



THE LABOUR HISTORY ASSOCIATION

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION
105-2235 BURRARD STREET
VANCOUVER, B.C. V6J 3H9

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BULLETIN

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The Labour History logo was designed by Dale Juarez of Vancouver during the summer, 1978. We are very pleased with it, and it has already become identified with our association.

EXECUTIVE REPORT

by
Frank L. Fuller, President

The Executive of the Labour History P.S.A. has met twice since the beginning of the school year to plan and develop our objectives for this year, and with your continued support and assistance we will be able to meet them.

At our last executive meeting, we voted to undertake the production of an 18-minute documentary film on the Great Depression in B.C. This action was sparked by the research for and production of our recent issue of *Labour History* which had this theme. Colleen Bostwick and Gary Onstad have drawn up the project proposal which is being submitted in application for funding to various agencies, foundations and institutions. The National Film Board's Challenge for Change program has made a tentative commitment to support the project by supplying us with some of the major operating expenses involved in such a production. We hope to make use of archival film footage, photographs, graphics, tape recorded interviews, etc., that are currently tucked away in private collections, public archives and libraries. If our members know of such material (particularly film footage!) they should contact the Labour History PSA (c/o BCTF) by mail, or phone Colleen Bostwick at 731-9715.

In order to produce this film, we must raise at least \$14,000. Colleen has been contracted to submit applications and to solicit the necessary funds. We have already raised nearly \$4,000 from personal donations and N.F.B. cash-in-kind. So wish us luck!

* * *

Our slide/tape shows continue to receive enthusiastic support. They are now in 13 school districts and we hope to increase that to 30 by the end of the year. They are being distributed through the BCTF Lesson Aids and are being widely used in the trade union movement. In addition, I have been invited to show "These Were the Reasons" at the Southwest Labour His-

tory Conference at the University of California (Los Angeles) in the Spring.

We have again been invited to participate in the annual Social Studies Conference at Simon Fraser University, April 27 - 28, 1979. The Association will run three workshops and will obtain trade union speakers for a forum on the threatened "Right to Work" legislation. As President, I will moderate the sessions on behalf the Association.

* * *

These are some of our objectives. What are you, as a member, doing in the classroom? Is the material being provided of use to you?

Let us know what kind of material you have developed and how you are using that being provided by the Labour History PSA.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF LABOUR History will focus on the struggles among public employees to organize and establish full collective bargaining rights. This is a unique history dating from 1897, of which teachers were participants.

RESEARCH FOR THIS PROJECT has already begun, but we are in need of much more material than we have yet obtained. The history of workers in the public sector is still stored in basements and attics, in photo albums, journals and diaries. If you know of such material, let us know! Write or phone: Colleen Bostwick, 3018 W. 2nd Ave., Van., V6K 1K4. Tel: 731-9715.

A NOTE ON FIELD TRIPS

by
Peter Seixas

The use of field trips and guest speakers can enhance a social studies unit immeasurably by giving students a concrete "feel" for what has been discussed more abstractly in the classroom. Recently, by coincidence, we were completing a unit on the forestry in B.C. in Social Studies 10, when Jack Munro made newspaper headlines with his keynote speech at the International Woodworkers of America regional Convention (held at the Holiday Inn). I hurried to make arrangements to take students to see how a large union functions - an opportunity for them to see something they had been reading about. Three days later, Tom Fawkes (an IWA public relations staff person) ushered us from the top of an escalator in the downtown Holiday Inn, to a small meeting room. He briefly explained who was downstairs on the convention floor, what they were doing, and the structure of the IWA.

After the introduction, we went down onto the floor, and took observers' seats at the back. The debate was interrupted by the chairperson, to announce our presence and to welcome us. The delegates gave us a warm round of applause, and I exchanged slightly embarrassed, but very impressed, glances with the students.

We heard some debate which involved a challenge of the chair, and then a speech concerning organizing in the southern U.S. Munro came back to welcome us personally. After about 45 minutes, we returned to the small meeting room with Tom Fawkes for a "question and answer" period. An extremely lively discussion followed which ended up focusing on "right to work" legislation. Once again, Tom did an admirable job of explaining this very complex issue.

Whenever one ventures outside of the safe and (somewhat) predictable atmosphere of the classroom s/he takes a chance. I was acutely aware of the chances I was taking with this particular trip, having sat through boring hours of convention-floor haggling myself. In this case, stu-

dent interest was maintained simply by seeing the large body of delegates dealing with business and with each other. More importantly, however, was the fact that we were provided with an "interpreter" who explained what was going on in a spirited and interesting way. Given background information and a sense of what to look for (these are essential elements), many "real life" situations can be tapped for school field trips.

Other activities, easier to arrange though perhaps not quite as topical, might include:

1) a trip to a mill. For those in the Lower Mainland, CanFor's Eburne Sawmill is happy to provide tours. According to the receptionist "we put thousands through every year." John Collins' article, "The Docile Operator: Corporate Management's Goal in Education" (*Horizons*, Vol. 16; No. 1) provides interesting discussion background. It is about personality traits desired by companies, the dehumanizing nature of mill work, and schools' relation to the industry.

2) a trip to M.B. Place, MacMillan-Bloedel's permanent exhibit building in the Van Dusen Gardens. It focuses on the contributions MB has made to the forests, forest ecology, etc. Students in my classes have been stimulated by a comparison of "Timber Tigers" (a poorly made, anti-industry film about the destruction of the forests in the U.S. Available from IDERA) and MB's "A Walk in the Forest," which is shown at MB Place. Our discussions centred on the concept of differing points of view, and the techniques employed by the film-makers to get their point of view across.

CHILD LABOUR IN CANADA

Denis Ottewell

Children were very much a part of the industrial revolution. As workers, they were even more ruthlessly exploited than adult labourers by owners of industry in Great Britain and Europe. These practices were brought to North America and have become part of our own labour history.

Dr. G. Walsh has prepared a documentary study, "Children in the Industrial Revolution," available through the BCTF Lesson Aids (No. 2027). It is an invaluable introductory study to the plight of working children in England. I have used selections at the grade six level (where pupils quickly establish an age identity) and recommend it for high school use as well.

The Walsh study examines the use of child labour: working class children grew up in the mines and factories, in the mills and chimneys of Great Britain. Until they reached adulthood they were bound to the workplace and the abhorrent conditions of the job: cold, dark quarters, frequent beating, injuries, loneliness. Children were thought of as adults in small bodies, working side by side with grown men and women, six days a week, fourteen hours a day at shockingly low wages.

The early industrialists of Canada and the U.S.A. were fully aware of the advantages in using child labour. Numerous books on labour and social history mention the use of children on farms, in the textile and processing industries, and in mining and fishing. But few have explored the role of working children in Canada. One exception is An Illustrated History of Canadian Labour, 1800 to 1974, by Edward Seymour (Canadian Labour Congress, \$2.50). This readable book should be included in every high school library. Though it does not explore the topics in depth, it presents short, pertinent descriptions of events. Readers wishing to pursue topics in greater detail are furnished with an excellent bibliography.

From Seymour's book we learn of the working conditions and wages of children in the textile factories and mills in the 1880's. But, how, why and which children entered the work force are also important topics for teachers. They can tell us much about the process of industrialization and colonization of Canada.

Prior to the industrial revolution and the concentration of workers in urban centres, children worked in whatever trades occupied their families. Often apprenticeships would be arranged or the children would be indentured to another household or shop owner. The urban factory system quickly changed this. A feudal mercantile society developed into an industrial capitalist society with new goals and new demands on people. Low wages and high costs meant that all family members were expected to work.

Poverty forced parents to place their children in work houses, sell them as indentured labourers, or abandon them outright. The number of children classified as orphans is shocking, but the fate of such children is even more so. Authorities acted with speed to arrange the care of these "waifs and strays...from distressed and orphaned families" by placing them in work houses, thereby supplying the "home industries" with the cheapest possible labour. In addition, tens of thousands of orphaned children were shipped away to meet the labour needs in North America and colonial territories. Greg Smith, in "Dr. Bernardo's Promised Land" (Weekend Magazine, Dec. 3, 1977), describes the immigration scheme that brought at least 100,000 children, ages 5 to 16, into Canada between 1869 and the late 1930's.

Another useful source on child immigrant labour is Neil Sutherland's recently released book Children in English-Canadian Society, 1880 to 1920 (1976). Sutherland says that "English Canadians showed little awareness of children as individual persons...they saw nothing of the inner, emotional life of youngsters." And, he

Child Labour in Canada/cont'd

says, children "played an important and often central role in rural and family economics... (T)hey were needed for the work they could do." (Pp. 6-9.)

Immigrant children under nine were usually adopted out ("doption, sir, is when folks gets a girl to work without wages."). Those between nine and eighteen were put out under a contract of indenture. The harsh conditions imposed on many of these children, along with changing attitudes towards the family and child labour, the protests of workers and the lobbying efforts of trade unions, eventually prompt-

ed reforms in Canada during the 1880's.

Today child labour is still exploited. Young people often work long hours at low pay, with few (if any) benefits, no job security and no possibility for advancement. Many non-union and part-time jobs are filled by young workers. Legislation is needed to extend to them full employee rights and a guaranteed "adult" minimum wage.

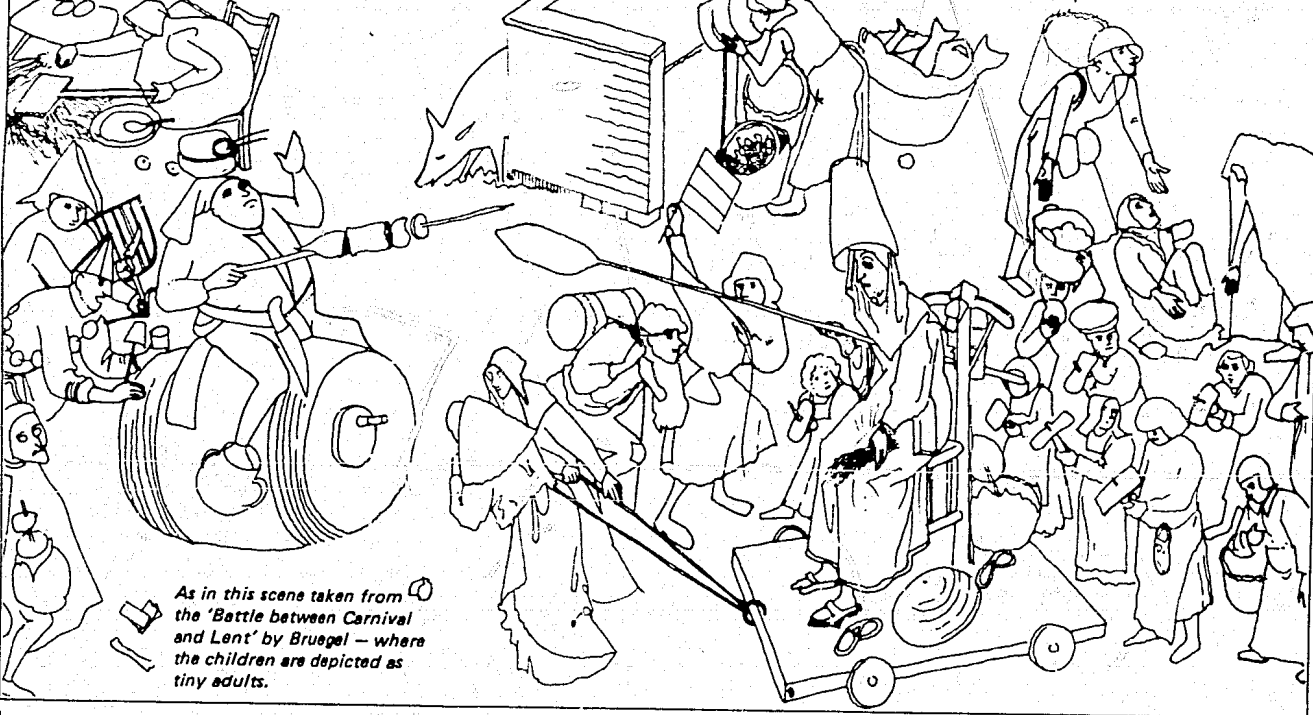
The Invention of Childhood

Based on: 'Children, the Victims of Time' by J.H. Plumb

Illustrated by Bob Hewerdine.



Children dressed like their parents. In the Middle Ages young and old played together in games and festivals



As in this scene taken from the 'Battle between Carnival and Lent' by Bruegel — where the children are depicted as tiny adults.

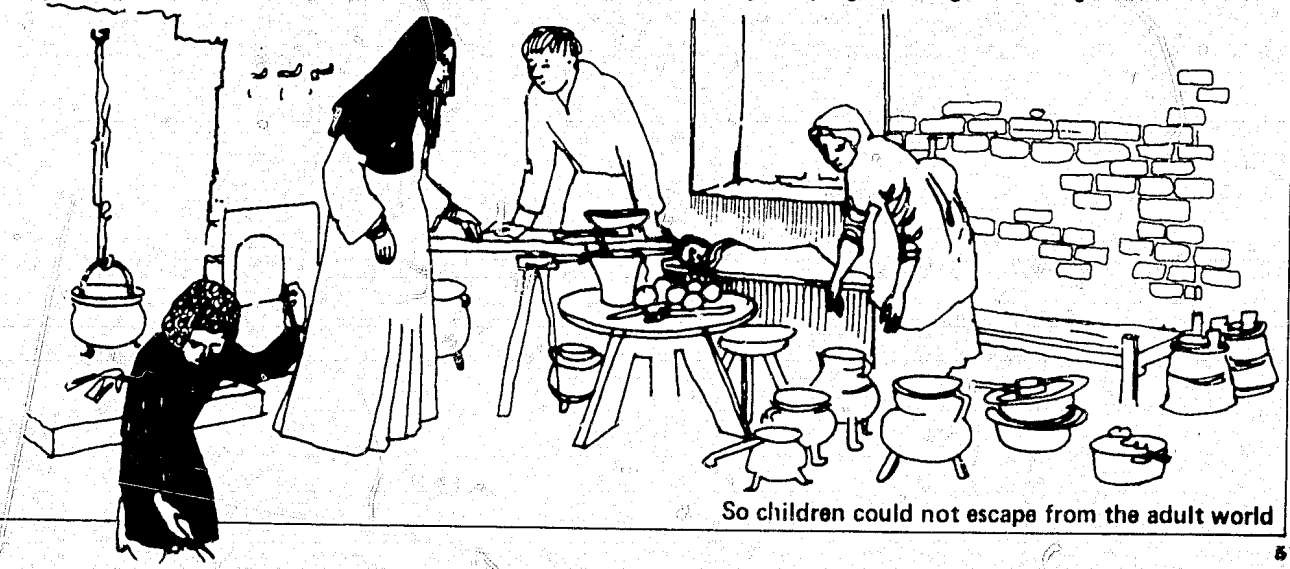
Everyone worked together



And was held responsible



In many cases houses were not split up into special rooms, for eating, sleeping, working or cooking.



The small 'father, mother and a few children' kind of family was not very important — particularly since children often died

As the French writer, Montaigne put it

I HAVE LOST TWO OR THREE CHILDREN IN THEIR INFANCY. NOT WITHOUT REGRET, BUT WITHOUT GREAT SORROW



Up to the 17th century 75 per cent of all children christened were dead before the age of 5

CHANGES IN CHILDHOOD TOOK PLACE RAPIDLY AFTER THE 17th CENTURY

Partly for religious reasons...

MEDIEVAL CHILDREN KNEW THE 'FACTS OF LIFE' BEFORE THEY COULD WALK



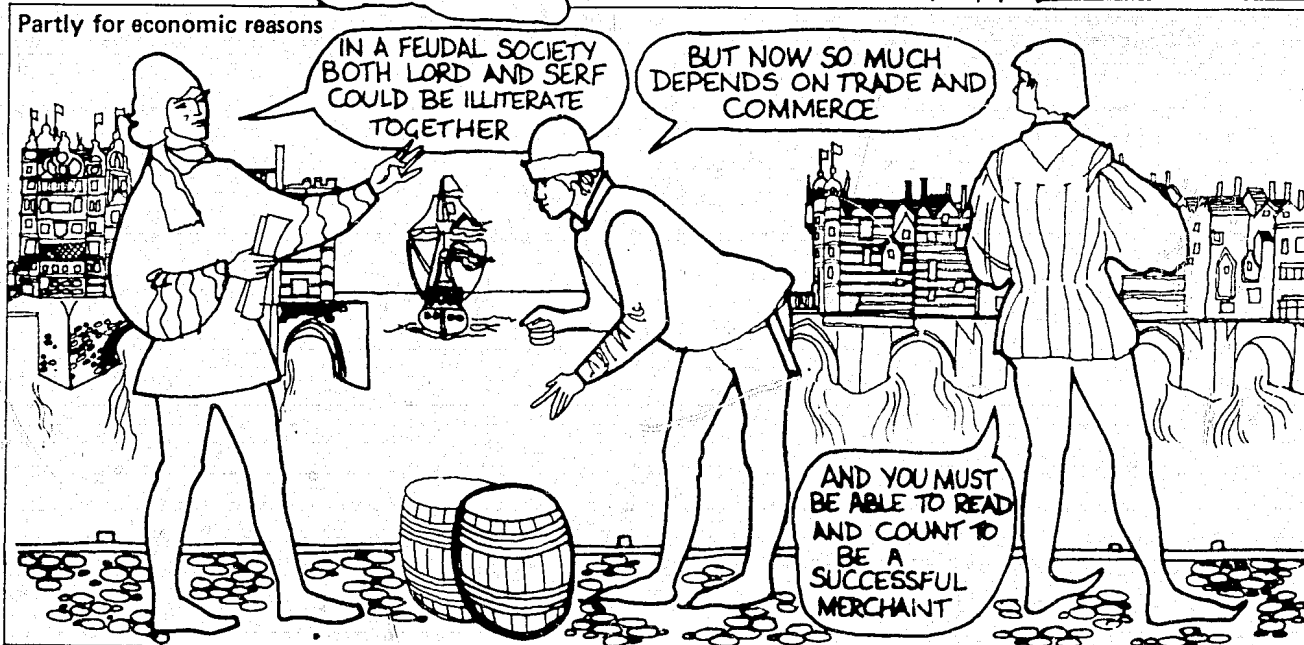
BUT NOW WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN START OUT 'INNOCENT' AND SHOULD BE KEPT THAT WAY AS LONG AS POSSIBLE



Partly for economic reasons

IN A FEUDAL SOCIETY BOTH LORD AND SERF COULD BE ILLITERATE TOGETHER

BUT NOW SO MUCH DEPENDS ON TRADE AND COMMERCE



AND YOU MUST BE ABLE TO READ AND COUNT TO BE A SUCCESSFUL MERCHANT

So education became more systematic



WE CHILDREN ARE DIVIDED UP INTO CLASSES OF THE SAME AGE GROUP

And reform went relentlessly on to create a separate world



AT HARROW WE WILL HAVE NO DRINKING OR FORNICATION OR GAMBLING

By the end of the 19th century upper class children were even segregated in the home

WE ARE FORBIDDEN TO MOST OF THE HOUSE AND CAN ONLY SEE MOTHER AND FATHER AT CERTAIN TIMES

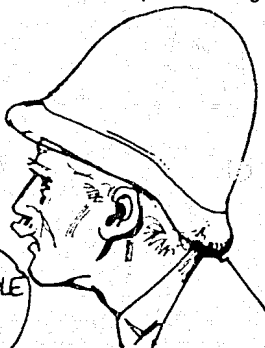


AND WE NOW HAVE OUR OWN SPECIAL KINDS OF CLOTHES

They were to learn the habit of unquestioning authority.



TO CIVILISE THE COLONIES FOR EXAMPLE WE NEED RELIABLE DISCIPLINED PEOPLE

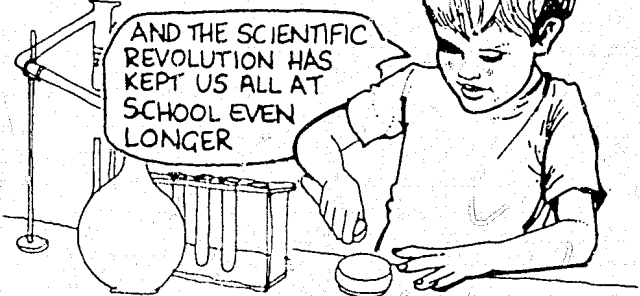


Lower class children however still lived in the adult world. In Victorian London or Paris they drank, gambled, rioted sexually – and worked hard



But increasing affluence eventually made even the offspring of the lower classes into children

AND THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION HAS KEPT US ALL AT SCHOOL EVEN LONGER

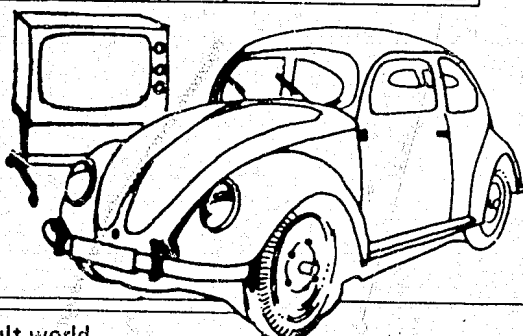


The 20th century brought dramatic changes

WITH THE EMPIRES GONE...

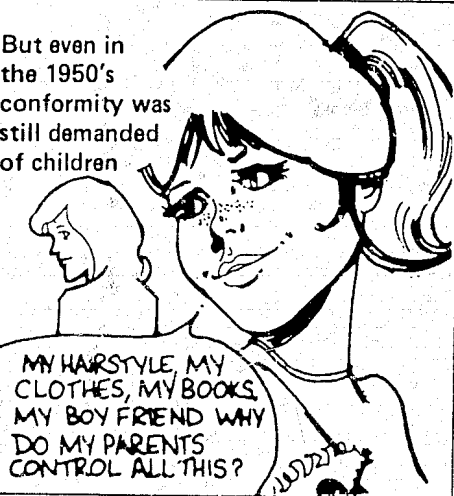
MORE MONEY

AND LESS UNQUESTIONING DISCIPLINE NEEDED



But even in the 1950's conformity was still demanded of children

MY HAIRSTYLE, MY CLOTHES, MY BOOKS, MY BOY FRIEND WHY DO MY PARENTS CONTROL ALL THIS?



With no access to the adult world adolescents rebelled in their own world



OUR OWN MUSIC



OUR OWN DANCING

OUR OWN LANGUAGE

Over four centuries children have been pushed into an artificial world. Cut off from adult responsibility they look for release in the often bizarre world of their own

Vancouver City Archives

The Vancouver City Archives are located at 1150 Chestnut St., right next door to the Planetarium. The Archives are a valuable source of information for anyone interested in the history of Vancouver, and the facilities are open to the public.

Teachers, especially, can use the Archives to encourage students to develop skills in research.



The City Archives holds an entire range of historical papers:

- Official City of Vancouver records, such as City Council minutes, departmental and committee minutes, correspondence, plans, maps, photographs and pamphlets.
- Private manuscripts, such as the personal papers of citizens, the records of city businesses and unions, and the papers of local clubs, institutions, associations and societies.
- Photographs of every aspect of local history. Many incorporate a caption which defines the historical significance of the picture.
- Paintings, drawings and cartoons.
- Maps, primarily of the Lower Mainland, dating from the 1700's to the present.
- Plans of many Vancouver commercial buildings.
- A reference library on local history, which includes books dating from the late 18th Century to the present.
- Many local periodicals and newspapers.
- City directories.

Teachers who are interested in taking small groups of students to the City Archives should drop in before hand to make arrangements with the staff. To contact the Archives phone 736-8561, Monday to Friday between 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

F I L M R E V I E W

by
Jim Munro

WHO WILL I SENTENCE NOW?
National Film Board, 1978
Directed by Boyce Richardson

This is the first of two half hour films on the subject of Occupational health in North American industry. The film hinges on the fundamental question: What are the long term dangers to workers exposed daily to dust, radiation, noise, heat and chemicals? After periods of fifteen to forty years on the job, the effects of these exposures often are seen in the diseased lungs, kidneys and other internal organs of working people.

Dr. Irving Selikoff, head of the environmental sciences laboratory at Mt. Sinai hospital in New York, has discovered (and describes in the film) the "latency period" of industrial diseases. Dr. Selikoff has conducted numerous epidemiological studies, involving thousands of workers.

Through brief historical reference, examples of existing conditions, statistics and portrayal of case studies, the film raises still further questions: How can the traditional curative approach to occupational health be changed to create adequate preventative programs? Will industry resist paying the often massive costs of cleaning up the work environment? Do government regulating agencies create and enforce adequate standards? What are the political pressures put on those agencies and the government?

Boyce Richardson is able to move the audience by the way he lays out the scope and gravity of the problem. His portrayal of grieving widows and the distressed family of a victim angers us at a gut level. However, the questions which the filmmaker sets up are left unexplained in the film. One statement does address the root causes of the problems. Anthony Mazzochi, a long time union Health and Safety director, states: "Gradually I

came to realize that the growth rate of cancer in North America is integrally tied to the production process of industry."

In his written research for the film, Richardson expresses his own views towards these questions in more detail. He says that if legislation and regulation by public authorities were able to solve this problem, Canada would have no problem, since there are already 200 pieces of legislation and 400 sets of regulations dealing with occupational health. Most of them are not, and can never be, properly enforced by governments.

If research by the medical profession were the answer, the problem would never be solved, because doctors have been trained to treat diseases, not prevent them. There are so few doctors who have been trained in occupational health in Canada, that it will take generations before enough are available to make an impact on the problem.

The best hope lies with the workers themselves. It is they who have suffered the longest and the most, but their attitudes are changing. This will be the subject of the second film, soon to be released: what workers have done; what they are doing, could do and should do to improve their conditions of work.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOCIAL STUDIES CONFERENCE: APRIL 27 - 28, 1979 (FRIDAY & SATURDAY)

THEME: HUMAN RIGHTS

THE LABOUR HISTORY P.S.A. WILL BE CONDUCTING FOUR WORKSHOPS ON "RIGHT TO WORK" LEGISLATION" AND THE RIGHT OF INDIVIDUALS vs UNIONS/CLOSED SHOP.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

JOHN COLLINS, CHAIRMAN
463-9463

MINISTERIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES

PURPOSE: To study and recommend with respect to articulation between the elementary program and the secondary program which is presently under review; and

To recommend to the Social Studies Management Committee following a review of the present elementary curriculum and support materials.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS: Two-day sessions each month. The Ministry will pay substitute costs.

ANTICIPATED PERIOD: One to two years.

MEMBERSHIP: Teachers with varied teaching experiences in elementary social studies.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1978

DEPRESSION ERA FILM FOOTAGE

Anyone knowing of film footage from the Depression decade, 1929-39, please contact Colleen Bostwick, 3018 W. 2nd Ave., Vancouver, V6K 1K4, telephone 731-9715. This could be anything from 'home' movies to Movietone newsreel.

ALSO, photos, memoirs, ANYTHING which can be used in a film would be greatly appreciated.