

on labour problems

Stevens at Dal

by David Gutnick

"This day I think will long be remembered in Canadian working class history. Together we workers are saying to the government - Look, you've tramped on our toes too long, and now it's got to stop." So said Canadian labour unionist Homer Stevens, speaking against controls at Dal Oct. 12. Stevens, president of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, was in town for three days last week.

Invited to Halifax by the Dal Student Union's Community Affairs Department, Stevens spoke against controls for two hours in the McInnes Room. Addressing himself to the topic "Why Tie Up the Nation," he explained why most unions affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) decided upon the day of protest.

"Wages are held down and Prices," said Stevens, "are going up." With a copy of the Chronicle-Herald in hand he continued: "I see a full page ad here explaining how the day of protest is actually a day of mourning. Work on the 14th, the ad says. Work for Canada. Well, in part it's true. When workers lose their right to legally withhold their labor power then there is something to mourn about...and to fight for." (Some Canadian courts have found that the Day of Protest walkouts were in some cases illegal.)

J.K. Bell, Secretary of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL) explained further why some Nova Scotian workers were protesting wage controls and the Anti-Inflation Board (AIB).

On Oct. 13, the day before the Day of Protest, a noon-hour forum held in the lobby of the Dal Student Union Building which attracted a



Dal Photo/vwalsh

large number of students. Participating were Gordie Neal, president of the Dal Student Union, Bill Kelly, president of CUPE local 1392, P. Schmidt, graduate student in social work, and Homer Stevens.

Gregory S. Kealey of Dal's History Department chaired a wide ranging discussion of labor and student issues.

Kelly, Dal maintenance workers' leader, gave first-hand information regarding the recent wage roll-back of about \$400. per worker.

Thursday, the Day of Protest, saw Stevens on the steps of city hall together with other Nova Scotia labor leaders...He had been up until 4 that morning meeting with local fishermen and labor leaders. Throughout Nova Scotia, workers left their jobs on Oct. 14. In Sydney, over 3500 demonstrated.

While in Nova Scotia, Stevens also appeared on five radio and television stations.

Conferences on wage and price controls

TORONTO (CUP) — labour is demanding a full and equal partnership in Canadian society, according to the director of the research and legislation department of the Canadian Labour Congress.

Ronald Lang made his comments recently to an audience of 800 corporate executives as part of a conference on wage and price controls organized by the Financial Post. John Kenneth Galbraith and Pierre Trudeau also addressed the business forum.

Lang elaborated on the Canadian Labour Congress's proposal for a tripartite decision-making body involving labour, business and government that would be delegated decision-making powers through a minister reporting to Parliament.

Labour, which proposed the tripartite planning scheme in "Labour's Manifesto for Canada" passed at the May CLC convention, thinks the tripartite body should have power over many areas of social and economic decision-making. This included power over labour market policy to match the needs of industry with manpower, overseeing areas of public and private investment policy, and in formulating a national industrial strategy.

"If planning for the future requires controls over corporate economic decision-making then yes, the labour movement is in favour of controls - but the real need is for the kinds of national policies that are forged in negotiation and consensus; for it is only in this kind of an atmosphere in which the present divisiveness and destructiveness can be brought to an end", Lang said.

The sole voice of labour at the conference, Lang was flanked by speakers who gave pro-business if not pro-controls speeches. Simon Reisman, the former federal deputy minister of finance who quit before controls were introduced, said the controls were doing more harm than good and should be removed as soon as possible. "If controls are to do any good at all in helping to restore price stability, much depends on public confidence and support and the skill of the government in the design and administration of the program. I regret to say that the current Canadian experiment with peacetime wage and price control seems to lack these essential elements".

Reisman added that "controls are stifling production, employment and productivity, retarding technological development, and depressing the standard of living".



Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith partly blamed inflation on rising consumption from less affluent members of society: "The blue collar worker no longer accepts that his living standard should be lower than that of the white collar worker or civil servant. The civil servant or scientist or engineer no longer assumes that he is meant to have less than the business executive", he said.

"The most visible 'manipulation' of the increasingly classless character of private consumption is the power of unions", Galbraith said, going on to reassure the corporate executives in attendance that while they have to increase salaries to workers, they can get it back in the form of higher prices.

A second source of inflation is the increased pressure for goods and services from governments. This starts inflation spiralling, "With higher prices each group (business and labour) seeks to protect its real income and consumption levels. It presses for the income that promises to do so. This combines and intensifies the inflationary thrust", says Galbraith.

He sees no other solution but to regulate the struggle for higher consumption and higher salaries by an incomes policy.

Trudeau once again declared his faith in individual enterprise saying that it's "the principal stimulant of the growth we need and is one of the best guarantors of personal freedom". He hopes this individual enterprise will stimulate investment, production and growth in the economy.

"I am confident that Canada will emerge from this searching and action process as a stronger and more united country", the PM said, making no mention of the widespread discontent with wage and price controls among workers in Canada.

Dalhousie students march

by H. McKinnon

"I want to give the Dal Maintenance workers a day's wages because I can't think of a cause more worthy of support." These words were spoken by a community organizer after pledging her wages of October 14 to the Dal CUPE workers.

This woman is giving a day's pay to support the CUPE appeal to the Anti-Inflation Board(AIB).

The AIB rolled the Dal workers back by approximately 10%, in effect, pushing them below the poverty line. As a consequence of the AIB ruling the workers have to pay back upwards of \$400. (see Gazette, Oct. 7 and Oct. 14).

Approximately 100 Dalhousie students marched from the SUB to the Grand Parade on the CLC National Day of Protest last Thursday [October 14].



Dal Photo/Walsh

The Dal Grad Students and the Dal Faculty Association have each donated \$500 to the appeal fund. Many individuals are doing the same.

Any assistance, financial or otherwise, will be accepted for the Dal workers by:

Theresa Westhaver
CUPE Treasurer
c/o Caretakers Office
Forrest Bldg.
Dalhousie University

Make your contributions 'Defence Fund'. All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged.

