

Nine-day march unionizes the unemployed

TORONTO (CUP) — Ontario's unemployed are angry.

And after years of struggling in shame to feed their children on the few dollars left after the rent is paid, they have unionized.

On September 14, 12 members of the London Union of Unemployed Workers reached the Ontario legislature with a petition demanding an immediate 25 per cent increase in the new provincial government's welfare rate.

They had just spent nine days walking on the highway from London in the March Against Poverty.

"The first couple of days, it was really rough," says one of the union's members, Donna Collins. "We had sore feet and sore muscles, but we were strong and we formed a really tight group. We shared socks, shoes, whatever was necessary.

Collins, 49, says her march from London to Toronto was inspired by two grandchildren.

"I'm marching on behalf of all children who don't have enough

food, who are going to school hungry and going to bed hungry. And because they are not getting nutritious meals, they are not doing as well as they possibly could in school," she says.

The London Union of Unemployed Workers is not only made up of the unemployed but also includes many under-employed people. This means people who find "dead-end, low-paying part-time work and then are unemployed again and facing poverty," says union president John Clarke.

Beverly Fitzpatrick and her three children are surviving on \$885 a month in family benefits, living in a three-bedroom apartment in a low-income housing complex. Fitzpatrick, who pays \$197 in rent and the spends the rest on groceries, says the whole system is screwed up.

"They raised our (social assistance) cheque, so our rent went up. It's money for us to buy food, not to be raising our rent," she says.

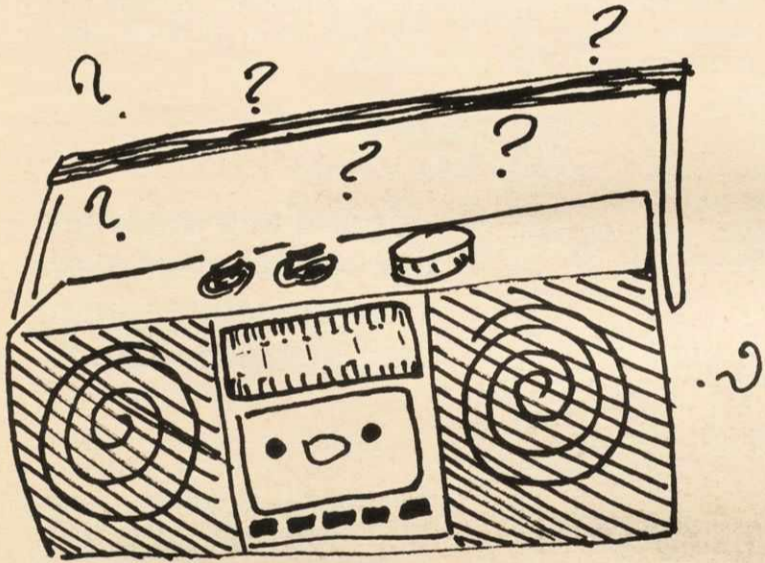
More than 1,000 people have been involved with the union in

1982. The union played a role in the 1983 March for Jobs campaign, the "housing not hostels" coalition, and a public health inquiry into the effects of homelessness on health.

Ironically, Maxwell says many of the people involved in the Toronto union have gotten jobs because of it.

"I've seen people come into the union, people an employment

counsellor would call unemployable, who after doing work with the union had picked up enough basic skills that they had a lot more confidence so they were able to go out and get a job."



CIMN silence Cut from the airwaves

CHARLOTTETOWN (CUP) — Students at the University of Prince Edward Island's radio station had been spinning records for two weeks before anybody noticed that CIMN wasn't broadcasting.

The wires in the building which are supposed to feed the electronic signal to campus residences and to a cable company had been snipped during campus renovations over the summer.

"There were a million wires in the building, and the contractor during the construction went in and cut those wires. They were not documented as being saved. It was inadvertently cut," said David Bermark, one of the architects behind the demolition of the building's interior.

Both the student council and radio station representatives claim it was not their responsibility to notify the architects

about the presence of radio cables.

John Bentley, CIMN's technician, hopes some wires can be temporarily spliced within a week, restoring transmission to at least some residences.



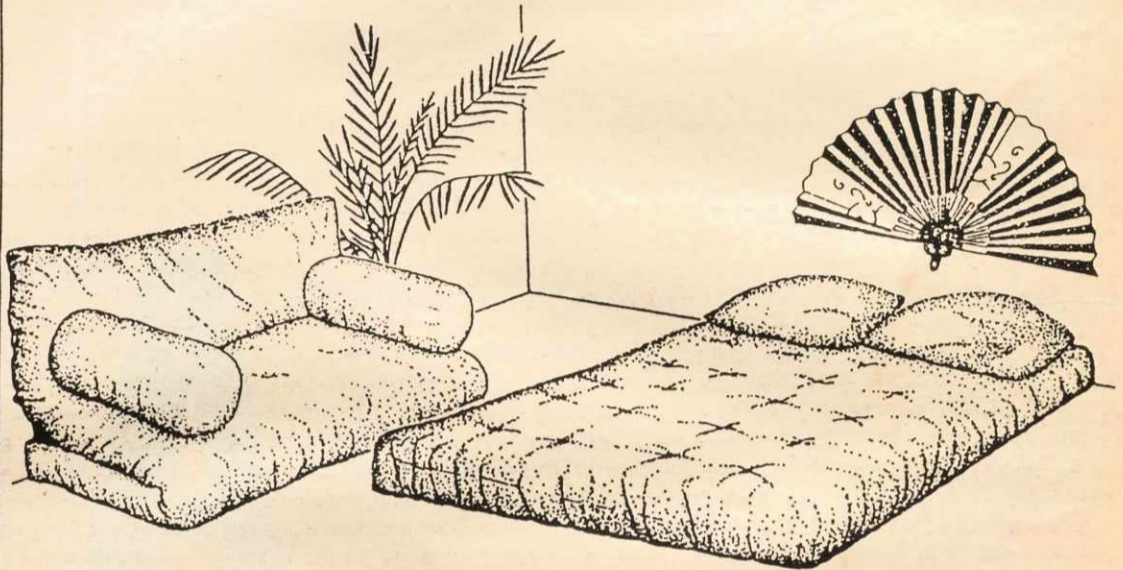
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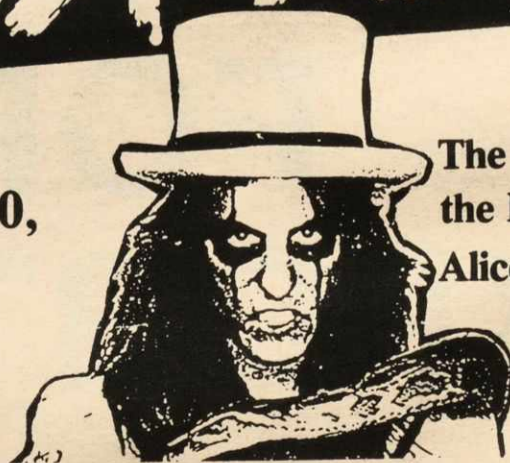
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