

Still below poverty line

Dalhousie workers rolled back

by Rick Plociennik and Jeff Clarke

"These people (the A.I.B.) are sick. They're sick to the point where if they can sit there and destroy people, like in our group, working hard to survive with the few cents that we've got...those \$24,000-a-year fat cats should resign."

Some people might call it legal, but that doesn't make Bill Kelly any happier when the government and Dalhousie get together to lift hundreds of dollars out of his pocket.

"They're hired because they're vicious and they don't care about the human race or human suffering" continued Kelly. President of Dalhousie maintenance workers CUPE local 1392. "They just don't care."

The Federal 'Anti-Inflation' Board had just announced its decision to reduce the already low wages of these union members by 9.8% over the life of a contract that has expired.

Kelly and his fellow cleaners and maintenance workers weren't the only ones shocked. The Student Council's October 3 meeting moved to "condemn the recent A.I.B. decision as being unjust in that it has served no purpose except to deny the Dal maintenance workers the right to earn a living wage." Student Union President Gord Neal added, "With this ruling the October 14th C.L.C. Day of Protest has become more meaningful. With this rollback it is obvious that wage controls are definitely contrary to the interests of both workers and students."

On Tuesday the Students Union took more concrete action, distributing to Dal students a leaflet calling on them to support the workers fight against the roll-back.

The Original Contract

The Wage agreement between Dalhousie and CUPE local 1392, representing over two hundred Dalhousie staff, was signed in early January this year. More than two months after the contract was originally agreed on, the Nova Scotia government joined the Federal programme, moving to retroactively cover all agreements reached since Trudeau's Thanksgiving announcement.

Before this contract, the employees pay scale started at a base rate of \$2.30 an hour. Municipal and County employees, doing comparable work in the city were making as much as \$5.05.

Instead, they were forced to

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Dal Photo / Creaser

Maintenance workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees [CUPE], experienced a wage rollback at the hands of the Anti-Inflation Board.

settle for a deal which allowed a top rate of only \$4.35 an hour. And now that's disappeared.

University To Collect
University President Senator

Henry Hicks told the *Gazette* that, "We were satisfied with the contract that was negotiated...we were prepared to pay that money." Now Dalhousie will have to, "...play the game according to the letter of the

law and the spirit of the law. Whether you like the law or not, you have to obey it."

The university now considers itself legally obliged to decrease maintenance workers salaries by some 10%. It will soon begin to recover, from already reduced wages, about \$400 per employee, what is now called an "overpayment". Senator Hicks expects that the approximate \$100,000 collection will help nicely in reducing the University's debt.

The University's next step will be to get together with the A.I.B. to discuss the means it will use to separate employees from their money. As well, the Administration will be seeking ways of collecting from any workers who have quit, or have retired since March 31 when the second part of the past years wage increase went into effect.

When the Dalhousie Administration signed the original pact they agreed that, "...in the event that the University becomes subject to the guidelines, the University will use its best efforts to support the Collective Agreement in its totality."

Union local President Kelly doubts that the University lived up to its side of the bargain. "I don't feel that the Board of Governors at Dalhousie fought very hard in their presentation to the A.I.B. They all sit back and see what we are trying to survive on, how can they sit back and let anybody do this to us...?"

Below Poverty Line

The "what we are trying to survive on" that Bill Kelly is talking about is a wage just dropped, by government edict, below the poverty line. Statistics Canada reports that the poverty mark for a family of four in Halifax is a forty hour week at \$4.25 per hour. After the rollback, the highest paid Dalhousie maintenance worker or cleaner will be getting only \$4.02.

NOT EVERYONE INVOLVED WITH DAL IS SUFFERING. CHANCELLOR LADY BEAVERBROOK, BENEFACTOR AND FRIEND OF PRESIDENTS, SLAPPED \$16,500 DOWN ON THE TICKET COUNTER AND HAD A DC-8 FLY HER PRIVATELY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC THIS WEEK.

HOW COME?

ON A REGULAR FLIGHT, SHE WOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO HAVE HER TWO DOGS RIDE IN HER LAP.

Faculty supports CLC 'Protest Day'

The Dalhousie Faculty Association voted its support of the October 14, National Day of Protest and its opposition to the present Wage and Price Controls program. This decision was reached in an emergency meeting at the Faculty Club late last night.

Earlier this week, the Dalhousie Student Union and Graduate Council passed strongly worded resolutions supporting the Day of Protest and opposing Wage and Price controls. The Graduate Association voted to give Dal-

housie maintenance workers \$500 towards the costs of their AIB appeal; the DFA did likewise last evening.

DFA urged members to attend October 14 activities; but because faculty members are not unionized, could not urge them to boycott classes.

Most of the support staff and many students are expected to support the October 14 'Day of Protest'.

The *Dalhousie Gazette* also supports the 'Day of Protest'.

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by Greg Zed

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