

EDITORIAL

"To work or not to work, That is the question"

For the last six months, employees at Brunswick Bottling (Coca Cola) in Moncton, Saint John and Edmunston have been on strike. Union officials say the decision to take industrial action was reached after the management tabled a motion to remove articles from a collective agreement that previously protected the jobs of senior employees. According to a handbill recently circulated on campus, the strike "... is about people who want to protect their jobs, their right to a union, their dignity and about an employer who has been trying to "bust" the union."

Pretty emotive stuff, eh! But let's examine the facts. In November 1982, the company laid off 32 employees, including the members of the negotiating committee and the shop stewards -- with the exception of one. Seven months later, the company hired new employees. Representatives of the union claim that most of these people were relatives and friends of the company president. They were brought into the plant two days after the seniority rights of the employees on lay-off had lapsed.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1983, union members allege that the management fired, suspended and reprimanded workers for no other reason than to weaken the union. This led to a boycott of Coca-Cola products by the union and the N.B. Federation of Labour. After arbitration, the management was found guilty (for the most part) of not respecting a collective agreement signed in 1982. Subsequently, a settlement was reached and workers were re-instated.

But overstaffing created more problems. The "relatives and friends" hired in the summer of 1983 were still on the payroll. The management started to shut down the plant every so often. Furthermore, the jobs of even the most senior members of the workforce were threatened. This led to the May 1987 strike and the present dispute.

Familiar reading? It should be. This heavy-handed approach on behalf of the management is characteristic of the 1980's. As the recession demands that we tighten our belts a couple of notches, employers are calling the shots. In the Maritimes, where unemployment is endemic, local management is adopting a cavalier attitude towards workers' rights. They know that scab labour is always available. In fact, since the beginning of the strike, Brunswick Bottling has hired scabs to operate in Moncton, Saint John and Edmunston. The use of scabs might temporarily alleviate some problems for the management, but in a larger context the effects on certain communities are phenomenal. Just look at how the miners' strike in the UK effected some of the mining communities in Yorkshire and Wales.

But what bothers me is the fact that people are faced with this ethical dilemma. To paraphrase Shakespeare:

To work or not to work, that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the bricks
And bottles directed against scab labour
Or to live in poverty on U.I.C....

MARK STEVENS



Mugwump

By ERNEST
DUNPHY

Journal

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the classroom. . . It is again back viciously attacking students once, twice, or three times a day, and it is all happening soon. You can find out where it will attack you, if you look in the middle of the paper. Remember too, this time it is personal.

Heard the latest rumour? Well on page 3 of *the Charlton*, the Carlton University paper, it's said that James Downey is a leading candidate for the job of President at Carlton. The article goes on to say Downey is not interested in the job at this time. I am sure that in a few months time if offered the job Dr. Downey would be a little bit interested, and might say goodbye to UNB.

There has been a suggestion again that UNB have one name for all its sports teams. One alternative would be the name all the teams after the best team on campus, but Red Sticks doesn't fit the basketball team and Red Shirts wouldn't work for the wrestling team. The idea I like is to name them all the Red Bombers.

Are you a business student? Do you know who KPK Nair is? Have you ever seen KPK Nair? Who is KPK Nair anyway. Is he the dean of a faculty or is he a person someone created so they could collect two paychecks? For the answers to these questions and more please stay tuned.

Your student directories should be out in a few weeks, which is more than you can say for the yearbook.

It will be the 8th anniversary of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and it reminds me of an article that I read in *the Globe and Mail*. It was about some Soviet defector who told stories about how captured rebels were treated. The defectors said that rebels were tied up, placed on the road, and then they were run over by Soviet tanks. Glasnost, not available in Afghanistan.

For you pool sharks out there, the Social Club is opening the Woodshed as a poolroom next month. My sources also go on to say that they hope to make it a pub by next year.

Word of the Week: Fossil - remains or impression of a plant or animal of an earlier geological age. - See UNB Administration.