

Union suspicious;

Administration promotes five

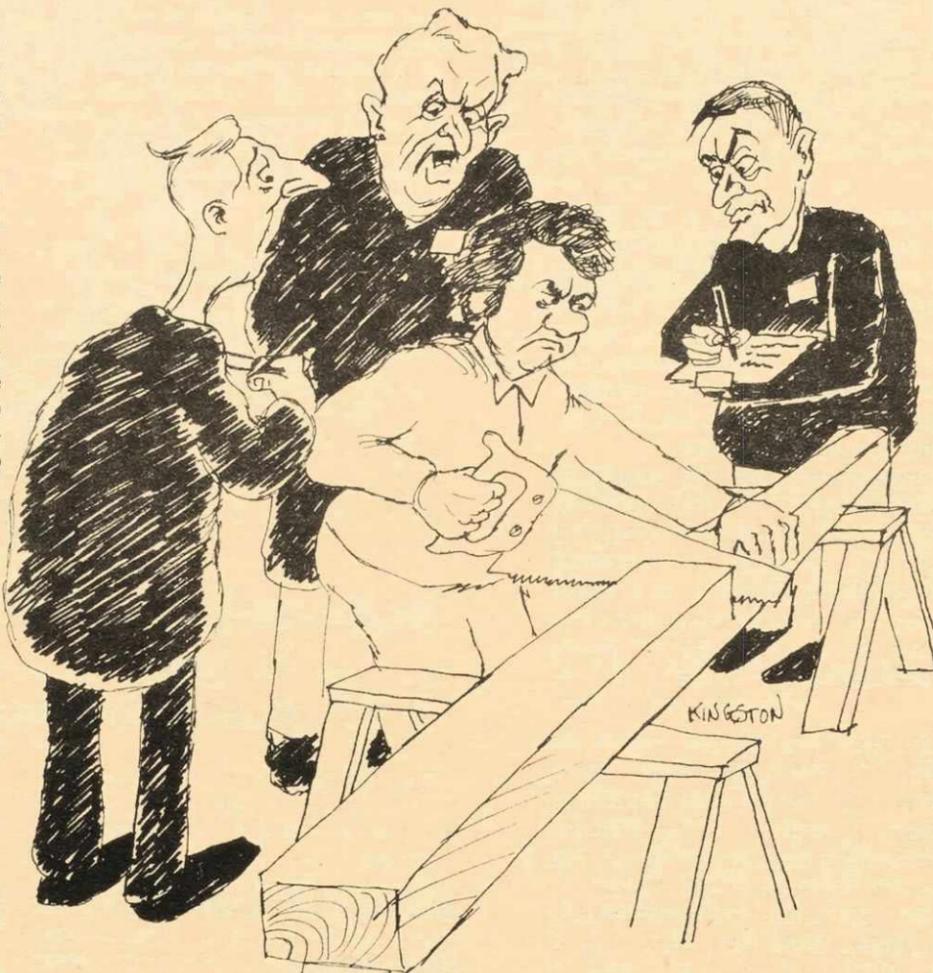
by Marc Allain

As local 968 of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) signed the negotiated settlement with Dalhousie University on January 10, five of the union's membership were promoted to supervisory positions in a move the union calls an attempt to undermine their bargaining power in the event of another strike.

Union spokesperson Jack Purcell said the administration's move is clearly designed to facilitate operation of the different parts of the support systems when the union goes on strike again since now there are experienced supervisory personnel in every area. "They have enough experienced people to keep essential areas operating indefinitely if we are ever forced into strike action again", he explained.

The union would have preferred the new appointments be designated as working foremen, thereby allowing them to retain their union membership as well as carry tools and do productive work. Creating the five new supervisors has reduced union members from 70 to 65, and there are indications that there will be no new personnel hired to ease the increased workload.

Purcell admitted that "management has the right to as many supervisors as they want" but he asked "why do they have to take them from within our ranks?" He said the union thinks the administration wants to reduce the union strength and eventually "destroy the union."



With the recent promotions, the supervisor-worker ratio has gone from 7-70 to 12-65. "In some situations it is almost ridiculous," Purcell said. "At the rink for instance, the ratio will be 3 supervisors for 4 workers."

The new positions were to become effective January 16, however they were unexpectedly made effective on January 9. According to union sources the administration's move was precipitated by a rumour that the engineers intended to engage in a wildcat strike the following day.

Administration representatives have denied the allegations, saying that the positions were filled one week early as part of a training program for the new personnel. At a special labour-management meeting on January 5, management stated that the changes were necessary because more direction was needed for the shops to become more efficient.

Vice-president McKay told the *Gazette* that he was unaware of the most recent developments in negotiations with the IUOE and he referred all questions to vice-president Vagianos. Vagianos was unavailable for comment previous to *Gazette* press time.

At a general meeting of union members January 9 the IUOE decided to sign the settlement with the university despite the administration's latest moves, and to request aid from the IUOE international offices in an attempt to have the promotions rescinded through normal grievance procedure.

Contract interference

CUPE accuses administration

by Jeff Round

Unfair labour practice charges have been brought against Dalhousie University by Local 1392 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), representing Dalhousie cleaning and maintenance workers.

The university administration is being charged with interference in contract negotiations under section 51 of the Labour Relations Act which states "no employer or person acting on behalf of an employee shall interfere with the administration or representation of

ministration."

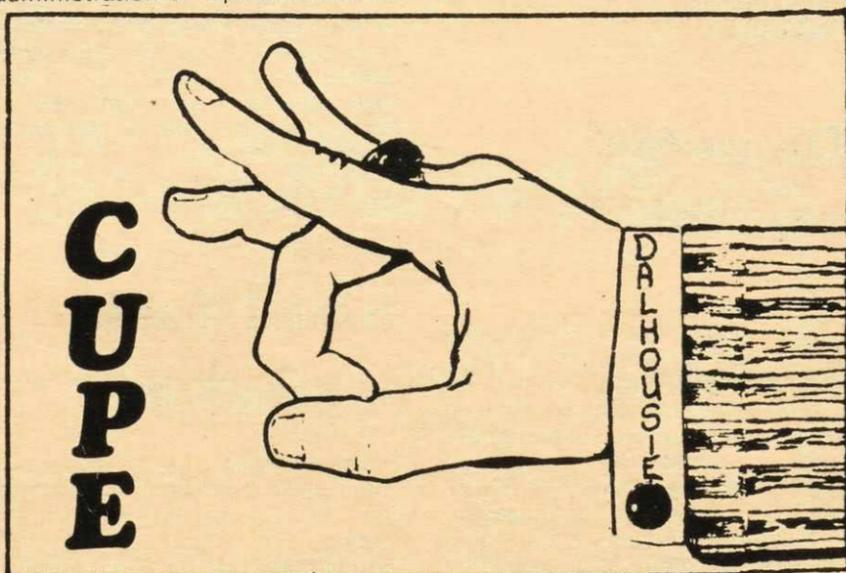
"The administration incorrectly bypassed the union's certified representatives and went directly to our members, what we believe goes against the Trade Union Act," Cunningham said.

Dr. Andrew McKay, vice-president of Dalhousie, told the *Gazette* he did not think the administration had overstepped their authority, saying that the letter was "merely the outline of a proposal the administration had made to CUPE representatives."

tives had turned down an offer above what CUPE officials were asking (8%). "What the proposal did was to offer 8% on the condition that members work on their days off as outlined in the proposal. They want us to work more in order to subsidize our own raise," Cunningham said.

CUPE workers have been attempting to reach a settlement with the

university since their contract expired last August. Negotiations with the university broke off in late November after a conciliator had been called in to mediate between the two groups. CUPE workers are now in a legal position to strike pending 48 hours notice. It is not yet known when CUPE's case is to come before the Labour Relations Board.



employees of a trade union." The charge is being laid as the result of a letter dated 19 December 1977 sent to workers by the administration which, according to Al Cunningham, representative for CUPE, "encouraged members to vote a certain way and encouraged individual bargaining with the ad-

According to a *Gazette* source the letter was interpreted as an attempt by the administration to "convince union members to withdraw support from union representatives." The allegation was refuted by McKay.

Administration's claim in the letter was that CUPE representa-

Unemployed to meet

A public meeting of the unemployed is to be held Monday, January 16 at 8 p.m. at the New Vimy League Hall on Cogswell Street.

The meeting is co-sponsored by the Halifax-Dartmouth and District Labour Council and the Metro-Coalition of Support for the Unemployed. Both the Atlantic Federation of Students and the National Union of Students are members of the Coalition and students are encouraged to attend the meeting.

Last September, the *Gazette* conducted a survey which indicated that 16% of Dalhousie students polled did not find work last summer. Sixty-five per cent said they were receiving some form of financial assistance to meet the costs of the school year.

Similar surveys conducted at universities across the country showed student unemployment to be as serious: U of Saskatchewan 23%, UBC 16% and Loyola U. 26%. In the summer of 1976 only 65% of students were eligible for UIC benefits. The recent changes in

the UIC regulations mean that even fewer will be eligible this summer.

Students are urged to think ahead to the dismal job prospects they face and to attend this meeting of support for the unemployed.

