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## NEWSLETTER

February 1985

Hi!

We all have our own feelings and opinions about a dental plan for families of military members; about the new uniforms; and about the controversy over unemployment insurance benefits to those who receive pensions. We would like to reprint this letter to the editor that was submitted to us. You might feel the same opinions, you might not, however, we feel this opinion is worth reading.....

### DENTAL CARE AND UIC, NOT NEW UNIFORMS

I read with growing concern the ongoing comments about the introduction of new uniforms for the Canadian Military.

It is condemned as a terrible waste of money and on the other hand it is lauded as bringing a better "esprit de corps" to the service.

Better "esprit de corps" would be given by diverting this money and instituting a dental plan for families of military members.

It is amazing to me that small businesses with less than 10 employees can have a dental plan, but an organization employing 80,000 does not. The members themselves have dental facilities available to them, but nothing is done for their families.

Now I also read that because the military get a pension when they retire, they will get little or no unemployment benefits, yet they pay full unemployment contributions. The two organizations most affected by this new policy have no organization to represent them and so, it seems, can be walked over roughshod by politicians and government.

Susan Kerr Mynarski Park

We might add that greater "esprit de corps" might also come from improvement in housing. The Personnel Newsletter (4-1984) states: "With all the existing regulations, Treasury Board Guidelines, and budgetary constraints, the steps other property managers would have taken towards renovation and new construction have been severely limited. That's why much of the housing stock looks like a flashback to the 1950's." \$35 million may not seem like a lot towards housing, but since there are no land costs, it could mean as many as 1000 new PMQ's. This project would not be a waste of money but could be self-supporting.

The same article states that PMQ renovations have "to compete with other CE projects such as hangar doors and single quarters etc." It's no wonder PMQ'S are such a low priority. Perhaps the "NPF mode of married quarters Operation" suggested in the article would help. Perhaps the people who spend the most time using the PMQ's should be represented in the groups working towards solving some of these problems.

This same Newsletter states "that the rent charged for MQ's must not be seen to confer a benefit to the occupant..... the Treasury Board intends to ensure that the ordinary Canadian citizen does not see the occupant of PMQ's as special privileged." This is a moot point since the public perception is that we live in rent-free and/or subsidized housing. Perhaps the Treasury Board should start a campaign to let the public know that we do pay rent but have no tenants' rights and that military members do pay income tax!

So there it is, opinions on issues we all talk about. Maybe its time to take some positive action and to stop just talking!

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We are all travellers in the wilderness of this world, and the best that we find in our travels is an honest friend.

Robert Louis Stevenson

SMALL VICTORIES

The most exciting thing that I have ever done was to go up against the system and win. A small victory, I admit, but to fall back on an old phrase, "You've got to start somewhere."

When my husband and I decided to join the video club at the Canex, I ended up going down alone, as he had to go on exercise just shortly after we arrived at our new unit. When I asked to join, I was intensely humiliated on being told that I could not join without my husband's signature: "I don't believe it!" was my first reaction. My second reaction was to look the clerk straight in the eye and say, "You're a woman, surely you don't agree to such a policy?" But she did agree. "Oh yes, better for business. A man had been very angry with Canex for allowing his wife to join while he was away. He had to pay for the machine she broke." I guess Canex felt they couldn't face another irate husband, so they changed the policy instead. Women were not to be allowed to join the club or to buy on credit at Canex.

Naturally I argued that that problem was between a husband and a wife, and why should I be treated like a pre-schooler because of it? To no avail. The clerk remained calm behind the counter nodding and smiling. I felt I was being patted kindly on the head and told to run along. Since my blood pressure was rising dangerously, I did just that.

I sat at home all week fuming, and thinking up all kinds of excellent retorts which I could have used, but didn't because I was too angry and shocked to think of any. I decided to try again. I got the same routine, but this time I asked to talk to the manager. The officer-in-charge sent the clerk back to me with this little message. "Explain it to her again and if she still doesn't understand, I'll see her." Through clenched teeth, I explained that I understood perfectly, and that's why I would like to see the person in charge. The person in charge sat behind his desk and listened to what I had to say. When I got to the part about being able to join any video club in the city of Calgary except this one in my own community, he shook his head sadly and informed me that these were the laws of Canada, what could he do? I bit my tongue to keep from telling him what he could do.

"O.K." I said, "Maybe you can't do anything about it, what can I do?" He answered that I could write to my member of Parliament. I said I would do just that, and opened the door to make my little exit. (The moment of triumph nears) He called me back, a little too urgently, and suggested that I shouldn't do anything I might regret later. He agreed that the policy was discriminating, and as a favour to me he would call Ottawa. I asked him to put the discriminating part on paper, he became a little agitated. I left on a real high and didn't come down until he phoned me the next morning, saying that the video club would be open to wives, and that they would also be allowed to buy on credit. So much for the laws of Canada. Get Ready. Here it Comes.

You'll never know if a door will open until you give it a little push!

Leslie Taylor-Reporter-at-Large

New Offices

OSOMM will be opening their office on March 1, 1985 at the Red Deer Industrial Airport site. We will be located in Hangar 11 at the Interra building. The phone will be installed around March 5, when we will give you our number.

General Meeting: There will be a general meeting of all OSOMM members and guests on Monday March 11, 1985 at 8:00 at our new offices. Watch for a reminder telling you how to get there. (Hangar 11 at the Red Deer Industrial Airport.) Refreshments served. Come and see what's happening.

DOES ANYBODY KNOW? IF Official documents in the British Military still use these terms of reference? Officers and their ladies, NCO's and their wives, Junior Ranks and their women.

PETITION: Our petition concerning the intersection at 2 and 2A is now completed. We will be presenting it to the Minister of Highways in Edmonton in the near future.

Dental Plans: Not forgotten, we are still awaiting news from Ottawa. It looks like we will be moving ahead on letting our government know about how we feel about the Dental Plan by March 10, 1985.

Delivery of Newsletter: Our apologies to all the men who have called who don't want their wives to receive our newsletter. Since the number was extremely small, we have decided to mail the newsletter by bulk. We have no control over who does not receive the letter in bulk mailing, however, when we deliver by hand, we will insure that those women who do not wish to receive this newsletter, will not receive one.

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