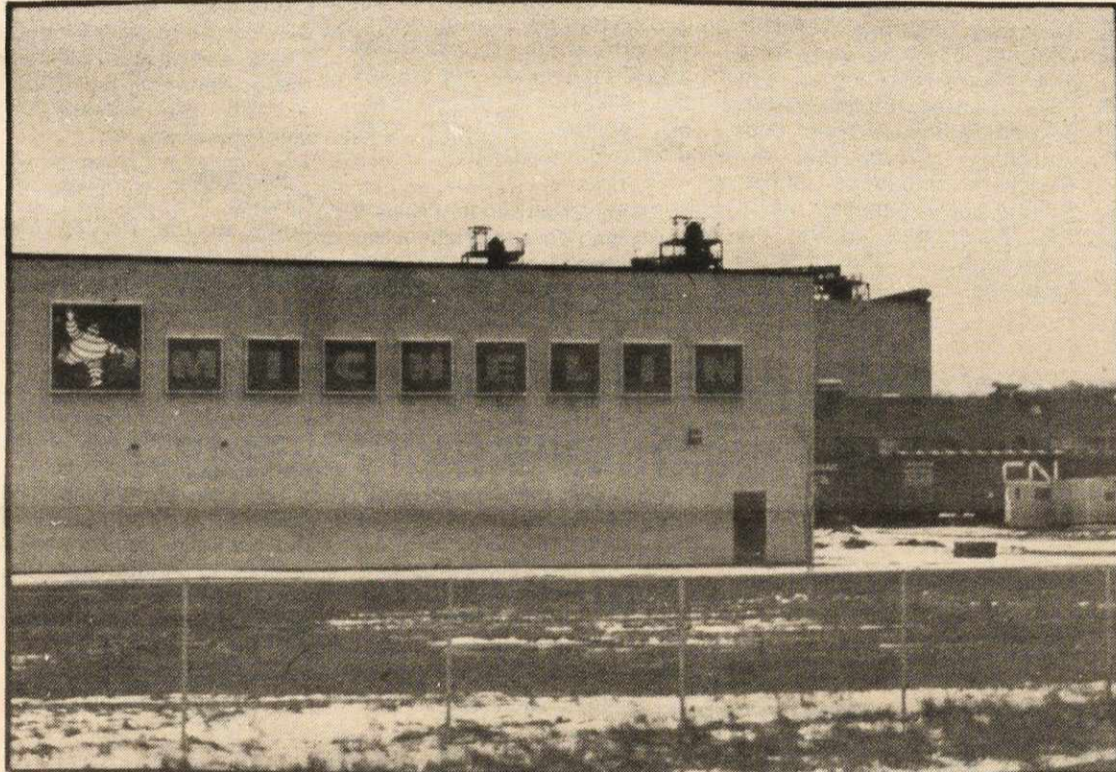
These include the absence of criteria for job promotion, demotion and job posting. There is the already mentioned problem of shift work and the absence of any grievance procedures. The arbitrary kind of power possessed by foremen and supervisors, the reduction of wages for disciplinary reasons, and the practice of shifting an employee to another less desired job while he or she was off are also problems which a union can remedy.

Beliveau emphasizes these are not 'pocket-book' issues, but largely psychological in nature.

It is hard to comprehend all of the problems in the Michelin plants at Granton and Bridgewater. They are less bread and butter issues and more matters of workers' freedom and rights as individuals being deprived, often without their being fully aware of it.

Of course, it is not for an outsider to judge for Michelin employees whether they need a union or not, that should be their choice. Our concern here has been to provide an introduction to Michelin, to show how they work and to show some of the techniques Michelin uses to surreptitiously take away the power of workers to organize. Next week in Part II we will describe how the government has dealt with that power.

Sources used for this story include Round One, pamphlets numbers 8 and 9, publications of the Development Education Resource Services; the MacIntyre File, January 12, 1978, a CBC production; "Economics" by McConnell and Pope; Michelin corporate documents; and numerous interviews with workers at the Granton Michelin plant, former Michelin employees, citizens of New Glasgow, United Rubber Workers officials and interested private citizens.



Matt Adamson

The management style of Nova's largest manufacturing employer is deliberately kept out of the public eye.

Michelin makes extensive use of a large manual produced by James L. Dougherty called "Union-Free Management—and How to Keep it Free". (Dougherty, a renowned union-buster, is thought to have lectured at Michelin supervisor school).

According to Dougherty, the primary incentive to keep out unions is profit. He cites studies to show that a union free workplace is "25% lower in direct labor cost, assuming equal wages rates".

As will be shown, Michelin has a very rigorous program to keep their plants at Granton and Bridgewater union-free. Critics call it a systematic "brainwashing" campaign which violates the civil rights of thought and expression of Michelin employees.

Michelin's Anti-Union Campaign

New employees at Michelin go through a four day training period which includes an introduction to the concept, history and practices of unions. An introduction to Michelin is also presented, all of which comes to the "conclusion" that Michelin can provide all of the advantages of union

for alleged violations of civil rights within the Granton plant. The case has now been appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

One document records the case of an employee at the Granton plant who was completely aghast at the supervisors statement that he must support the company's union free policy.

He had replied, "My honesty and integrity come before loyalty and honesty to the company."

The supervisor told him if the worker did not follow company policy that "action will be taken accordingly."

Debate continued and the supervisor asked him for a definition of honesty. The worker could not give one but said what he told his brother and family came before company policy.

Minutes are taken at crew meetings on the material presented and the reactions of the employees. Reports on these meetings are sent to top management personnel.

Technicians, foremen, and supervisors are also expected to adhere to Michelin's union free policy and reports on

possible for workers to collect in one place and organize. Furthermore, most of the workers in the Granton plant live in five towns scattered in different directions.

Dan McKinnon, a worker at the Bridgewater plant for nine weeks, repeats a frequent complaint: the seven day a week, 24 hours a day shift system Michelin operates on is extremely grueling.

McKinnon says he would work for three days on one shift, have a day off, and begin a different shift for another three days.

"Changing shifts, your meals and sleep get all fringed up," he said. "It's not good for the body."

McKinnon also said he found his job so mentally exhausting he had little desire to do anything but eat, sleep and drink.

He also mentioned other complaints: the tight security within the plant, the childish atmosphere, the boredom and lack of a grievance procedure. But McKinnon does not believe a union is necessary at Bridgewater.

Good pay, production incentives, and a congenial

'CLASSIFIEDS'

RESUME HOUSE
Executive Resumes
Skilfully Written
455-6842

INTERNATIONAL MAIL FORWARDING ASSOCIATION
P. O. BOX 22 — STATION "A"
WINDSOR, ONT. N9A 6J5
CANADA

OXFAM CANADA
Working with People Who Are Helping Themselves.
OXFAM supports small, self-help projects in developing communities around the world. OXFAM projects stress self-reliance and seek maximum participation by the local population. OXFAM is more than a charity. It is a movement for social justice.
YOUR CONTRIBUTION CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE
OXFAM-CANADA
BOX 18,000 TORONTO, OTTAWA, HALIFAX, ST. JOHN'S
BOX 12,000 WINNIPEG, REGINA, CALGARY VANCOUVER
HERE IS MY DONATION \$ _____
FOR YOUR WORK.
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

"EARN CASH putting up posters on your campus. Send name, address and tel. no. for details to Acorn Books Ltd. Box 1803, Edmonton, Alta. T5J 2P2."

"HOW TO BECOME A LAWYER IN CANADA. Best selling guide (640 pages) now at campus bookstore or order direct from Acorn Books Ltd., Box 1803, Edmonton, Alt. T5J 2P2. FREE REVIEWS sent on request."

Cost for insertion of a "CLASSIFIED" ad. is \$4.00. Ads. must be thirty words or less, and must be left at the Gazette office, or the SUB information desk,

GET IT ON YOUR CHEST
GOLDEN SILK SCREENING
Let us put your club, team or slogan on a Tee.
GOLDEN SILK SCREENING
7156 Chebucto Rd., Hfx.
Tel: 454-8441