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New scheme attacks women on benefits

By DONNA ROSENWEIG

According to present government plans, income maintenance for sole-support mothers in Ontario will be shifted from the Family Benefits Program to General Welfare early in 1983. While Family Benefits are given on a long-term basis, General Welfare is seen as short-term assistance to people who are temporarily unemployed.

Details of the new arrangements have not been worked out, leaving only partial answers to several key questions: to what extent will sole-support parents be pressured to work outside the home? How much money will they receive? Should income maintenance for sole-support parents be administered locally or provincially?

One Job or Two

Until the 1970's, the Ontario government tended to view all sole-support mothers as unemployable. In the past years though, some attention has been directed to developing day care facilities, employment counselling, and support services that assist Family Benefits recipients in seeking employment outside the home. But now, as government finances get tighter, services that began as a support to sole-support mothers may very well become compulsory.

Frank Drea, Ontario's Minister of Community and Social Services, announced last June that "the necessary support services have been put in place in many areas of the province. What is necessary now is to develop a co-ordinated approach to their delivery and to tie them directly to the eligibility determination process for social assistance."

The availability and adequacy of day care facilities and of employment opportunities for women should be seriously questioned. A great deal of information about deficiencies in services and the scarcity of employment opportunities is available from groups such as Action Day Care, Neighbourhood Legal Services and Ontario's Women's Bureau.

But even more important is the indication that sole-support mothers will be required to seek employment outside the home in addition to their responsibilities as homemakers. In a letter to the Minister, the Citizens' Advisory Committee of Ottawa's Regional Social Service asked: "Will single parents (men and women) be subject to more pressure to seek employment even if it is their

choice to stay home and care for their children? How will these parents be perceived by the system? As layabouts?" These questions have not been answered.

Money and Administration

At present, people receiving Family Benefits are given a higher allowance, since their long-term earning capacity is generally lower. On Family Benefits, a mother with three children will receive \$696 a month, whereas a couple with two children on General Welfare will receive \$615. (Both figures apply to the November 1981 rate and include a housing subsidy.) The amount of money that a sole-support mother will receive through General Welfare has not yet been determined.

Plans for the administration and government financing of income maintenance programs are also now under consideration. The Family Benefits Program is administered provincially with a single set of regulations that apply across the province. It is cost-shared on a 50-50 basis by the provincial and federal governments. General Welfare, on the other hand, is a municipally administered program. Each municipality develops its own regulations, allowing for systems that can be responsive to community needs in some areas and barbaric in others. Municipal governments pay 20% of the cost of General Welfare, the province contributes 30% and the federal government 50%. Under the proposed changes, sole-support mothers will be served by their municipalities. The government cost-sharing arrangements have not yet been worked out.

Pilot Projects

Information on which to base administrative decisions will be gathered from the experiences of pilot projects being planned for 1982. Pilot projects will be conducted in several areas of the province, including Peel County, Waterloo, and Etobicoke, an area within the Metropolitan Toronto municipality. Only new applicants will be included. While they will be served municipally, they will receive their cheques from the provincial government at Family Benefit rates. The pilot projects are designed primarily to establish and test new administrative procedures and to assess staffing implications.

Sole-Support Mothers Organize

In Metro Toronto, a sole-support mothers' group has

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140,000 Hit Interest Rates

Over 140,000 people converged on Parliament Hill in Ottawa Nov. 21 in the largest protest ever to demand the government take action to bring down escalating interest rates. Initiated by the Canadian Labour Congress, the protest was called by a coalition of concerned groups including homeowners, consumer groups, tenants, farmers, women's organizations and several others. OWW had their own contingent in this massive demonstration. Provincial labour federations and the CLC are holding follow up rallies in local areas.

Microchip unemployment

By DEBORAH LITTMAN

This winter Canada received the grim news that layoffs and plant closures had finally pushed the unemployment rate above the million mark. In our justifiable anger over the shutdown of Canada's dying industries, we may have missed an even more insidious source of unemployment which has been growing in our bustling stores, banks and offices.

Behind this new source of unemployment lies the microchip, a bit of silicon the size of a thumbnail which has facilitated the computerization of tasks ranging from filing to medical diagnosis.

Microcomputers offer employers a method of automating jobs that were previously too complex or expensive to be automated, and employers have been quick to recognize the advantage. These fall into three primary areas — speed, control, and staff reduction.

A word processor vastly increases the speed of secretarial work. Errors can be corrected without time consuming erasures, for example, retyping, which can take up to 70% of the traditional typists' work, is largely eliminated. The machine lays out the letter, justifies margins and may even correct simple spelling and grammatical errors. The word processor can print multiple copies of the text, while the typist goes on to new work. This tremendous speed means

that the same amount of work can be done by a much reduced number of workers. In one Canadian office which introduced word processors, six to eight operators were able to take care of all the text-handling requirements for 198 of the professional and managerial staff.

Additional increases in productivity result from the monitoring and reorganization of work which accompanies the introduction of computer technology. Word processors, electronic cash registers, computer controlled switchboards and the like are capable of recording the exact speed at which an employee is working. Management uses these figures to set work quotas and penalize workers who fail to meet them.

It is not uncommon for employers to use the introduction of computer technology as an excuse to reorganize their operations. This generally involves the centralization of tasks that were previously fragmented, and the narrowing and deskilling of jobs. A secretary, who at one time reported directly to one person and did a wide variety of tasks, now sits in a "word processing centre" typing all day long.

In a case reported by Dr. Marvin Sirbu of the Michigan Institute of Technology's Centre for Policy Alternatives, the company already had secretaries in a typing pool when they gave the secretaries word-processing equipment. A study found that 90% of the saving was from central-

ization; only 10% of the increase was from the new equipment.

Perhaps the most ominous aspect of computer technology is its ability, not only to speed up certain jobs, but to bypass them entirely. Letters typed on word processors need no file clerk. The information is automatically "filed" in the computer's memory. Letters can be transmitted instantaneously from one computer terminal to another, eliminating the need for mailroom clerks and postal workers. When sales are rung up on an electronic cash register, the computer corrects inventory figures and orders new stock. Inventory personnel and warehouse workers become superfluous.

These various aspects of computer technology translate directly into job loss. The impact will be felt across a wide spectrum of occupations, but those likely to suffer most severely will be women.

The clerical, sales, and service sectors, where two-thirds of all women are concentrated, are exactly the areas that management has targeted for the introduction of new technology. Various European studies indicate that anywhere between 25% and 40% of office jobs will be replaced by automation in the next ten years.

Much has been made of the fact that, while low level jobs will be eliminated by new technology, new jobs will be created at higher

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Immigrant women battle for equal opportunities

By CATHI CARR

"Most immigrants come from underdeveloped countries and they immigrate to countries largely responsible for the underdevelopment in their native countries," stated Alehndra Cumsill. Cumsilla and Gladys Klostorny from Women Working With Immigrant Women spoke to the January 14 membership meeting of Organized Working Women about the particular plight of immigrant women in this country.

They reported that immigration flow is very much in relationship to the economy of the receiving countries. In the sixties there was a need for labour in this country. When that need closed off, it was followed by immigrants being falsely blamed to taking jobs from Canadians. It must be realized that immigrants are part of the working class of Canada.

Immigration offices are strategically located; where the economic demand is the greatest they have the fewest offices. There are only five immigration offices in all of Africa while there are seven in Britain. There is only a two to four month wait for an immigrant from England while it takes from nine to twelve months to process an immigrant from Jamaica or Latin America.

Immigrants come to Canada looking for the promised land; for a better opportunity for themselves and their children, but immigrant women often find themselves in low-paying, unstable jobs with poor working conditions. They labour in factories which are cold in winter, hot in summer with constant pressures to produce.

Many immigrant women do not speak English and are assumed not to have language needs because they are only the wife of the "breadwinner". When the newly-arrived couple go to the immigration centre, as they are required to do, the counsellor decides who will be the "breadwinner". This designation usually goes to the man even if the woman has more skills, and thus the man gets the English training. The counsellor will suggest to



Immigrant women are often forced to work in sweatshops where only foreign languages are spoken.

the woman that she try to learn some English on her own and then come back and he will see what he can do about getting her into a language course. Predictably, when the woman returns, having acquired some English, she is told that her knowledge of the language is too good for an English course but not good enough for a job retraining program.

English on the Job

Because it is difficult for them to get language training they frequently end up working in such jobs as sewing machine operators where they can work without language. Some women have been in Canada for twenty years and still have no English. They live in ghettos with no exposure to English; they are doing piece work at home, or working in sweatshops where only foreign languages are spoken.

Gladys and Alehndra dealt with the myth that there is a resistance to unions among immigrant women. They stressed that immigrant women often come from countries with militant unions which brought the only gains they achieved in their homelands. In fact, many of these women say that unions are not doing enough, are not aggressive enough in demanding workers rights.

Most immigrant workers are unorganized. There is a need for them to express their needs and demand their rights. They need to know what's going on and when meetings are held. Meetings need to be held when women can attend, with childcare available, and with language translation provided. They do recognize the importance of unions in making any progress but they feel that the ideology of unions must change. The more militant women will have to come forward as leaders to assist other women to come forward and press for change.

There are some valuable resources and community supports for immigrant women:

- The Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples provides counselling re: adaptation problems; E.S.L. programs at three locations in the city, and has a legal clinic among other services.
- The Immigrant Women Job Placement Centre on Spadina.
- Women Working with Immigrant Women, an umbrella group covering such groups as the Working Women Community Centre 1072A Bloor St. W. which serves the Portuguese and Spanish community.
- The Labour Committee of WWIW does consciousness raising with women surrounding demystification about Canada.
- St. Christopher House.
- International Women's Day Committee.
- YWCA — Immigration service.

Cathi Carr is health and safety representative with the Ontario Nurses Association Staff Union.

Bank organizer gets back pay

A bank teller has won her case before the Canada Labor Relations Board for a month's salary and a letter of reference as compensation for her dismissal July 31 from a Vancouver branch of the Toronto Dominion Bank.

Melody Rudd, a member of the Service, Office and Retail Workers Union, was fired four days after union organizing leaflets listing her name and number were distributed outside the branch.

She is now working for the Bank of Montreal who had originally fired her June 5 after she handed out union leaflets near the branch. The bank rehired her after she filed two unfair labor practice charges.



UPDATE

Caretakers fight for equal pay

HAMILTON — A month long strike against the Hamilton School Board, helped narrow the wage gap between women cleaners and their male counterparts.

Money was not the key issue in the strike which settled on Dec. 23. The 530 members of Local 1344 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees were on strike for one collective agreement covering both caretakers (men) and cleaners (women), who were covered under separate and unequal agreements. The base rate for men was \$8.74 an hour while women were paid \$5.65.

"That was the discriminatory factor", said CUPE staff rep Bev Drain. "Women never enjoyed the wages and benefits men did. The cleaners had no pensions, so we were asking for the basic OMERS (Ontario Municipal Employees' Retirement Savings) pension which the caretakers already had. But the board said the women didn't need pensions because they just use their wages to buy nylons anyway."

While the union wanted to combine the two agreements and improve wages and benefits for both men and women, the board wanted an "indepth study", which Drain described as an effort "to rip the guts out of what we enjoyed".

The union was successful in winning one contract which includes a life insurance and pension plan, improved benefits and shift premiums. The average increase was 15.39% with bigger increases for workers on the bottom end of the wage scale. The average pay for a cleaner is now \$6.62. The original \$3.09 an hour wage gap has been narrowed to 92 cents.

Students and parents were also instrumental in forcing the board to settle. During the strike there was a walkout by students at one of Hamilton's biggest high schools demanding that the strike be settled quickly because the school was filthy and health standards inadequate.



Striking caretakers wear signs reading "CUPE Doll" in reference to remarks made by Hamilton school trustee, that women only work "to buy nylons anyway".

Irwin Toy strikers win contract

The 202 day strike at Irwin Toys ended Jan. 5 with a first contract signed between the company and the United Steelworkers Union.

The one year contract provides for a 13% increase for the 100 warehouse and factory workers, who are mostly women, with a minimum rate of \$3.70 an hour. A sick-leave plan is also included. The workers are being recalled based on seniority with an agreement that no reprisals be taken against the strikers.

This is the same contract that an Ontario Government Disputes Advisory Commission recommended last October but was rejected by the company.

When the strike began last June of the 100 workers in the unit, about 20 elected to scab, and many found other jobs, leaving 26 strikers to maintain the picket line.

The strike was given substantial support by the Steelworkers and other labor groups, and included a Women's Solidarity Day organized by the Ontario Federation of Labor Women's Committee. Steelworker District 6 leader Dave Patterson was arrested along with other trade unionists from Local 1005 in Hamilton while picketing with the strikers.

These mass solidarity pickets and a country-wide boycott of Irwin Toys during the Christmas season helped the workers win their right to union representation.



Two hundred and two days on the picket line won Irwin Toy workers a first contract.

Women's lives in El Salvador

Miriam Galdemez is a tiny, vital woman whose roots lie deep in the El Salvadorean countryside. Today she is working in Europe representing the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FRD), the major opposition force which has widespread support in El Salvador. We reprint an abridged interview with her which appeared in Spare Rib, a British women's publication. It was provided by the Committee of Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, 582a College St., 533-8545.

"For women in the countryside the day starts very, very early. Even before the sun has risen they get up from their rough bundle of mattress and, trying not to wake their husbands or step on their children, go outside their little shack and start grinding up maize into flour for tortillas. These are the little pancakes that everybody eats for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Grinding the maize is really hard work, because its still done by hand, and it gives you muscles like rock.

"By the time she's finished the children and her husband will be up. If the children are old enough she'll send them off to get some water, but if not she has to go herself. Water is one of our biggest problems, because only about 30 per cent of people in the countryside have access to safe drinking water so they're always getting sick. Diseases from bad drinking water are one of the biggest killers in El Salvador.

"She looks after the animals; goes down to the river to wash the clothes; collects firewood for cooking; looks after the family's few crops; cooks the dinner; maybe she weaves to make cloth or sews clothes, things like that. Sometimes she'll go and see friends and chat or if a woman is giving birth she'll go and help with the labour, sometimes ..."

"El Salvador's hardly got any hospitals or doctors and most of them are in the capital and cost a fortune. There was a census in 1971 which said that there were three doctors and 17 hospital beds for every 10,000 people. You can imagine how many women die in childbirth and how high the infant mortality rate is as a result. Women have an average of six to eight children but often have twice as many pregnancies.

"Peasant women are migrating now because there is so little work in the countryside and the depression is horrific. Some find work as empleadas and, unless they're very lucky, end up exploited as workers and as women. Its just expected that an empleada will service her boss

and the sons of the family sexually as well. If she refuses she loses her job. Its the same for many nurses and secretaries, they are forced to give into the sexual capriciousness of their bosses or the directors of the hospital to keep their jobs.

"But there's still many women who can't find any sort of work — especially if they're illiterate, which lots of women are. But they've still got to eat and so they fall easily into prostitution and all its evils: beatings, illness, syphilis. But what can they do? They can't go back to the countryside because of the situation there. They're stuck.

"The social structure in El Salvador is inhuman. It's important to say this because, yes, machismo, is a real problem, but nothing's ever going to change until we have the basic necessities of life: economic security; housing; health and education. At the moment most people don't have either. And we're never going to get them until we change the whole power structure in El Salvador. We must join with our men who suffer too, as well as fight for our specific rights. Thats why we set up the Association of El Salvadorean Women (AMES) on International Women's Day last year — to make sure women could do both these things.

"The El Salvadorean elite is tiny. Its just 2 per cent of the population, but these 60 or so families own 60 per cent of the land — and it's the best land. The land where all the cotton, coffee and sugar cane is grown for export. It goes mainly to the USA and West Germany. Of course the oligarchy keeps the profit, or, to be precise, they share a profit with the firms who buy their crops — another reason for U.S. interest! Well, they have no intention of giving up anything, land power or privilege.

"It's always had the military in its pockets and its own para-military forces like ORDEN, who have terrorized the peasants for years — nothing's changed, things have just got worse. We've

tried every democratic means of change. Some people thought it might work as late as last year when they backed the present government of Napoleon Duarte which tried to implement a very small land reform. Really this was just a strategy to try and buy off the peasants and justify the repression of the left which was thought up by the U.S. State Department.

"But when they tried to take the land from the oligarchy — well, that was when El Salvador blew up! The military and the paramilitary went on the rampage. Peasants were murdered; whole villages were destroyed; workers suspected of being left-wingers were knocked off. The Roman Catholic Church has estimated that over 13,000 people have died in the year that has followed. As for the government — well, lots of people left and joined the FDR. Duarte stayed, but now he's just a puppet of the military. The land reform has been abandoned.

"Direct U.S. military intervention will be a bloodbath and the people who suffer will be the poor, the dispossessed. All this stuff about Russian and Cuban intervention is a lie: an insult. We are fighting to bring an end to the day to day suffering of the people, not because any outside force is telling us what to do. Look at the lives of the women I've told you about — wouldn't they make you want to fight?"

"Nobody has seen any Russian submachine guns or tanks in El Salvador, but they've seen plenty of U.S. ones. Tons of military arms that are being used to kill the people. Green Beret paratroopers who are already inside the country. We are also fighting U.S. imperialism which has dominated our country and has backed the oligarchy because the oligarchy does its dirty work. What people don't know is that the U.S. has been intervening in El Salvador for years: training army officers in techniques of counter-insurgency; spying; imposing programs of population control and sterilizing women without their consent; dumping dangerous drugs which kill us. Many things. Had it not been for the U.S. my people would have been at the door of their liberation many years before now.

"The late 60s and the 70s saw the growing participation of women in the guerilla armies and in the popular organizations. They have always been closely linked to the guerrilla forces, but they based their work in trade union struggles; struggles for housing and water — popular struggles that really related to people's day to day needs.

"Women have joined the guerilla armies too, but not in such great numbers. Many women still believe that the armed struggle is a matter for men and there are still many men who cannot accept a

woman fighting alongside them. There's a long way to go before women pick up a machine gun as easily as a casserole! But things are changing. Many of the women in the guerillas — often at top level — are fighting through discussion and general assemblies to incorporate more and more women into the army. In one of the liberated zones the people in charge of civil engineering, campaign hospitals and weapon production are women.

"Women have suffered terribly too, through repression. Now it's common practice to stab pregnant women in the stomach to make sure they are not carrying arms.

"AMES was set up for two reasons: one, to provide an organization through which women such as housewives, nurses and secretaries could participate in the liberation struggle; and two, to provide all women with an organization which would fight for the specific rights of women: for the right to maternity and an end to forced sterilization; to safe family planning; to free childcare; to education and training.

"We believe that our liberation from a machista society won't come until we achieve our national liberation, for it is an integral part of this, not separate.

"Women must get their organizations to condemn U.S. intervention in El Salvador and to demand recognition of the FDR."

Microchip unemployment

Continued from Page 1
levels of computer programming and design. Studies indicate that only a minute percentage of those women being replaced by microcomputers are being trained for new positions.

The full impact of microchip unemployment will not be apparent for some time. Large numbers of workers are still needed in the process of adapting old work structures to the new technology. Sectors such as banking are expanding services at the same time as they are introducing computer-

ization. Temporarily delaying job reduction, unemployment will rise, not from massive layoffs, but from conditions of no job growth. As women presently in the labour force retire and quit, they simply will not be replaced.

We can expect little government concern about this coming crisis in women's unemployment. Female joblessness is officially classified as "soft" unemployment. Women are expected to exit meekly back to the kitchen and leave the jobs that are left to men.

The real economic devastation women's unemployment will cause will be far from soft, however. A recent study by the National Council on Welfare indicates that the income of working women is the only thing that keeps thousands of families above the poverty line. It is doubtful that any amount of propaganda glorifying wifely duties will be able to distort this reality.

Deborah Littman is on the national executive of the Canadian Union of Educational Workers.

Scheme hits single mothers

Continued from Page 1
organized to express concern about the effects of the proposed changes. This group has formulated several sound resolutions:

- Single parents with dependent children have the right to sufficient long-term income assistance to enable them to work full-time as parents and homemakers.

- The right to define "employable" and "able-bodied" (terms used in government programs) in reference to participation in the paid labour force belongs to the sole-support mother. She can determine the time when such a move is feasible for herself and for her dependent children.

- Use of support services must be voluntary and not in any way linked to eligibility for income assistance.

- For those women who are in a position to work outside the home, the Ministry must develop a more effective range of support services and policies.

- The foregoing should apply equally to all sole support parents, regardless of sex.

This group has been working to

publicize the issues and to pressure government to recognize their views when formulating new policies and programs. At the provincial level, they met with John Stapleton of the Ministry in November. He provided little information or clarification of government plans.

Some progress has been made at the municipal level in connection with the pilot program being planned for Etobicoke. Largely as a result of the group's efforts, an advisory committee will be established early this year. As described in a motion passed by Metro Toronto, this committee will "have input in the implementation and monitoring of the Pilot Project, as well as have input in the development of a long range policy related to this issue." Sole-support mothers will participate in this committee, establishing a channel through which their views will at least be heard, if not heeded.

(The mothers' group is now planning strategy and action for the winter. New participants — both sole-support mothers and people

who share their concerns — will be welcome. Contact Gail Davis at 465-3376.)

Donna Roßenweig is a researcher at TV Ontario, and is a single parent, living at the Bain Ave. Co-op in Toronto.

This article appeared in Broadside Vol: 3, No. 4. It is reprinted here with the permission of the paper and the author.



Women on family benefits staged a protest in front on Queen's Park last year to protest cutbacks.

Financial report

There are just a few more months left to complete the 1981-82 schedule of OWW activities. Check the Calendar of Events in this issue of Union Woman and mark them in your Calendar.

The ongoing work of OWW is run from our rented office at the Ontario Federation of Labour building by a voluntary executive, our members and friends and by our hard-working, part-time executive-secretary.

Our cost are continually increasing. We suggest that you ask yourself, what you can do to help OWW continue the high level of activity you wish it to maintain.

May I suggest some possible answers:

1. Renew your membership now, as a regular member (\$15.00) or as a sustaining member (\$30.00 or more).

2. Convince a co-worker, colleague and/or friend to become a sustaining friend of OWW.

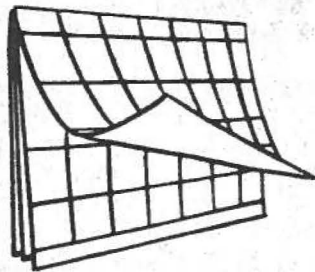
3. Bring some more union friends into OWW as members.

4. Bring our "Financial Appeal Letter" before your local executive to obtain a donation for OWW from your union.

5. Get your local to purchase a bundle of our unique newspaper "Union Woman".

Perhaps you can follow-up on three or four of these suggestions. Thank you in advance, for your commitment to our financial lifeline. Keep pulling.

Lois Bedard,
Treasurer, OWW



CLEAR YOUR CALENDAR

- Feb. 19-21 OWW Conference — Technology and the Working Woman**
OISE, 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto
- March 6 International Women's Day Celebrations**
11 a.m. Toronto City Hall, march to festival at Harbord Collegiate
- March 11 OWW Membership Meeting, Pot Luck Supper**
1901 Yonge Street, 8th Floor, 6 p.m.
- April 8 OWW Membership Meeting & Film Night**
1901 Yonge Street, 8th Floor, 7:30 p.m.
- May 15 6th OWW Annual Meeting**
- May 24-28 CLC Convention**
Winnipeg, Manitoba

No promises on daycare

By **KERRY McCUAIG**

Ontario Premier William Davis and members of his cabinet refused to give commitments Nov. 9 when lobbied by the Coalition for Better Daycare. The coalition, initiated by the Ontario Federation of Labor, spoke for over a million and a half people through trade unions, women's organizations, early childhood educators, teachers, social workers, nurses, students and other groups.

The coalition's brief called for

immediate implementation of a \$5 per child per day grant to all non-profit centres; expanding subsidized spaces by 10,000 and the initiation of a task force to develop neighborhood daycare centres.

The long term objectives stressed the need for a publicly-funded, non-profit quality daycare system, universally accessible by 1990, with neighborhood resource centres providing a range of services to accommodate children from infancy to 12 years.

Community and Social Minister Frank Drea claimed Ontario's daycare service was better than other provinces and tried to press the responsibility back onto unions and the collective bargaining process.

Premier Davis, trying to bail out Drea, tried to divert discussion to non-daycare matters, but

finally stated, "We will make a commitment, but we have to set priorities and that is difficult to do."

Reporting back from the lobby, participants indicated support from the New Democratic Party and a range of reaction from the Liberals and Conservatives, some of it astonishingly backwards.

PC Margaret Schrivener said, "Mothers should stay at home, and we should find volunteers for daycare centres." She did however oppose profit making in daycare.

Drea has the unqualified backing of PC Bud Gregory on this issue "no matter what", he said.

One MPP thought the problem would solve itself. Liberal Roy Haggerty confided that he and eight brothers and sisters were raised at home and that "with technology overtaking us, women will soon be jobless anyway".

OFL human rights director Shelly Acheson told Union Woman the coalition was continuing its lobbying of MPPs at the local level and establishing local coalitions. A provincial conference is planned for the fall.

Kerry McCuaig is a member of the Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild Local 87.



Join OWW!



Membership in OWW is open to all women who are members of a bona fide collective bargaining unit or a bona fide organizing committee of a union. Membership is \$15.00 per year.

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

Name

Address

Telephone

Union Local

Organized Working Women,
15 Gervais Drive, Suite 301,
Don Mills Ont. M3C 1Y8.

If you are not eligible to join OWW, you are invited to subscribe to UNION WOMAN at \$10.00 per year.

In Memoriam

It was with deep regret and sadness that OWW learned of the sudden death of a dear sister Natalie Horbatuik. Natalie died Nov. 21, 1981 after a sudden illness.

Natalie, a member of OPEIU Local 343, worked for many years with the Metro Toronto Labour Council where she contributed her skills and knowledge.

She loved and was involved with many other cultures, studying foreign languages and was actively involved in cultural events in the Greek community.

She will be greatly missed by us all.

Unemployment vs inflation?

By **JO SAXBY**

Unemployment. Inflation. Which is the most pressing? Will control of inflation end the economic crisis? Or would job creation increase productivity and secure the economy?

By juxtaposing such alternatives economists and analysts would have us believe the two are unrelated. They are not. They are hallmarks of the current economic crisis. The Liberal government's policy of monetarism — control of the money supply — has not worked in reducing inflation.

How can they work when the reaches of the crisis extend far beyond Canada's boundaries? We are in a crisis of world proportions. The government is waiting for a break in the American economy which will drag Canada's along with it. In the meantime, flight of capital from Canada must be avoided at all costs. So monetarism is the word of the day.

And what of the hundreds of thousands of workers who are laid off, the mortgages which are foreclosed, and small businesses which collapse? Well, it's unfortunate but in the long run it is worth it. But for whom? It is too easy for statistics to hide the lives of Canadian workers reeling under the blows of the economy.

Wage controls are again threatened. Wage controls for workers while many companies, the banks foremost, pull in record profits? Workers will never accept them, some caution. Maybe not, others agree, at least those in industrial unions. With over half of big unions' contracts up for negotiation this year, the government moves cautiously. Why should workers accept controls when for the first time in years wages may pull slightly ahead of inflation?

Perhaps, though, there could be "guidelines" for public sector employees? Guidelines? What is the difference between guidelines and controls when the government is the employer?

The divisive tactics of the government are a classic response. By focussing on controls for public sector employees, the government tries to split union solidarity. They believe that support for workers in the public sector is not what it is for others. They believe such workers lack militancy. But workers know what happened last time around. Wage and price controls did not end the crisis.

When the Liberals realized they could not contain worker concerns with tight money policies alone, other measures were introduced. Special projects were announced by the Minister of Employment and Immigration, Lloyd Axworthy. Some of the programs address matters of national concern in a useful way; others are nothing more than delaying tactics within the stall strategy. It is not within the scope of this commentary to address all these projects but examination of a few will make the general thrust obvious.

Work sharing has been advanced as a positive way to cope with unemployment and not increase inflation. Some workers cut back on hours so other can be hired, or less laid off. Unemployment benefits make up for the lost time. For example, a worker who cuts back by 20% would, by a combination of wages and U.I. benefits, receive 93% of her/his wage. Sound good? How can people survive on 93% of their wage when many cannot make ends meet as is? Will banks agree to 93% of payments met? And how long will the program last? To a maximum of 26 weeks. What happens after the 26 weeks if lay-offs still occur? After 26 weeks of reduction, an even more severe reduction will ensue with U.I. benefits as the sole income.

A Portable Wage Subsidy program has also been outlined for older, permanently laid off workers. They are assisted in securing employment in other areas with wages subsidized by government. Will they face a reduction in wages? Will they lose seniority, benefits? There are insufficient details as yet.

Clearly, it is workers who, once again, bear the brunt of the crisis.

Other plans emphasize equal opportunity for women in the trades. Will this result in a depression of wages? Will special assistance be available for a short time and then another group targeted as is too often the pattern?

The Minister also announced special job creation schemes in the voluntary and community service sector for women, native peoples, youth and the disabled. They would be encouraged to train in non-profit organizations. But the financial security of these organizations is shaky at the best of times. What kind of future will workers training in these places face? How will workers, laid off when the special programs end, survive on UI benefits when even the full wage is woefully inadequate? Is this not again a divisive tactic — to take in to the system some of those hardest hit, perhaps with the hope that militancy be tempered?

There are other "special" programs, "special" consultants. By labelling the programs as "special", the government labels the crisis as "special", an aberration. This crisis is not special. It will not just soon go away. It has been with us for years. Even if this current manifestation recedes, how long will it take for a recurrence?

Short-term, special programs for severe crises are no answer. Conservative policies focusing on capital concerns are no answer. Wage and salary controls are just not good enough. The government must respond with measures aimed at attacking the root problems of our system. Only then will they be responsible and responsive to workers' needs, workers' rights.

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