

Readers page

Protect employees from union power

Your cover story of July 16, "Fotomat Girls Fight the Union," says a lot about the way Ontario law goes out of its way to protect unions against the best interests of the employees they are supposed to represent.

The Ontario government recently chose to side with the union bureaucracies against the best interests of Ontario workers by forcing

unionized employers to collect union dues from all bargaining unit members — whether they are members of a union or not.

The government is needlessly exposing employees to the sort of harassment which has happened at Fotomat by giving the union a protected legal status . . . by refusing to require a secret ballot for all certification votes . . .

Unions were supposedly placed above the law to represent employees in their dealings with "unfair" employers. It is time the laws were changed to give added protection to employees from irresponsible uses of union power like the Fotomat case.

Geoffrey E. Hale
Ontario Policy Director
Canadian Organization of
Small Businesses

Counter-Act inaccuracies

In your July 16 edition coverage of the parks cleanup, your paper inadvertently associated the Kids Who Care project with our campaign. Please be advised that Clean

City participated in that we supplied the garbage bags and the gift bags for the volunteers — but that the program was co-sponsored by Square One, The Mississauga News, the City of Mississauga and under the banner of Counter-Act.

Helen L. Leluk,
Executive Co-Ordinator
Mississauga Clean
City Campaign

Cut federal studies, help seniors

The following letter was sent to Don Blekarn, MP, Mississauga South.

Received your letter of July 2, 1980 along with the reply from Monique Begin and would like to thank you, for the efforts you put up on behalf of your constituents, which in turn help others all over the country.

I would also like to have you pass on my thanks and appreciation to Monique Begin for taking the time to read about the "seniors" in my position and genuinely try to explain the government's attitude toward seniors. I agree with what she explains as matters now stand but believe she should look into the different classifications of seniors which I shall endeavour to clarify.

First, there are the rich seniors who would spurn any help from the government and have no compassion to the plight of other sections of seniors.

The second group are the not-so-rich but financially independent seniors who were able to make investments in their working lives that make them financially independent and they also spurn anything from the government.

The third group are the seniors who, through circumstances, have managed to pay off their homes and are content to live in them, frugally of course with today's prices. They, through the grace of God and good luck, if no misfortune hits them, will be content and possibly able to carry on to their inevitable end.

Fourthly, there are what I choose to call the "grey" seniors in which I classify my wife and myself. The "Greys" live in a home of their own, although not fully paid for, and carry mortgage expenses along with the high cost of utilities and upkeep

which gradually eats away at any income or equity they may have, until eventually they are forced to give it all up and move down to Group 5.

The fifth group is the group that I feel most sorry for and so does Monique Begin as her letter to you implies and they deserve the most assistance, even more than they already receive, however, this group does receive a great many advantages over Group 4, such as subsidized housing, no heating or mortgage and upkeep problems, house insurance, taxes, high utility costs, etc. Any I have visited are certainly more worry-free and living better than the Group 4 seniors. Perhaps the sooner Group 4 is forced to give up their so-called independence and join Group 5, they will be better off but a lot more of a financial burden to the government.

There are many more groups even worse off than Group 5; for example, those living in old age homes, hospitals and other government institutions and, as Monique Begin rightly suggests, have to be looked after first. Their needs, however, are known to the government and are looked after, where Group 4 seniors try to hide their needs and carry on.

All the groups of seniors have, I am sure, contributed to the best of their abilities to build Canada into the great country it could be.

Following are my comments and suggestions as requested.

(1.) Monique Begin suggests there is just no money to assist Group 4 Seniors, but perhaps if we cut down on a lot of unnecessarily spent funds such as some of the studies of problems which are extremely costly and never seem to accomplish anything and our millions of dollars

spent on foreign aid of which only about 10 per cent reaches the people it is meant to help.

(2.) As Monique Begin agrees, because of Government policies people with small company pensions and Canada Pension are no better off than those without them because the two areas of Government work individually. It would be my suggestion that the two government departments work in conjunction with one another thereby allowing the seniors on small company pensions to at least realize 50 per cent of the benefits.

(3.) It is proposed that the contributions to Canada Pension are going to be increased to insure that the fund is not depleted by the year 2000. I do not believe consideration has been given to the impact that much heavier contributions to Canada Pension would have on the wage earner who today, with prices and inflation so high and going higher daily, has a very hard time coping with at present.

(4.) I have made a separate list of my expenses for the luxury of living in my "own" home, which I will provide to you if requested. These expenses total \$7,215.65 per annum and do not include such items as food, clothing or any of the emergency breakdowns associated with running a home, nor the personal necessities needed to enable people to exist and retain cleanliness and personal hygiene. These sundry expenses cost as much as food.

If it were not for my children taking from themselves and my grandchildren to assist my wife and myself financially, we would definitely have to sell and join Group 5. However, by helping us they are giving up the opportunity to

provide for their own futures. It also makes me feel like an albatross around their necks.

(5.) Many seniors like myself live in large homes of the old fashioned type but lack the funds to change them into apartments which would supplement their income. Perhaps a Government grant for such projects would enable seniors to have these changes made, increase their income and thereby be more self-sufficient and less likely to slip into Group 5 where the dependency upon the government is increased.

(6.) When W W 2 broke out, Canada did not think twice of spending billions of dollars to fight a war and put everyone to work to supply those who were in the military services. Is it not just as logical to invest the same amounts to develop our natural resources and invest in industries to manufacture and produce the finished goods ourselves for sale to export rather than selling our raw materials to other nations to refine and manufacture products to sell back to us.

(7.) Why not use some of our government grants to make employment for willing senior citizens as messenger boys for some of our busy MPs — they could also pick our brains for the odd sensible thought we may have before we are gone and the knowledge with us. I mean "ordinary seniors," not the "near rich" or wealthy seniors who occasionally sit in our senate to "yes or no" to the person who appointed them at an overly generous salary for their efforts.

At a time of gloomy outlook in our Country we need men of decisive action to make decisions in our government where we have too many "wait and see, it may go

away" types.

Sometimes it is good for a country and its people to feel the pinch and have their backs to the wall and things not so easy; otherwise they rot away and become decadent like the Roman Empire and cease to exist. But when the people fight back and rebuild their country to greatness again through supreme effort and guts it builds character and strengthens the people that sometimes lasts for generations.

If we Canadians "Bite the Bullet" now before we slip into that type of decadency while there is still hope in this great country with its great natural resources and human resources we will surely win and it is the responsibility of the government in power to use these resources to the full extent by making changes so every citizen can be useful in their own way and according to their abilities. No one can do it all on their own but collectively with the opportunities the government could provide, we can do it now and not make it impossible for future generations to get out of the mess our present policies are making.

I am not suggesting it will be easy, but as in times of war we will prove ourselves capable of doing it. However the government must move now and not go on sleeping and dreaming.

The government could set up another committee composed of unemployed "senior citizens" with a generous grant of course, to read and analyze all the opinions and pick out all the logical points contained in them and pass them on to the government departments concerned.

Harry E. Grainger
Delta Road

We shouldn't pay for noise prevention

It is a peculiar gambit of politicians that when the public makes a protest against any problem they face, the authorities hold an inquiry or appoint a committee to make a report or study. The report is often produced after considerable delay so that the issue has long dropped out of the public eye. The Spur Line is experiencing exactly the same thing. In 1978, the Spur Line Resistance Group, with the financial assistance of the city of Mississauga, hired a firm to study the noise level created by the CNR and its expansion in the north end of Malton.

The study and its report together with public pressure, convinced all levels of authorities to set up a committee to hold another study, which confirmed once again that the Spur Line Resistance Group was in the right and that their concerns were genuine. This, incidentally, was not the real issue.

We are hoping that the recommendations of the report produced by Vibron Ltd., will be implemented without further delay and inconvenience to those who are affected — the Malton residents.

I would like to reply to the comments made by the spokesman of CN, Bob Doty, that either CN or the municipality should pay for the noise prevention in Malton. Why should

the residents suffer because of decisions that would ultimately affect their well-being, made without their consultation? If the recommendations of this report were not to be implemented why did CN waste money on the study? We already knew that noise and vibration existed. I would like to draw Mr. Bob Doty's attention to my press release of March 15, 1979, a copy of which was sent to Mr. Doty.

It follows:

There is no need to spend much time on the established fact accepted by the three levels of government and local residents that there is excessive noise in Malton. CNR officials are also in agreement — a most gratifying sign. Now that this important environmental dilemma has been acknowledged, who is to blame? Or, furthermore, which one of the organizations mentioned above will rectify the situation?

Perhaps if I underline the severity of the problem, the guilty party will gallantly accept its responsibility. The environmental hazard posed by excessive noise has often been overlooked. The Ontario Ministry of the Environment has indicated that noise

pollution has had several detrimental effects: deafness, mental anxiety and similar psychological defects. This is not the society that our children should be subjected to. However, some administrative body is prepared to allow this.

We are experiencing an interesting phenomenon: benign negligence. Each level of government and the CNR have all been confronted with the task of constructing a proper berm and a noise barrier; to prevent the shunting trains behind residential houses and to reduce the speed of trains. Yet all of them have transferred their responsibility to one another. CNR blames the City of Mississauga. The latter should not have built the Bay Green subdivision (the affected area) without adequate protection from noise vibrations from a railway line which had already been established. The Mississauga politicians (Councillor F. McKechnie and Mayor H. McCallion) contend that the particular specifications concerning noise barriers required by the Ontario Government had been met at the time.

Likewise provincial politician Terry Jones poses the issue to the federal representative, MP Tony Abbott. He claims that the federal government cannot be vindicated for the actions of the Peel government. And so the vicious circle continues.

And where does the Canadian citizen stand? As usual, he is aimlessly circumvented by government bureaucracy; or should one say inefficiency.

Now I am glad to welcome a dim green light from CNR, for a noise study, under the pressure of the Mississauga City and the Region of Peel councils together with your group's resolutions. I call upon you to exercise your democratic right to build pressure on the provincial and federal governments to fulfill their responsibilities towards the Malton residents.

My position has not changed. I, on behalf of the victims, urge all concerned parties to pay their share for their mistakes in order to ameliorate the situation.

Jhalman S. Gosal
Kittridge Dr.