

## Second Annual Meeting

The stories in this edition of **Union Woman** summarize the past year for women in the union movement.

On the one hand, a start in organizing bankworkers, new women's committees, English classes in factories, and a successful International Women's Day.

On the other hand, cutbacks and lay-offs, working conditions that prompt a strike, and the continuing economic recession.

The OWW Executive reports on the past year's work and the tasks facing the organization in the year to come on page 2 of this issue.

## Women Steelworkers

By DEIRDRE GALLAGHER

Rachel Barriault, Shirley Hawes and Betty Wickie have been working at INCO in Sudbury for the last four years. As a result they managed to survive this round of lay-offs but the next time all women at INCO will be laid off.

Because INCO only started hiring women four years ago, this means that the women have low seniority. It was because of this situation and other problems in their employment that these three women decided to set up a women's committee in their local union.

United Steelworkers, Local 6500. They wanted to bring to the attention of their whole local the particular difficulties that women face both as workers at INCO and as members of their union.

They have worked hard on various issues — like investigating the company's refusal to let women work in a certain area of the plant because it was maintained that women are negatively affected by an antidote pill used to "protect" workers against chemical pollution. The women's committee wondered if it was bad for women wasn't it bad for men

too? They discovered that the company had no proof, no documentation to defend their position. They became suspicious that the company was just using this as another device to discriminate against women.

Suspicion that INCO discriminates against women is well founded. For example, there are still many areas of the above-ground operation where women are not allowed to work. The reasoning? The old excuse that there are no washroom facilities. Of course, women are not allowed to work underground either. But this is a legislative problem. In Ontario, women are prevented from working underground because it is considered to be an unfit place for women to

work. In other provinces, though, women do work underground. INCO can hide behind the discriminatory Ontario legislation.

Right now, according to Rachel Barriault, the chairperson of the women's committee, the women are working on a brief to be presented to the union's negotiating committee on the question of maternity leave. The provisions of the present agreement are completely inadequate. They are pressuring their union to agree to negotiate for maternity leave as a priority item in bargaining.

The general position of women in Sudbury is pretty bleak. With the lay-offs and government cutbacks there are even fewer jobs for women than there were before. • Cont'd Pg. 3



# UNION WOMAN

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## Rise of Bankworkers

By PHIL HARGREAVES

It's no fun being a bank worker. Most members of the public think that the women behind the bank counter have a pleasant, comfortable and clean job. It would come as a surprise to them to learn that a bank teller has a heavy responsibility, is under a lot of pressure, often has uncomfortable working conditions and is very poorly paid.

Each bank teller is responsible for all the money that she handles at her wicket. She has to remember and carry out numerous different procedures at the same time as being courteous to the public and working fast. Generally it's not possible to sit down at the wicket and many banks have no working areas at which the tellers can sit down. Sometimes a teller can remain standing at her wicket for as long as seven hours without a break.

At the end of each day the teller is responsible for balancing the books at her wicket. If they don't balance, she has to stay until she has found the mistake and corrected it. Many banks charge the teller a fine of \$10 plus 10% of the imbalance, if the mistake cannot be found.

For all this a bank teller earns the princely sum of approximately \$8,000 a year.

The banks provide a classic case of female job ghettos. 73% of bank employees are women and they are almost all to be found in the lowest paying jobs such as bank tellers and ledger keepers at the bottom of the bank hierarchy. The vast majority of the managers are men, and a branch manager can earn three times as much as a bank teller.

In general every one in a management position has been promoted up through the hierarchy. However, a man can reach a management position in two years or less, having spent as little as three months in the lowest positions. A woman can be stuck as a bank teller for years and years.

Small wonder then, that there is



a crying need for bank workers, particularly women bank workers, to organize. In British Columbia the Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada (SORWUC) accepted this challenge. With little money but with massive volunteer help, close to 200 people, they organized a campaign to unionize bank workers.

In June 1977 they gained an historic decision which made it possible for banks to be organized branch by branch. Since then, SORWUC has organized 20-30 branches including two in Saskatchewan.

Part of SORWUC's success is that it is a union organized by women, run by women, serving a predominantly female membership. Contract items and demands are geared to a female workforce, (for example, a longer lunch break once a month means that women can hold union meetings during the day, and do not have to worry about childcare), and the membership has full control of the union's activities. SORWUC organizers are bank workers themselves who fully understand the difficulties of working in a bank, so the workers do not perceive SORWUC as a union which would be insensitive to the problems of women workers.

SORWUC's successes have

• Cont'd Pg. 3

## Great Day for Women

By BARBARA CAMERON

On March 11 over two thousand women and men marched through downtown Toronto in a demonstration of protest and celebration marking International Women's Day 1978. The event was sponsored by a coalition of organizations representing women and labour, along with community groups and individuals.

Despite the drizzling rain, the demonstrators sang songs of protest and chanted such demands as "equal pay for equal work" and "abortion is our right". They marched from Convocation Hall up University Avenue, across Bloor and down Yonge Street to Nathan Phillips Square. The police had to abandon their attempts to confine the demonstration to the sidewalks and for a few hours that Saturday afternoon the main streets of Toronto belonged to the women.

In keeping with the origin of International Women's Day in the struggles of trade union women in the early years of this century, the banner of Organized Working Women led the large contingent

of trade union women taking part in the demonstration. Members of CUPE 79 and of other locals carried banners and signs identifying their unions.

At a rally held in Convocation Hall before the march, Carolyn Egan spoke on behalf of the International Women's Day Committee and outlined the main issues of the demonstration. These included: 1) employment: women's right to work and to equal pay, equal work and equal opportunity; 2) social services: an end to cutbacks, the provision of quality day care for all and the funding of necessary services such as Nellie's; 3) racial discrimination: an end to the deportation of Jamaican women and to discrimination against native women; 4) women's control of their bodies: repeal of the abortion law and the development of safe, effective birth control; 5) an end to violence against women; 6) democratic rights for lesbians: inclusion of "sexual orientation" in the human rights code and the right to custody of children.

Other speakers at the rally were Heather McNeil from SORWUC who spoke of that union's experi-

ences in organizing bank workers in British Columbia and Sharrona Hall who described the discrimination and harassment of Jamaican women by immigration officials. OWW Executive Secretary Deirdre Gallagher chaired the rally.

Shouts of "unionize the Royal Bank" and "unionize Eaton's" came from the trade union contingent and were picked up by others as the demonstration moved down Yonge Street. Copies of **Union Woman** were distributed to the demonstrators and to women and men watching the march from the sidewalks.

The demonstrators arrived at Nathan Phillips Square cold but satisfied with the success of the march. The afternoon's events ended with singing and a speech from a representative of the International Women's Day Committee about future activities.

There have been two meetings of the Coalition since the march and preliminary plans have been made for public meetings on unemployment among women and the right to abortion.



# UNION WOMAN

## OWW Newspaper Committee:

Barbara Cameron, Tina Cartwright,  
Joy Craig, Mary Ellen Marus  
Susan Seide, Marilyn Spink,  
Valerie Packota

Contributor: Maryka Omatsu

Union Woman is published once every two months by Organized Working Women. The Editorial Board of the newspaper is the Executive Council of OWW.

Union Woman is free to members of OWW and is available for distribution to union locals on request.

Letters to the editor, opinion pieces and news stories should be sent to:  
**Union Woman, 15 Gervais Dr., Suite 301,  
Don Mills, Ont. 447-7462.**

## Executive Reports to Membership

### Purpose of OWW

*The purpose of Organized Working Women is to unite women in the organized labour movement, as women and as unionists, to work within our unions to pursue a policy of positive aggressive actions in solidarity with our brothers to improve our conditions and to strengthen our individual unions. To this end every member shall declare her solidarity with other sisters and brothers in the labour movement.*

*Aware that there are many unorganized women and that this constitutes a threat to our strength of union, yet conscious of the need to fight any form of division among unions, Organized Working Women pledges itself to assist in the organizing of the unorganized.*

OWW Constitution, Article 2.

### Working Women Today

- Women are a particularly exploited or oppressed "majority". As a result of our dual functions in the home and the work place we face a double burden of work. For one of these jobs (in the home) we receive no compensation financially and virtually no social recognition for the value of our work.

- On the job we receive 60% of the wages of men. We are ghettoized into particular job enclaves.

- In Ontario alone in 1974 the profit to employers as a result of sexual discrimination has been estimated at 3 billion dollars (as reported in the OFL "Facts and Figures"). Women are used as cheap labour. The labour movement must develop strategies to fight this discrimination.

- In the last 20 years women have entered the work force at an accelerating rate. We now represent 40% of the work force in Ontario. Over 50% of

working women are mothers. Our entry into the work force has created profound changes in social and economic life.

- Women are now 25% of the union movement. Female union membership has grown by 144% in the last ten years compared with a 57% growth for men. This change in the sex composition of the labour movement has created strains, and new challenges as women trade unionists are struggling to take our place as equals in the union movement.

### The Recession and Women

Unemployment in Ontario is 7.9%: 7% for men and 9.2% for women. These official statistics do not give the full picture. The unemployment rate for women, especially young women, is actually much higher.

In order to be considered unemployed, a woman must be registered as ready, willing and able to work. If a woman cannot demonstrate that she has babysitters for her children she is not considered to be on the job market. Of course if she is not working she cannot afford child care.

Government apologists explain the higher unemployment among women by suggesting that because we really don't need to work (being marginal or secondary workers anyway) we are not as committed to finding work as men are.

The real cause of the extraordinarily high rate of female unemployment can be found in the structure of the economy and government policies which defend business interests.

Women are the last hired and first fired. We are less unionized than men, and therefore we have less job protection. Women work in predominately female job ghettos which are being hard hit by government cutbacks.

Government spokespersons try to take attention away from the actual causes of unemployment by using prejudices against work-

ing women (that we are only working for luxuries, that we take jobs away from men, etc.). Bud Cullen, Minister of Employment and Immigration says: "Unemployment no longer means what it used to — loss of all family income. Close to two-thirds of the unemployed are in families with at least one other wage earner. In fact, over half the beneficiaries are secondary or tertiary wage earners."

Bette Stephenson, Ontario Minister of Labour, told the legislature that women will have to forego equal pay under the present economic situation. Not only are women supposedly secondary wage earners, but our wages are to remain second-class too.

The economic recession has affected all of the women's movement, a movement which until now has been primarily a middle-class concern. The Humber College Centre for Women, Nellie's Hostel, the Women's Credit Union and other alternate women's services have had funding problems.

There is a growing realization in the women's movement that the economic attacks provide a common ground to join with working class women who are fighting for their jobs. This coming together creates the possibility of a new and greater power for the women's movement as a whole.

### Year's Highlights

#### Grant

The last annual meeting of OWW accepted a grant from the Secretary of State's Women's Program. With this money we set up an office and hired Deirdre Gallagher as full-time staff. This has helped us to establish OWW as a legitimate force in the trade unions and to encourage rank-and-file women to take an active role in their unions by setting up women's committees to press for their needs as working women.

#### OFL Convention

Perhaps our most significant activity was our participation in the OFL convention. It was there that we established ourselves as a political force worthy of respect. We operated as a team on the convention floor, we distributed our newspapers, and we published and distributed a statement on women's committees. We held the first successful women's caucus in the history of the OFL. At the caucus meeting the discussion gave us a strong sense of the support we have for our work.

In the end, at the OFL executive meeting following the convention, it was agreed to establish a women's committee. OWW has a resource person sitting with that committee.

#### Women's Groups

At the founding convention we

agreed that contact with women's groups outside of the unions was important. This year our work with the Equal Pay Coalition has been important and useful. OWW's role at the government equal pay conference, along with the Coalition, received widespread publicity and established our authority in a wider milieu. We were instrumental in gaining trade union support for International Women's Day. This not only reflects our strength and influence but also indicates a grow-

ing awareness in the trade union movement of the importance of the struggle for women's rights.

#### Newspaper

We launched UNION WOMAN as a regular publication, with a circulation of 3,000. The paper has been our main way of reaching out to the membership, drawing in new members, and providing a much-needed educational forum. UNION WOMAN is becoming a force for unifying and informing women in the union movement.

#### Newspaper Committee



This year's Newspaper Committee members (from left to right): Barbara Cameron, Tina Cartwright, Marilyn Spink, and Susan Seide. Absent when photo taken: Joy Craig and Val Pakota.

### New Focus

Given the current economic crisis, the focus of our strategy for next year should continue to be activism. However, while discussing some of the major initiatives and successes of OWW this past year, it became apparent to us that many of these issues were not brought forward to the membership, to discuss our involvement in them, our role or our position.

We have come to realize now that while we have become increasingly enlightened, enthusiastic and active, precisely through discussion and involvement in these issues, we have often left the membership behind and out.

We feel that not only must the executive be more accountable to the membership, but that OWW can only expect to gain the participation of the membership and new members by encouraging their discussion and involvement in the issues that confront working women.

It was just at those times last year when women were encouraged to be involved in the activity of OWW, such as at the OFL convention, that people were the most enthusiastic and the real need for and the possibilities of OWW as a force for trade union women became most apparent. We want to work together and build on that experience.



**OWW  
Enters  
Third  
Year**



## Public Service Under Fire

**Commentary** is a forum for debate and discussion on issues of interest to trade union women. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of *Organized Working Women*.

By MARG MOORES and MARY ELLEN MARUS

The Public Service Alliance of Canada, representing 178,000 members, has gained overwhelming support from organized labour for the ongoing campaign to defeat the federal government's latest attack on public service employees: Bill C-28. The CLC convention unanimously adopted an emergency resolution calling on the CLC to do "everything in its power" to defeat the legislation.

Labour relations in the federal public service has taken a severe beating with the introduction by the federal government of Bill C-28. It's perhaps the most repressive piece of labour legislation in recent memory. If enacted, this bill will result in a denial of the hard-won but limited collective bargaining rights which federal public service employees fought for forty years to secure.

- By providing for a system "of total compensation comparability" (a device to keep the wages of unionized employees at the level of non-unionized and therefore low-paid workers), the Bill would render collective bargaining a meaningless charade and establish a control mechanism like the Anti-Inflation Programme.

- By enshrining the right of the employer to assign duties to employees in addition to the right to assign duties to positions, the Bill would give carte blanche to the government to alter at will duties of an employee, thereby undermining the collective agreement, the classification plan and merit system.

- By making it possible for the employer to lay off employees temporarily, the Bill would introduce unprecedented and unwarranted restrictions.

- By incorporating into the law the right of the employer to lock out its employees, the Bill would introduce retaliatory tactics in staff relations.

- And, by extending managerial exclusions, the Bill would prevent thousands of federal employees from exercising their right to organize. The total effect of the proposals in Bill C-28, therefore, would be to negate the very

rights that were secured in the Public Service Staff Relations Act that came into force eleven years ago.

### Union-busting bill

Andy Stewart, Alliance President, received a thunderous ovation at the CLC convention where he explained the Bill "is designed to remove what collective bargaining we have in the public sector. If this Bill goes through it will impose computerized bargaining with no decision making on the part of the membership." He described the Bill, which would impose a formula called "average comparability of total compensation" on public service employees, as a bastard child of the Anti-Inflation Board."

Stewart's speech warned of political activity by the federal employees if the Bill is not withdrawn or defeated, marked by what may be the beginning of the radicalization and politicization of the federal workers.

Dennis McDermott, C.L.C. President, said the public service workers are the new scapegoat of the government to obscure its incompetence.

Kealey Cummings, secretary-treasurer of CUPE described the bill as "the most union-busting piece of legislation in the history of the country." He added that the federal Bill indirectly affects 42% of the affiliates of the CLC. This will also reflect on every private sector employee in the country. The private sector, in time, will also have a cap on wages and bargaining by computer. "This bill, if passed, will mark the beginning of the downfall of the labour movement."

The emergency resolution calls on the CLC to do everything in its power to defeat the bill; to organize special campaigns to defeat any MP who supports the bill, and to organize "whole-hearted support for any demonstrations, meetings, lobbies or any other actions necessary to defeat Bill C-28 organized by the PSAC and other unions directly affected by this regressive legislation."

Bill C-28 is anti-labour and if passed would be destructive of both the public and private sector unions. All of us should support this campaign to defeat Bill C-28.

*Marg Moores and Mary Ellen Marus are members of Local 556 of the Canadian Employment and Immigration Union (CEIU), which is a component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.*

## Women Steelworkers

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fore. Many women are being forced onto welfare. Because of this situation, the women's committee decided to organize activities to commemorate International Women's Day. They reached out to women in the community as well as their local union. It was the first time the committee had undertaken such a massive responsibility. They had no idea how it would turn out. But on the night of March 10th, hundreds of women arrived at the union hall — more chairs and tables had to be set up. There was a great feeling of elation and pride as women came together to celebrate their strength and to protest discrimination against them. Men from the union came out too. And they were surprised and impressed to see such a great turnout. The women's committee proved it had muscle.

Following this success, the women's committee invited Organized Working Women to send a speaker to address a meeting sponsored by the committee. The meeting was open to the public and it was publicized at INCO. I

attended on behalf of OWW and talked about the situation of women in the workforce, unemployment and cutbacks.

I spoke about the myths used against working women to force them out of the workforce at this time of high unemployment, and raised the question of a trade union's responsibility to its female members. The discussion was lively and at times heated as men and women together talked about their views on working women, about male chauvinism and the attitude of INCO to women workers.

Because of the inspiring work of Local 6500's women's committee, Rachel Barriault was invited to sit as a member of the newly established Ontario Federation of Labour women's committee. Her contribution to this committee will be indispensable as a representative of rank-and-file women fighting for equality — for the right to work in traditionally male areas, against sexist employers like INCO, and within the union for full recognition of women's rights and needs as union members.

## Rise of Bankworkers

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been some of the major victories gained by women in the labour movement during 1977. OWW congratulates them!

The CLC has also been quick to take advantage of the opportunity to organize banks on a branch basis. In early 1978 they initiated an organizing drive against the banks through the Union of Bank Employees (UBE). To this end \$1,000,000 per year has been set aside, and five staff people have been hired. There is one organizer in the Maritimes, one in Ontario, and three support staff in Ottawa, one of whom also does some organizing.

While the CLC is to be commended in recognizing the need of bank workers and accepting the challenge to organize them, OWW has some questions about the amount of resources they are putting into the campaign. By

their own reckoning, if one branch were organized per week it would take 150 years to organize Canada's 7,500 branches. In Toronto which has approximately 30,000 bank employees in over 1,000 branches, the drive would take 20-25 years. Yet women bank workers cannot afford to wait 25 years for a union, and Andrew Stanley, the UBE Toronto organizer, faces a Herculean task if he is to attempt this work alone.

OWW suggests that the CLC take a lesson from SORWUC's organizing drive, in terms of the amount of man and woman power needed, and the sort of priorities needed to persuade a large female workforce to become unionized. In the meantime OWW welcomes Andrew Stanley and wishes him every success in his attempts.

*Phil Hargreaves is a member of CUPE Local 79.*

## School at the Factory

By MARILYN SPINK

"We thought we'd be lucky to get twenty women for that first class at the Carhartt factory. At four o'clock people started leaving their sewing machines and going to the cafeteria. Forty-three women showed up to learn English that day. Even more came to the next class."

Andre Bekerman, International Representative for the United Garment Workers Union of America, thinks that his union's experiment with English as a Second Language classes (ESL) at the factory is a big success. The United Garment Workers are the second union in Toronto to give the classes a try.

Last summer shop stewards for the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union distributed a leaflet in four languages to workers in the Tip Top Tailor building. The union wanted to see if there would be a demand for English classes. April Coulton, Education Director for Amalgamated, says that six workers said they'd come to classes at the Union Hall in the evening. Sixty signed up for classes right after work in the plant cafeteria. The second week 90 women came to

the cafeteria to learn English.

The Toronto Board of Education pays the teachers, who must meet the Board's standards and the unions' approval, on the basis of one teacher maintaining a minimum of fifteen students in each class.

The garment industry in Toronto is sustained by the labour of thousands of immigrant workers, most of them women. Many do not speak any English. Some cannot read or write in their own language.

Conventional ESL classes are offered to immigrants during the day, or in the evening, after dinner. Working immigrant women with family responsibilities find it extremely difficult to get out in the evening to attend English classes. For many it is impossible.

Although some of the women attending classes after work at their factories are recent immigrants, many have been in Canada for more than five years. A workplace programme is the only opportunity they have to learn.

Mary Ellen Nettle, the teacher who co-ordinated the initial program at Tip Top, says that the

pilot projects this year have shown two big problems with ESL in the workplace. The first is that the usual ESL workbooks are just not relevant to factory workers. They feature men with briefcases and women at the sink.

The teachers, three men and three women, have been producing their own teaching materials for the classes. They are part of the ESL Literacy Core Group, a project of local community centres. This special preparation takes longer than the teaching does, but the teachers get paid only for teaching.

Another big problem has been ensuring, as the Board of Education requires, that there are fifteen in each class. When production fell early this year, the factories at Tip Top often let women off work at one o'clock. Some women valued the English classes so much that they stayed until five when classes began, but class sizes dropped. Lay offs also caused a decrease in the number of students. Participation rates have been consistently higher at Carhartt's.

There's an easy explanation for



this. Carhartt's management lets workers leave a half-hour early for classes, and will pay them for one-half hour of the hour-long class.

The teachers and union representatives have formed a Task Force to search out funding for a more ambitious program next term. The Task Force intends to convince management in other factories that they should contribute to the programme. The group will contract with the Board of Education to teach 300 students in factories next year. The contract will give unions

some flexibility in the size of the classes at different plants.

The Task Force intends to develop and publish a workbook and to produce other teaching aids for use in factory English classes.

One of the students at Tip Top wrote a letter of support for the Task Force's funding proposal. She said: "I make pockets. I do piece work. I start work at 8. I finish work at 5. I like English classes because I don't speak English. I can't understand the foreman. Or my children. I make \$167 in one week. I want the class at Tip Top."

## CRITIC'S CORNER

### Upcoming Election

**Critic's Corner** is a regular column of opinion on cultural topics. Any member of OWW is welcome to contribute an article to be considered for publication. Please type, double-spaced, all submissions.

By SUSAN SEIDE

With the advent of the federal election, it is appropriate for us to question where the present Liberal government and the parties in opposition stand regarding working women.

On March 6, 1978, Edward Broadbent (NDP, leader) used his party's only "opposition day with a vote" to introduce a motion about the discrimination of women in the labour force onto the floor of the House of Commons. It reads as follows:

That this House asserts that the women of Canada ought to have fully equal rights in participating in the Canadian economy, and in relation thereto condemns the government for its discriminatory policies and statements regarding Canadian women in the labour force.

A lively debate ensued, at least on the part of the parties in opposition. Mr. Broadbent and others supported the motion with hard facts.

#### Women victims

About the unequal position of women in the labour force, Mr. Broadbent said "Few members of parliament are aware that Canadian women are greater victims of unemployment and the resultant poor economic situation than are men." He also cited differences in pay between men and women and differences in job opportunities and advancement open to men and women.

Stanley Knowles (NDP) pointed out that since women "have fewer opportunities to get decent jobs with good pay ... it follows that their pension income in later years is behind that of men." The results: "two-thirds of (women) between the ages of 65 and 70 are living at or below the poverty line and three-quarters of those over the age of 70 are living below the poverty line."

Besides noting several existing gross inequities regarding pensions for women, Mr. Knowles stated that "the equivalent of the Canada Pension Plan entitlement (should) be made available to women who are in the home" and who are not, strictly speaking, counted as in the labour force.

Flora MacDonald (PC), who is more concerned about this issue than many Tories, spoke in favour of the motion, saying "We should long ago have arrived at the point where equality of women in the work force is a matter of fact and not a matter of debate."

#### Liberal defense

The key Liberal speaker was Marc Lalonde (Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations). Astonishingly, he did not seize the chance created by the NDP motion to identify problems facing women in the labour force or to state the goals of the government in this regard. Instead, Mr. Lalonde attacked the record of the other parties as best he could. He then named, generally, changes in legislation affecting women passed under previous and present Liberal governments. The list being brief, he repeated it in English, although everyone had heard it the first time through simultaneous translation.

No other important ministers were present to speak to this vital issue. Mr. Lalonde left after re-



cess, so he did not hear the whole debate about this government's discriminatory policies and statements concerning women in the labour force.

#### Myths attacked

Mr. Broadbent had said that "myth No. 1 which the government is trying not to correct but to perpetuate ... is that unemployment among married women does not really matter because they are secondary earners. The reality is that 4 million working women today make up 40 per cent of the work force in Canada. ... The reality is that almost one half of them are not secondary wage earners at all but are the sole providers either for themselves or their families."

Mr. Broadbent went to deal "with myth No. 2 ... that women are causing unemployment among men. Both the Minister of Employment and Immigration and the Prime Minister have referred a number of times to the allegations that increasing participation of women in the labour force has caused a recent growth in unemployment."

"The reality is that two-thirds of women workers are in clerical, sales, or service jobs. The reality is that women are not stealing men's jobs at all. The reality is that they are still being held down to the lowest paying jobs in our society which, by and large, men have rejected."

The motion was lost in a vote that was split, in general, with the Liberals against and the parties in opposition for.

As working women, we must review the government's past actions and inactions concerning women in the labour force. Our votes must reflect the records of our politicians.

## It's Everyone's Fight

By WENDY CUTHBERTSON

There are rats. There are usually only three toilets working for more than 100 workers. People are burned repeatedly on spitting moulds. Wire racks fall on them. Dust levels trigger headaches and sinus complaints. Outdated machinery injures and mutilates workers. A local doctor calls it "a butcher shop".

The wage rate starts at \$2.85 an hour. After ten years of service, a worker can look forward to \$3.24 an hour. There are no fringe benefits to speak of.

The company refuses to negotiate on union security, 40 years after the Rand formula.

Those are the issues behind the two-month-old strike by 130 members of UAW Local 1620 against Fleck Manufacturing, an auto parts firm located in Centralia, Ontario, outside London. Moreover, the fact that such disgraceful wages and conditions could only be visited upon women in this day and age means as well that the strike is a vital one for women's rights.

But those issues don't always make headline news. What put the Fleck strike on the front page was the unprecedented and dangerous involvement of the Ontario Provincial Police, who went into the plant even before the strike began and lectured the workers about their behaviour on the picket line. The OPP action became even more suspect when it was discovered that the company was connected

with the Ontario government at the highest level. James Fleck, who founded the company and whose immediate family still retain a 50 percent share, is Ontario's Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

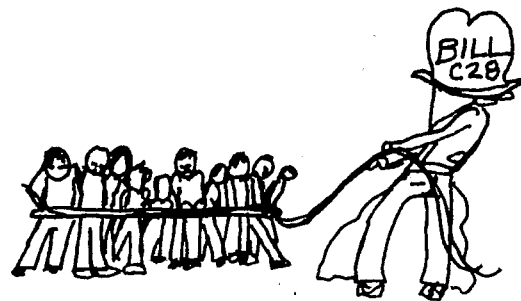
The OPP has kept up its involvement in the strike, dispatching large numbers of officers to the picket line. According to its own figures, the police have spent \$2.5 million on the strike — or \$280 for every hour of scab labour.

Fleck has become something of a symbol for the labour movement. Financial support for the strike has come from many unions besides the UAW, and a number of unions have sent reinforcements to the Fleck picket line.

Ontario Labour Minister Dr. Bette Stephenson has indicated her support for the union's security demand, but so far she has given no indication that her support will be translated into government pressure on Fleck to settle.

However, the UAW is pulling all stops on this one. On his acclamation to the Canadian directorship of the UAW on April 22, Bob White, formerly administrative assistant to Dennis McDermott, said that the UAW will intensify its efforts on the picket line and elsewhere. "We won't stop until we get an agreement for those women that gives them some measure of human dignity and includes a union security clause," he promised.

Wendy Cuthbertson is a member of the American Newspaper Guild and is on staff with the UAW.



## "A Planned Economy is Urgently Needed"

Vicki Newall is a member of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America and has worked at Canadian General Electric for some years.

CGE is closing its TV manufacturing plant on Royce Avenue. Vicki is one of 54 hourly-rated workers who are being laid-off. Fortunately, she has managed to line up another job at Philco-Ford, where she will join a UAW local. She hopes the Philco job lasts.

By VICKI NEWALL

What does free enterprise mean today? It means large corporations shutting up shop and leaving workers behind when they move their factories to lower wage areas.

It means workers high and dry when factories and distributors buy components or products from another country.

CGE tells us that the plant has

to close because of TV imports. But CGE says it will continue to provide dealers with GE sets imported from the States.

The announcement by CGE to get out of the TV assembly busi-



Lois Bedard (OSSTF) and Vicki Newall (UE) with OWW contingent on International Women's Day.

ness in Canada is the latest in a long list of plant closures. It seems like daylight robbery to us when the ground from under our feet is exported, and very little is kept for our own needs in the way of energy, manufactured goods and employment.

It is snowballing, and the first to suffer are the factory workers as always, and those who would like to be for want of a job, any job.

The only free enterprise a worker has is negotiating her pay packet, if she is lucky, and how she spends the little she has left after taxes and necessities.

With our jobs being exported at the rate they are, and the extent to which the remaining industry is controlled by Americans, it's time for a change in government. A planned economy is urgently needed for Canada.

It is clear that the Liberals and Conservatives are going to take us nowhere. We need a change that will let us call our country and our souls our own.

## Join OWW!



Membership in OWW is open to all women in the Toronto area who are members of bona fide collective bargaining units. Membership is \$10.00 per year.

To join OWW, send in this application form with proof of union membership to the OWW office, address below.

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Address .....  
..... Telephone .....  
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