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Posties hit hard

by Marc Allain

As of midnight, October 24, members of the Nova Local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) owed \$292,000 in fines to the Canadian government. The union rank and file are being fined \$100 a day along with a straight \$2,500 and \$250 a day for union leaders for defying the government's back to work legislation.

The strike breaking legislation, Bill C-8, came into effect after midnight on Thursday October 19. The Bill, known as the Post Office Continuation Act, declared the CUPW national postal strike illegal and ordered all Post Office employees back to work. CUPW represents over 23,000 workers who handle mail work inside the Post Office.

Members of the Nova Local of CUPW have to date ignored the back to work order. The Nova Local, which represents 425 inside postal workers in Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and Lower Sackville had been staffing picket lines at the Halifax Post Office on Bedford Row until an injunction made picket activity illegal last Tuesday (October 24).

The injunction, handed down by Nova Scotia Supreme Court Justice Constance Glube, allows Halifax police to arrest any CUPW members who try to picket on Post Office property. The decision to obey the injunction was made by the local membership at a general meeting on Tuesday afternoon. "We decided that it was easier to organize the strike from our headquarters than from jail cells downtown" local president Robert Andstein told *the Gazette*.

Partial mail delivery resumed on Tuesday when the CUPW workers withdrew their pickets and mail carriers entered the main Halifax Post Office. The mail carriers had honored the picket lines since the beginning of the strike. Andstein said the mail that is being delivered is that which remained in the building when the strike was called.

Post Office officials have announced that over 40% of the CUPW members have returned to work and that mail delivery will soon return to normal. Andstein, however, says only 10% of the Nova Local have returned to work, and that they along with other scab workers and management personnel are handling the work normally done by CUPW personnel. *The Gazette* has received a report that the Post Office was attempting to recruit high school students to replace the striking workers, the report remained unconfirmed at press time.

Members of the Coalition for Full employment and several other unions affiliated with the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour have replaced CUPW workers on the picket line, distributing information literature to passerby. Because they do not constitute a "legal picket" they are being ignored by the letter carriers.

Andstein told *the Gazette* that the Union was appealing the injunction hoping to have it lifted before the November 14 expiry date. The union argued against the injunction at the original hearing on the grounds that it infringed on their right to free speech, Glube, however, ruled that since advertisements in the local media were still open to them the injunction did not constitute such an infringement.

The Postal Workers have been informed by Post Master General Gilles Lamontagne,

that unless they report to work by midnight on Thursday October 26, they will lose their jobs. Bill C-8 itself does not allow the government to fire its employees. A clause in the Public Service Act, however, allows the government to dismiss any employees for "abandonment of position" if they do not report their absence from work for 7 successive days. Andstein says he thinks the government will attempt to enforce this clause on all CUPW members who continue to ignore Bill C-8.

The Nova Local met on Wednesday October 25 to discuss recommendations from CUPW's national executive concerning the return to work order. Their decision was unavailable at press time.

CUPW workers in Victoria recently returned to work for a 24 hour period in order to work around the clause.



Dal Photo/Sineno

At Shirreff Hall

Free to stay

by Danièle Gauvin and Maria Rey

Shirreff Hall is a home for about 430 women; and many feel that it's time to do some housekeeping and sweep away a few cobwebs. Last weekend, Shirreff Hall residents took the first steps in an effort to bring 'open' hours or extended visiting privileges for male visitors. Presently, men have to be signed in after six p.m. and they can't remain in the building after 3 a.m. or be readmitted before noon. If implemented, 'open' hours will extend men's visiting rights, allowing them to be signed in or out at any time during the weekends.

A survey taken last weekend by a special committee headed by Cathy McLean and Véronique Blanchard revealed that a strong majority of women are in favor of the change. "We hoped that the survey would give us an accurate representation of the women's attitudes towards the proposed changes," McLean said. The committee has received 400 replies, representing 92% of the Hall's population. "We now feel that we have a strong enough base of support to make a serious presentation to the Dean," said Residence council Vice-President Sue McMillan. She added that she could not reveal the exact results of this survey until a second one, scheduled for next week, has been completed, so as not to influence the results. The second survey, conducted by a group of marketing students, will deal with areas of residence life which would be directly affected by the change, such as security.

Dissatisfaction with the

present curfew hours has been an issue for several years now, according to Mary Jarrat, secretary of the Residence council. One recurrent complaint is that women with out-of-town boyfriends or brothers haven't been able to give them shelter on their visits. Other women argue that the choice of bringing a man or woman to one's own room when one wishes should be made by the individual and not regulated by the university. Some residents argue that students in the men's residence have complete freedom of choice and that restricting the women only is discriminatory.

Security has been the greatest worry of both proponents and opponents of the new curfew. Christine Irving, the Dean of Women, has expressed concern about the Hall's security in general, notwithstanding the special problems which might arise from the changed visiting rights. The janitors who now patrol the Hall at night do so out of their own goodwill; a permanent or semi-permanent security person is one possibility being considered.

In order for the changes to be implemented, the proposals must first be presented to the Dean. Her approval would lead to a trial period which might then lead to a permanent change by the Board of Governors. If the Dean doesn't approve, the proposal will be taken to the next Student Council meeting, where councillors may vote to have the council executive bring it directly to the Board of Governors' meeting next Thursday.



Dal Photo/Morris

Cleaners to strike

On Wednesday evening, Dalhousie cleaning staff (CUPE, local 1392) voted to strike because their wage demands have not been met by the university administration. The workers will be in a legal position to strike on Wednesday, Nov. 1.