LABOUR HISTORY

VOL.3 NO.2

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EDITOR: Ellen Moffat

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Editor's Message

Ellen Moffat

The purpose of this issue is twofold—to review and promote published and unpublished literature about the Canadian working class and to offer suggestions to teachers interested in incorporating labor studies in language arts, English, and music classes.

The journal includes poetry, a teaching unit on poetry and myth, children's novels, a song and accompanying article, and a short story. One article, writings by students at Burnaby Central Senior Secondary School, reflects the awareness and concern secondary school students have about the economy and their prospects for employment. Also, it gives a suggestion for a valuable writing assignment for secondary school students.

Mark Goutz

Why Unemployment?

I can hardly understand how people can go on year after year giving Christmas baskets without wondering why people lack food; collecting old clothes without asking why people should not buy new ones; trying to get people jobs and not asking "why unemployment?"

I.S. WOODSWORTH, 1934

from *One Proud Summer*
by Marsha Hewitt and Claire Mackay

CHAPTER 1

"You idiot!"

Lucie jumped. The skinny bobbin of fine cotton thread leapt from her sweating hands, fell to the floor, and rolled to a stop in a pool of oil under the loom.

"You idiot!" the foreman yelled again. "All your fingers are thumbs!"

Lucie, on her knees, frantically reaching for the soiled spool, looked up at Angus MacGregor's angry face for the third time that morning, "But...but..."

"Shut up, kid! And forget that bobbin! It's no good now!" Swearing, he stepped forward and yanked the switch to "Off." "Shuttle's empty, you dummy! Again!" He waved an arm towards the end of the aisle. "Sc's number six!"

He moved towards her, throwing his shoulders from side to side, his head stiff on his neck as if it were made all in one piece. He always walked that way. Probably to make himself look bigger, Lucie thought. And he was really only a little taller than she was. He put his hands on his hips and looked her up and down, shaking his head in digust.

"Frenchie, you are some dumb kid! You got more fines than anybody on the floor!" He chuckled and pulled a greasy black notebook from his vest pocket. "Let's see now, Laplante, Laplante...yeah, here we are..." He chuckled again. Lucie glanced around to see if anyone was watching, if anyone could hear over the steady grinding clatter of the machines in the cavernous weaving shed. She bit her lower lip to stop it from trembling. Fines? What was he talking about? What fines?

"Yep, six mistakes so far this week. Just about the record." He made a mark in the notebook, then stared at her, smirking. "And that's not counting yesterday when you sneaked off to the washroom. Twice a day is all you're allowed, remember?" Lucie felt her face go hot. "You keep on like that, sweetheart, and your pay envelope'll be empty. Just like your head!"

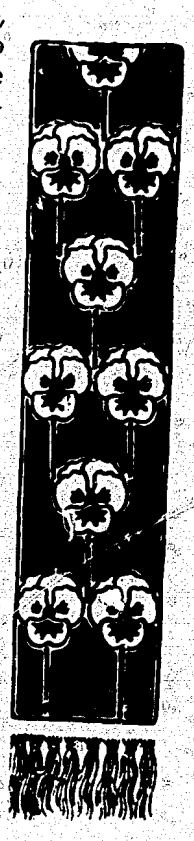
"But sir, I...I...nobody told me about fines!" Lucie hurried to fit the cop of thread on the shuttle tongue, her sore fingers fumbling as he watched her.

"You think you get paid for mistakes? Or hiding out in the bathroom? What do you think, we're running a charity? You make a mistake, we dock your pay!"

"But..." Lucie bit her lip again and tried to swallow the tightness in her throat. "But sir, I've already worked over two weeks without pay. Please don't fine me, I need my pay, all of it!"

The foreman leaned closer. The pale May sunlight angling down through the high windows glinted on his carrot-colored hair, on the reddish stubble covering his cheeks. Almost like fur, Lucie thought. Like an animal's fur.

She could smell the stale tobacco from his mouth and see the brown stains on his teeth. His narrow maroon tie, spotted with food, brushed her bare arm. She flinched, but he grabbed her chin with a rough hand and shook it back and forth till she felt dizzy. Then he laughed and said, "Well, now, Frenchie, ain't that just too bad!" He let go abruptly and she fell back against her wheeled wooden crate of foot-long bobbins, the crate she pushed in front of her all day, every day, rushing to fill the endlessly emptying shuttles. He laughed again, harshly, and walked away.



Lucie felt the fury, the despair, rising in her once more, making her knees sag and her vision blur. Her hands, webbed with tiny cuts from the sharp thread and stinging with sweat, curled into fists at her sides, and her jaw, framed by brown shoulder-length hair, grew tight against the tears threatening behind her eyes. She looked older than thirteen. She watched as MacGregor stopped to yell at Annette in the next aisle, and she knew she hated him.

Annette. The one bright spot. Just looking at her made Lucie feel better, not so afraid. Funny how they'd made friends right away, even though Annette was older. Knowing that in a little while they would eat their lunch together, that tonight they would walk home together, made the day less grim, the work less hard.

Annette never seemed scared at all, just went on weaving till MacGregor's voice got tired, paying no attention, a grin on her face. Maybe when you're sixteen you're not afraid any more, Lucie thought. As the foreman walked away, Annette turned and winked at her. Lucie grinned and waved. Wish I could be like that...maybe when I've been here longer, when I'm a weaver...Annette had been working for over a year now, since just before V-E Day when the war with Hitler ended, finally, and everybody had run into the streets in the middle of the morning, cheering and crying and singing. The soldiers had pulled off their caps and ties and kissed every girl they could find, Lucie remembered, and the big mill whistle had hooted with joy, the siren down at the firehall had wailed happily, and every church bell in town, from the high tower at Ste-Cécile's cathedral to the tiny gospel hall just north of Dufferin Street, had rung out the news. Lucie had been at school that day, learning about watts and kilowatts. It was a little before recess, and Sister Gabrielle had run into their classroom with her black robes flying to tell them the war was over. Then they had all stood up to sing *O Canada,* while Sister fluttered her hands to keep time and tears streamed down her face, because now two of her brothers would come home—and one wouldn't. The schools had closed, the stores had closed, the mill had closed, and that night in the park by the old canal there were flags—the bright blue and white of the fleur-de-lis, the brave tricolour of France, a Union Jack here and there; and fireworks—rockets splashing their gaudy pinks and greens against the navy sky, giant sparklers spitting white light; and free hot dogs and pop for all the kids in Valleyfield...

She lifted her hair from her neck for a moment. She was wet with sweat. Bits of cotton stuck to her arms, tickled her upper lip. She blew at them without result. Water, hissing out from the ceiling pipes in a fine spray, made a thin moist fog all about her. And every window in the place was nailed shut. Colonel Kirk, the manager, said the dampness was better for the thread. Kept it from getting brittle and breaking. She sighed. Might be better for the thread but it was sure a heck of a lot worse for the people.

Furtively she glanced around to locate MacGregor, before she stretched to ease the ache in her shoulders and back. He was three aisles away, she saw, and her mouth twisted with scorn. He had his arm around dark-haired Emilie Bouchard. As usual. And—as usual—she wasn't pushing him away. No wonder she gets her looms repaired first. I bet she doesn't get yelled at either. Or fined. Lucie felt the anger surge in her once more. It wasn't fair!

Then she shrugged. Ah, what was the use? Things were as they were. What could she, or anybody, do about it? Nothing. Nothing at all. Unless she wanted to play Emilie's game. And she'd never do that, never. No matter what. She bent over to pluck a bobbin from the bottom of her cart, and the big silver whistle two blocks away, its voice a sharp command above the maddening metallic chatter of the looms, announced lunch break.

CHAPTER 2

"Hey, Lucie! Over here!"

Annette, blue eyes smiling, was perched on the wide cement window sill eating her usual bologna and mustard sandwich. Lucie smiled back and grabbed her lunch bag from the shelf above her sweater. A cockroach ran down the wall and scuttled towards a crack in the floor. Lucie stamped at it. Darn! she thought. Missed again.

She hoisted herself up beside Annette, opened the bag, looked inside, then carefully closed it.

"Eat it, Lucie."

"I'm not hungry."

"So eat it anyway. You don't eat, you get sick. You get sick, you can't work." She glanced at Lucie sideways. "You don't work, you don't get paid."

Lucie unwrapped the dark bread and cheese and stared at it as if it were an enemy. Her stomach rocked. I'm already sick, she thought. Sick of the mill. Sick of pushing a cart. Sick of being yelled at. She forced a bite down and said, "Sounds like I won't get paid anyway. Did you hear what MacGregor said about fines?"

"Yep. Makes you mad, doesn't it?"

Lucie took another bite. "Mama was counting on my pay this week. The hydro's due..." She swallowed. "It's just not fair, Annette!"

"Right." The older girl surveyed the room. Some of the weavers still stood at their looms, eating as they worked. The more cloth they made, the more money in their pay. Under cover of the muted clatter Annette said, "Which is why we're going to do something to make it fair."

Lucie stopped eating, hope stirring in her at the confident tone of Annette's voice. She grinned, and for a moment her face lost its weariness. "Yeah? What, Annette? For a start, how about drowning MacGregor in the lake?"

Annette laughed. "He'd probably poison the fish. No, we're just going to change a few things around here."

"Like what?"

"Like the hours we work, the pay we get, the vacations we don't get—and the way MacGregor acts." Annette ticked them off on her slender fingers.

"How?"

"With the union."

"The union?"

"Yep."

Suddenly Annette sniffed and put a finger to her lips. She jerked her head to the left. Lucie glanced in that direction. A few yards away, near the open door, stood the carding shop boss, the smoke from his cigarette curling towards them like a woolly grey snake. Both girls fell silent. Lucie ate the rest of her sandwich and folded the waxed paper and the bag into a neat rectangle. She'd use them again for Monday's lunch. Tucking them into the big patch pocket of her dirndl skirt, she looked once more at the doorway.

"He's gone, Annette."

"Okay. Now, where was I? The union. You heard about it yet, Lucie?"

"Well, a little bit, I guess. I've heard my mom talking to my grandmother about it a couple of times. And then that lady from Montreal, you know the one?"

"Mademoiselle Parent?"

Lucie nodded. "She came to the house, last year I think, to talk to my parents..." Lucie frowned, trying to remember. "She stayed a long time, sitting in the kitchen. Just like anybody. Even though my grandmother said she had real pearls on!" Lucie stopped, looked away, then turned back and blurted, "Annette, she's against the Church! The sisters told us, at school! We had to say a prayer every week asking God to make her leave Valleyfield!"

Annette laughed. Lucie gaped at her in shock. What was so funny about being against the Church? It was terrible!

"Lucie, that's nothing! The priest told my dad he couldn't take communion any more if he joined the new union. It didn't stop *him*! Now he's the president! The old union, the Catholic union, wasn't any good. They never stood up to the bosses. So we needed a better one. And since it won't take orders from the Church, most of the priests are upset, of course." She glanced at the younger girl. "You get it?"

"Yeah, I guess so," answered Lucie. She hesitated again, feeling her face grow pink. "Uh, Annette, hope you don't think I'm stupid, but...well, I'm not even sure what a union is!"

Annette smiled. "That's what I figured. And you're not stupid, Lucie—at your age I didn't know either. Anyhow, a union's like a club, a club for all the people who work here, like you and me, and your mother and my dad, for everybody except the foremen and the bosses."

"For Emilie Bouchard, too?" asked Lucie.

Annette looked at her and grinned. "Even for Emilie Bouchard. You saw that this morning, eh?"

"How could anybody miss it?"

"I know. But Lucie, that's part of what's wrong. Emilie's too scared to act any other way. The union will fix things so she doesn't have to be scared. So that none of us has to be scared."

For a moment Lucie studied her friend. There was something in her voice, in her face, something strong and brave flowing from her that made Lucie feel different, happier somehow, despite her fatigue. Maybe things *could* change, she thought. If Annette said so, if Annette was so sure, maybe *everything* could change...

"And that's not all!," Annette was saying. "Most of us work fifty hours every week. What would you say to forty hours instead? And an extra five dollars a week in your pay? And pay for vacations and holidays? A month from now is St-Jean Baptiste Day. The whole province celebrates. How do we celebrate? We lose a day's pay, that's how!" She stopped for breath. "And then," she went on, "we've got to put with guys—excuse me, I mean rats, except that's an insult to rats—like MacGregor, who treat us like dirt under their feet, and who only know enough French to call us names!"

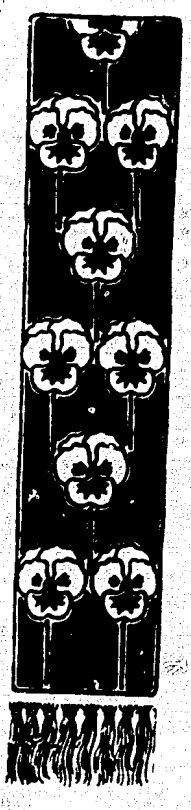
Lucie bit her lip and colour spread into her cheeks once more. Annette, seeing her face, slipped an arm around her shoulders and gave her a quick hug. Lucie looked at the floor, unable to speak. The whistle shrilled. Both girls jumped down from the window sill.

"There's more, Lucie!" shouted Annette. "Meet me outside the gates after work, okay?"

Lucie nodded, and ran to her cart at one end of the fifth row of looms. At the other end stood MacGregor. He peered at her, pulled out his watch, shook his head, and made a note in his black book, smiling under his scraggly red mustache. Lucie gritted her teeth and began working, unable to prevent the ripple of fear in her mind at the sight of him. Boy, she thought, if the union could get rid of him...

His words rang bitterly in her memory. "Idiot." "Dummy." And maybe worst of all, "Frenchie." The names had hurt more than she had imagined they could. They made her feel small, smaller even than her five feet three inches. They had changed the way she felt about what she was and who she was.

She remembered, as her fingers flew to thread a bobbin into a waiting shuttle, how

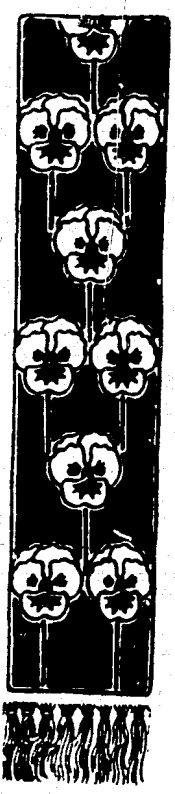


it had been at school. The sisters had praised her, saying she was clever and bright. She had stood first for three years in a row in geography and spelling and reading. And that was why her Papa had bought books for her at Christmastime and birthdays. When she bought home her report card, he would study her marks with a serious face, while she wriggled on the arm of his chair beside the big kitchen stove, waiting for what he said every time, for what delighted her every time. He would nod slowly, and a smile would lighten his face, and he would turn to her and say, "When the good God gave out brains, Lucie Laplante, daughter of Daniel Laplante, was first in line!" And she would laugh with joy, and he would laugh too, and then plant a kiss on her cheek. It was like getting a medal. She always felt as if she had done something special and marvellous, as if she were a conqueror.

But now that was gone. In three weeks it was gone, that feeling. Three weeks of pushing this stupid cart full of stupid bobbins. Three weeks of MacGregor yelling in her ear. She'd started to think he was right, and that her teachers, her father, had been wrong. Maybe she *was* what he said—clumsy, and slow, and not clever at all. Each time he shouted at her, each time he made a remark in his notebook, she felt something shrivel inside her.

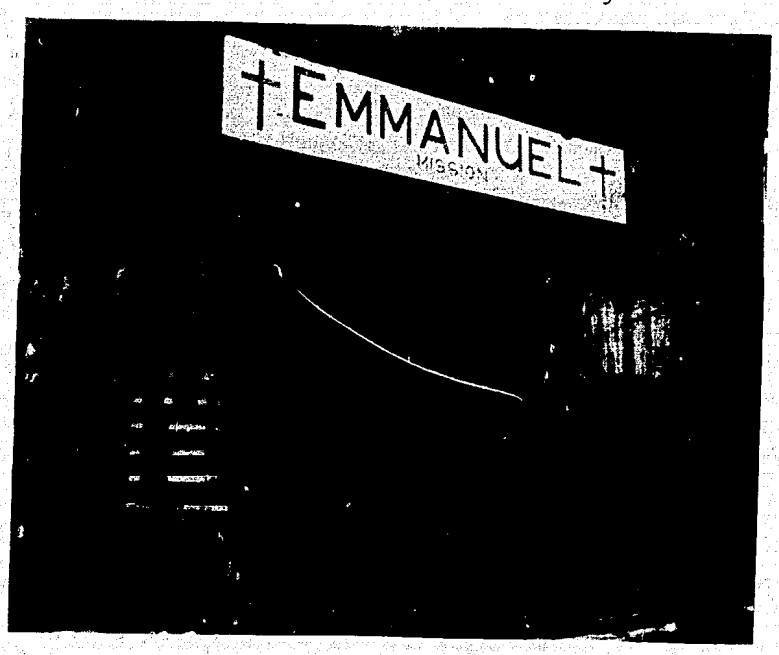
Can the union change that? she wondered, wiping the sweat from her forehead with a damp handkerchief. Can the union make me feel the way I felt before? Maybe, she thought, maybe with shorter hours and more pay, I can go back to school some time. Or at least study at night. Instead of falling asleep over my dinner.

For the first time since she had started at the mill she felt a lightness inside, a kind of strange excitement. The union. The union. She repeated the word, out loud, as if it were a lucky charm, a magic spell. A word strong enough to slay dragons, vanquish giants—or make an evil red-headed dwarf disappear.



Army of unemployed

I met a dear old friend today.
An accidental meeting;
At once I sensed a change in him
A coolness in his greeting.
I said "I'm on my way to work."
He answered "Nice for you.
It must be very gratifying
To be one of the chosen few."
His voice was filled with bitterness,
He looked at me with hate.
I felt I was his enemy



As he started to relate his story
It just came pouring out,
He'd been unemployed a year.
He'd lost his house, his car, his friends,
And now his greatest fear
Was he'd lose his wife and family
By his failure to provide.
He said he didn't want to live
Without dignity and pride.
"You know I've worked hard all my life
To build a future for my kids
And after all my toil and sweat
I'm headed for the skids."
I realized right as I stood then
My God, this could be me!
I have no job security,
I have no guarantee
That I won't be standing in his shoes
A month, a year from now;
And as he turned and walked away
I made a solemn vow,
That I'll fight to keep the lifestyle
I have earned by my own sweat;
And if I recruit the unemployed,
We'll have the mightiest army yet.

JUNE WILSON
Penticton Unemployment Action Centre

Mr. Black Shades Goes Dish-Washing

Writing poetry and myths on economic themes

Tom Morton

Following are some notes on teaching creative writing to Grades 8 and 9 with content that reflects work and social issues. The sources for my ideas were Kenneth Koch's *Rose, Why Are You Read?*; Tom Wayman's anthology of poems about work, *Going for Coffee*; and for the myth assignment, *Ideas for Teaching English in the Junior High and Middle Schools* from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). These are notes only, because the unit is evolving.

Poetry

I distributed to the class copies of particular poems, which we then used as models for our writing. Concerned about developing enthusiasm, I did not insist that students follow the workplace theme if they had another topic in mind. Poetic form first, content second. To develop a positive attitude, we would do group poems as well, brainstorming, for example, a list of similes (the paintbrush looked like..., the chain-saw sounded like...).

Publishing—reading aloud, mimeographing, and posting poems on the bulletin board—helped spread new ideas that students developed.

The students provided me with some ideas for improvement. They disliked the short time I gave them to write. Also they wanted me to take a more editorial role, giving more suggestions for improvement.

Here are a few of the poems and ideas I used:

1. **Jim Daniels**
Short-Order Cook

An average joe comes in and orders
30 cheeseburgers and 30 fries.

I wait for him to pay before I start cooking.
He pays —
he ain't no average joe.

The grill is just big enough for 10 rows of 3.
I slap the burgers down.
throw two buckets of fries in the deep frier
and they pop pop spit spit...
psss...
The counter girls laugh.
I concentrate.
It is the crucial point:
they are ready for the cheese.

My fingers shake as I tear off slices, toss
them on the burgers/fries done/dump/
refill buckets/burgers ready/flip
into buns, beat that melting cheese/wrap
burgers in plastic/into paper bags/fries done/
dump/fill 30 bags/bring them to the counter,
wipe sweat on sleeve, and smile at the counter girls.
I puff my chest out and bellow:
"30 cheeseburgers, 30 fries."
They look at me funny.
I grab a handful of ice, toss it in my mouth,
do a little dance, and walk back to the grill.
Pressure, responsibility, success.
30 cheeseburgers, 30 fries.

Jim Green
You Can't Help Smiling

You can't help smiling
when the chain saw is roaring
you've got chips in your mouth
exhaust and turpentine in your nose
and your hands are numb

you're limbing, cutting
stacking, working up
one hell of a sweat

"It's just like it was when..."
Carl thinking of Idaho
me of the mountains
north of Montana
both of us younger then

and it's good work
swinging the saw along the limbs
burning it through thick logs
getting the blade bound
and working it loose

then noticing
when you stop for a breather
the morning mist
just pulling away
from the mountains

You can't help smiling

From these two poems, we pulled out the use of sound words—*pop pop spit spit* and the use of a series of specific verbs to reflect the series of actions in a job. I asked the students to describe any habitual job they have done using a series of verbs and at least one sound word.

James Hickling, Grade 8
Dish Washing

The supper dishes sitting in the sink, like a bull challenging a matador.

I walk over slowly, like a gunfighter at the ready, and...I grab the nearest dish,...wipe, wipe/scrub, scrub/splash, splash/rinse, rinse/dry, dry.

The first dish is dry. I step back to admire my work for a moment, then dive in again. The second round begins. I snatch a plate and...wipe, wipe/scrub, scrub...over and over again!

Until...I finally stand alone. No more are they evil-looking, fire-breathing beasts, but now they are knights in gleaming armor.

Standing victorious, I have won.

2. **Jim Daniels**
Work Shoes

Loaned out to another department for the day.
I had a job painting the good parts green,
the bad orange.

When the line broke down
I painted my shoes green
and danced a resurrection from grease.

I was Mr. Greenshoes,
my feet so light and new
I painted my socks too.

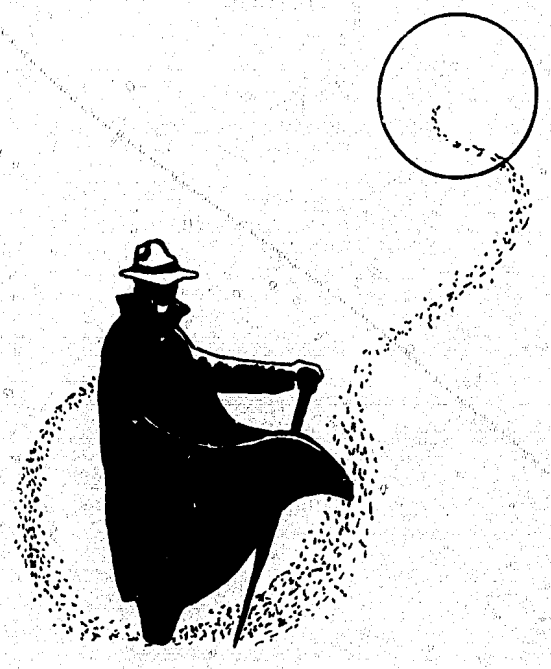
Foreman said "Asshole."
spit on the floor.
asked me to work late.

I said "Green shoes don't want no overtime!"
danced for him.
followed his thumb to the door.

The opportunity to take on a persona appealed to my students when I asked them to write a story with a colored-clothing character, such as Mr. Red Shirt says.... We discussed also the symbolism and mood of different colors.

Erik Rolfsen, Grade 8
Mr. Black Shades

Smoothly he slides along the straight
cement sidewalk.
A man many make out to be mean.
People keep their distance.
The wild whirling wind slows wisely down in the
wake of his walk.
A dumbfounding darkness dances
about him.
People keep their distance.
Cutting cleanly through the air as the killer
cats can
Is Mr. Black Shades.
People keep their distance.



3. Bronwen Wallace

The Housewife's Poem

for Virginia Woolf

Each morning
I make coffee begin
my journey to my own room
Sneak past the breakfast dishes
too late the teapot's spotted me
mutinous forks snap at my ankles
and the egg-turner tries
to block the hall door I reach it
just miss being crushed
a frying pan clatters uselessly
against wood

Pass the bathroom now where towels
encouraged by the clamor
ambush twine damp ils
round my neck tie my hands
as the clogged sink spits
hair and bits of soap
into my face
and the dust under the bed
begins a low complaining whine
rises to shriek as plants
choke in their cracked, dry pots
and windows gasp for sunlight
Reach my room at last but
the door refuses to shut
and yesterday's coffee mug
has spilled itself in my notebook
I grab for my typewriter
something has eaten the ribbon
all my pens are clogged
ashtray and pencil sharpener
exchange smug glances
I ignore them reach
for a cigarette dip it
in my coffee
begin to write

One of the poems most enjoyed by the students was this exotic extended personification. I asked the students also to describe a brief action—coming to school in the morning or going shopping—where inanimate objects act as if they are out to get them.

Joey Meyer, Grade 9

Untitled

I stumble into the kitchen—
Find myself staring intensely down into the sink.
Grungy plates stare back at me--
Bowls taunting and teasing my patience.
Images of the night dance before me.
I pick up a spoon—
I see my reflection.
I am horrified.

4. Suzanne Kwoka

Every Day Armor

I wear a coat of armor
Every day I add another layer
Toughen up they tell me.

The Union never does anything for me
Don't they know that they are the Union
Toughen up they tell me.

How come I got laid off?
He asked me, sitting in his Toyota
Toughen up they tell me.

The Union let them fire me
So what if I'm drunk every day
Toughen up they tell me.

I'll never call the committeeman, he's no good
Did I vote, hell no
Toughen up they tell me.

The Union let them raise the rate
Hell no, I didn't call a committeeman
Toughen up they tell me.

It's not my fault I got walked out
So what if I threaten the foreman
Toughen up they tell me.

They elected Joe as a joke
Now I have to help his district, too
Toughen up they tell me.

Toughen up they tell me
Instead I go home and cry
There must be a hole in my armor.

Although not a great poem, the subject matter allowed me to use Koch's repetitive form—"I seem to be" on every odd line, and "But really I am" on every even line.

Chris Moffett, Grade 9
Untitled

I was laid off work. "Damn fool," he said. On the outside I'm rough and tough with people, hard-headed, guts of steel, can take anything. Inside it's different—anger makes me rage to kill, but depression takes over. I need more steel guts. I must stick up for my rights and mostly for me and my former job or "ex."

M·Y·T·H·S

The following assignment came after a unit on the interpretation of Greek myths and a discussion of some modern myths. (See *Economics Myth: Fact Sheet and Writing Assignment*, p. 6.)

Economics Myth:
Fact Sheet and Writing Assignment

You are to write an economics myth that explains how or why something exists in society.

Part I: PRE-WRITING
You will need to create your own god or goddess and choose an aspect of economics or society as a whole for this writing assignment. Answer each question below. You will use these facts later in writing your economics myth.

1. Name of your god or goddess.
2. Why he/she was given the name.
3. What he/she is in charge of.
4. His/her symbol. (Draw a picture of the symbol. What does it stand for?)
5. What does your god or goddess look like? List information on face, body, clothing, special decoration.
6. List the special powers or abilities your god or goddess possesses.
7. Select a subject for your economics myth. Choose one listed below or write on a subject of your own.

How cars were created.
The origin of McDonald's.
Why we have rich and poor people.
The creation of the Sony Walkman.
How advertising began.
The first union (or multinational corporation or school) on earth.

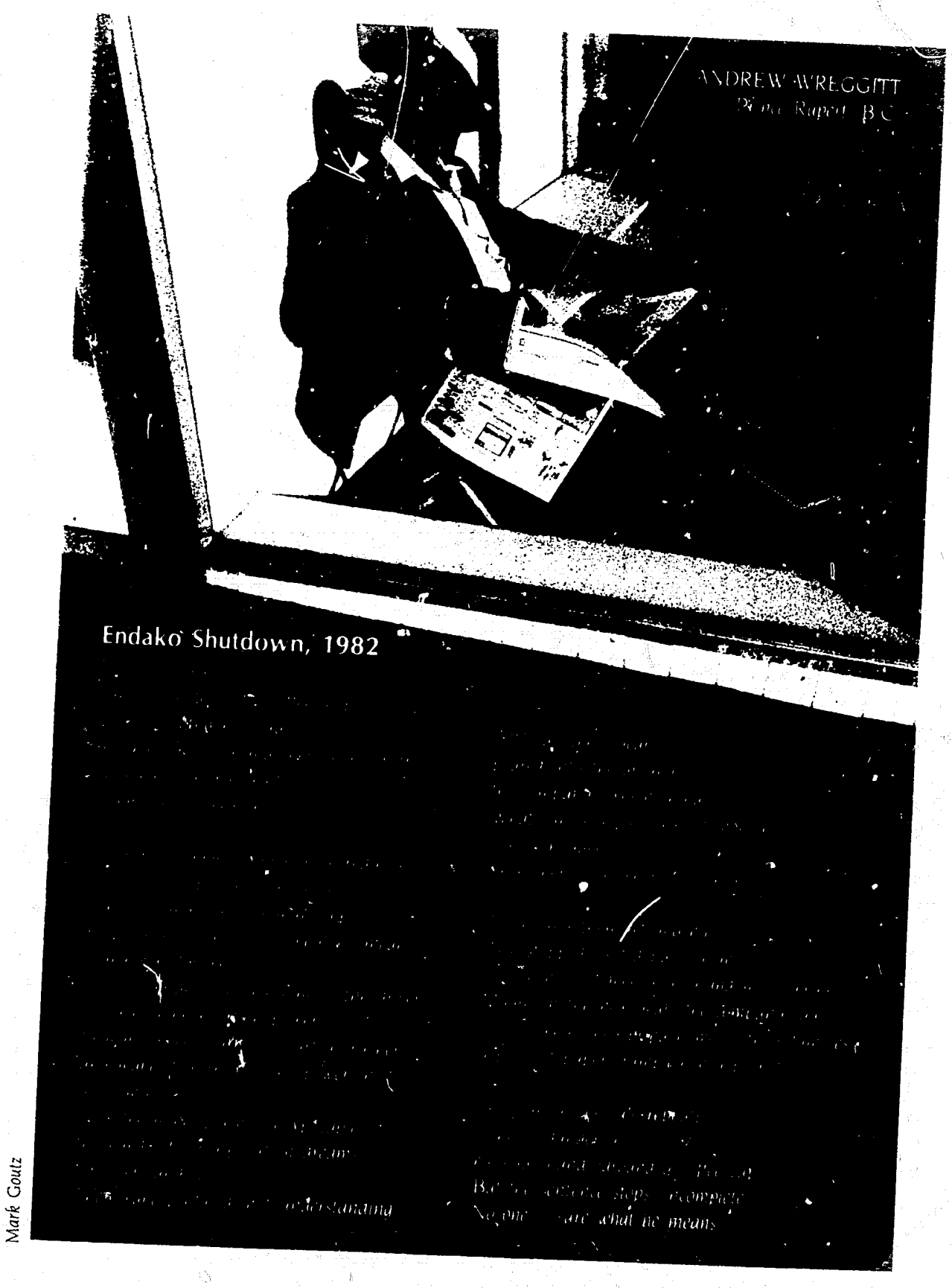
Part II: WRITING THE MYTH
Your economics myth will contain two paragraphs. Use information from Part I (Pre-Writing) to tell about your god or goddess in the first paragraph. In the second paragraph, explain how he/she was involved in creating the economics subject you chose. Your myth can open in many ways, but try to capture your reader's interest with the opening sentence. For example, "Once, Hecco, goddess of money was resting by a river, saddened by the loss of her only daughter."

MONOPLOS
by Allan Sharp, Grade 8

A long time ago, Monoplos, the God of Business, was in a quandary. His great success with Machinas, the God of Machinery, had been stopped by Unios, the Goddess of Labor, and Comptos, the Goddess of Competition. And this was hurting his protégée, the capitalist. How was he to stop them?

He stayed up for decades, trying to find a solution. He chewed 6,000,000 pens until they leaked, and then he threw them into the Black Sea, which is why they called it that (though it is not so inky as it used to be). He tried millions of ideas before he found one that worked.

His idea was the multinational corporation. A powerful holding company indeed, it managed to make a profit even when one of its own divisions was on strike. That helped put his businessmen on top. That is, until Unios and Realitus, the God of Politics invented Communism...but that's another story.

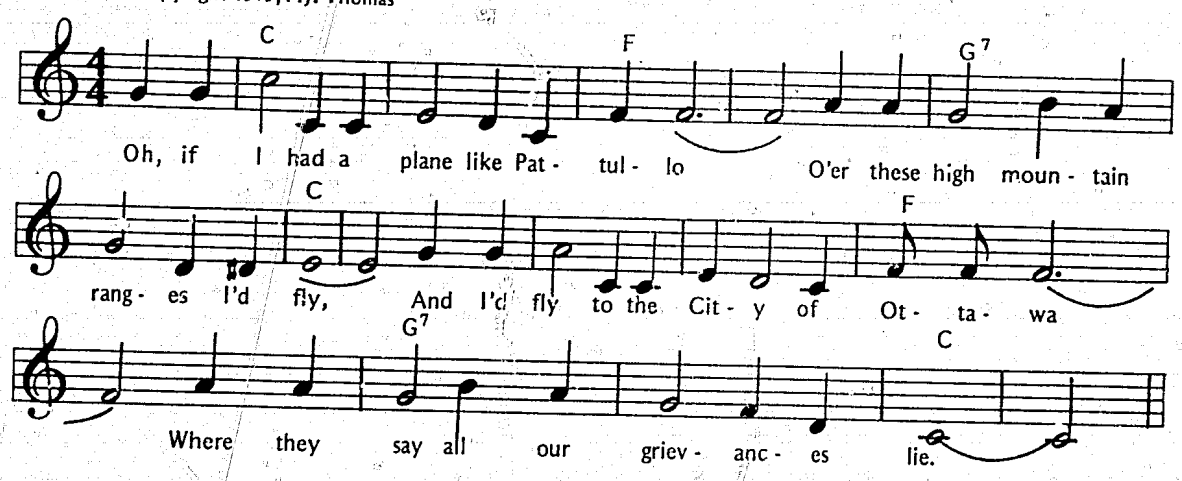


Endako Shutdown, 1982

Mark Goutz

"Oh, If I Had a Plane Like Pattullo"

A Song Full of Symbols
Song: Anonymous
Article by Phil Thomas



1. *Oh, if I had a plane like Pattullo*
   O'er these high mountain ranges I'd fly.
   And I'd fly to the City of Ottawa
   Where they say all our grievances lie.

2. *But now we're in British Columbia*
   And this is our domiciled home.
   We've all had our fill of those train rides,
   We no longer desire to roam.

3. *So we followed the birds to Victoria*
   To try to prevail upon Duff
   That it's work with a wage that we're after
   So cut out this transient stuff.

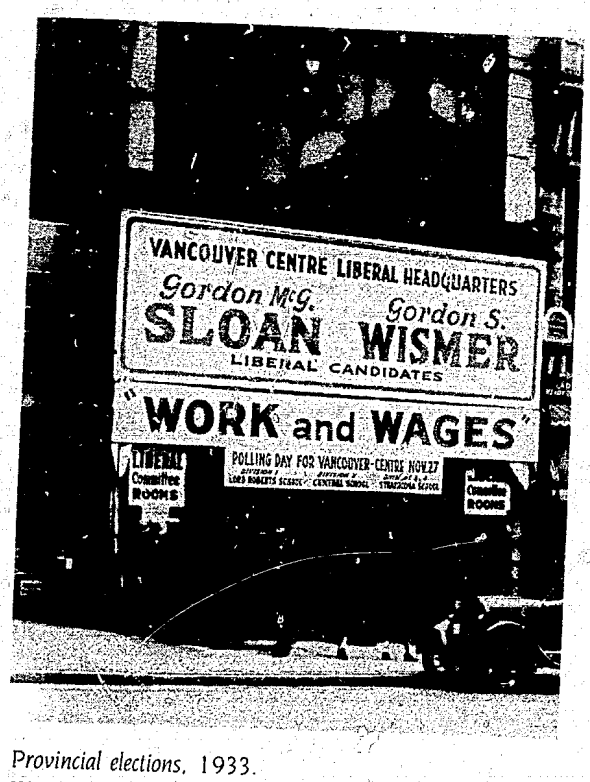
Hon. T.D. Pattullo in front of TCA plane.

"If I Had a Plane like Pattullo" was likely written in late June 1938, by one of the thousand single unemployed men who trekked to Victoria in the aftermath of their month-long Vancouver Post Office sit-down demonstration, which had ended only after the RCMP had used tear gas and clubs on them. The sit-downers had been protesting the continuing absence of a "Work and Wages" program in the nation. Municipal and provincial governments, as well as the unemployed men, agreed that Ottawa should meet major relief costs, but, although some moneys were provided by the federal government for public works, the program was piecemeal and uninspired. Having been routed by federal police from their occupation of a federal building, the single unemployed pressed Victoria for action.

The song was printed in the *Victoria Jobless Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, a hand-sized folded sheet, successor to the three issues of the *Post Office Sitdowner's Gazette*. The pamphlets were written, for the most part, in a light and humorous vein despite the gravity of the situation; the price was "your support"—they were used to raise funds. The song is a parody of "The Prisoner's Song" a well-known lament of the 1920s, which began with the line, "If I had the wings of an angel." To get the full flavor of the satire, a survey of the depression years in British Columbia is needed.

B.C.'s Premier Thomas Dufferin Pattullo had for years been an admirer of Franklin D. Roosevelt's national recovery policies, and he proposed for B.C. large-scale long-term public works. Without federal support from R.B. Bennett's Conservatives, and then after the 1935 election of Mackenzie King's Liberals, he was able to do little. He had built the Fraser River bridge at New Westminster, which bore his name, and the highway south to the U.S. border, which was a significant road in its day. His biggest chance to realize his hopes of giving the unemployed useful and inspiring work and wages was his proposed Alaska Highway. In 1937, he opened negotiations with the Roosevelt administration for the scheme, and, before Ottawa squelched his efforts, he had been hoping to borrow 15 million dollars from the Americans for construction.

At first, Pattullo travelled by train on his negotiating trips east, but in May 1938, he flew by United Airlines out of Seattle to Washington, D.C. The premier had for many years caught people's attention with his dapper style of dress, and now the image of his flying gave him an added dimension that lent itself to gentle satire. While the



Provincial elections, 1933.
West side, 600 block Granville Street.

unemployed men rode freight trains, this leader travelled in a different mode; the contrasting modes of travel symbolized their separation, their difficulty in dialogue.

Pattullo had come into office on a "Work and Wages" platform in 1933. In the provincial election of that year, the voters were presented with a choice among the splintered Conservatives (who had been in office), the three-month-old Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (the CCF, which became the NDP in 1961), and the regrouped and confident Liberals. The Depression had hit British Columbia early and hard. The first relief camps in the province had been inefficiently and corruptly managed; they were taken over by the Department of National Defence in 1933. In the federal camp scheme, the men received an allowance of 20 cents a day, which hit strongly at the self-image of all workers. The result was a clear move to the left in public opinion: the new CCF took 32% of the votes; the fragmented Conservatives, 26%; and the "Work and Wages" followers of Pattullo, 42%.

Before the election, British Columbia had 120,000 relief cases a month. During 1934, the unemployment in the nation peaked at 800,000,

one out of five of the male work force. The frustration of years of ineffective and demeaning palliatives finally showed itself in a rejection of the relief camps. Thousands left the camps demanding of Ottawa a positive work program. The ensuing "On to Ottawa Trek" faced Prime Minister R.B. Bennett with a choice, and he tried to arrest the trek leaders for sedition. This police action precipitated the "Regina Riot" of Dominion Day, July 1, 1935. (The previous May Day in Vancouver many of the men had carried placards demanding "Work and Wages.") In the eyes of many Canadians, law and order had parted with the cause of justice.

The election in 1935 of Mackenzie King's Liberals changed nothing. Canada was not to have a "New Deal." The burden of the unemployed was pushed from one level of government to another, and, despite some improvement in the economy, the situation of great numbers was bleak. This was so especially in British Columbia where many of the once-transient unemployed had with the passage of time become legally resident; that is, B.C. qualified as their "domiciled home."

Pattullo himself was frustrated with Ottawa's inaction and became obdurate in his stand against paying relief costs. In the spring of 1938, he ordered the closing of the provincial forestry camps where many men had wintered. Those who hailed from the East were told to go "home" and were offered their rail tickets. Many protested homelessness, and rejected the transient status to which they would thus again be condemned.

Many of those single men put out of the provincial forestry camps that spring became the Vancouver Post Office sit-downers and, after their violent eviction, went to Victoria to confront Premier "Duff" Pattullo with their plight. Their demands for a public works program as well as immediate relief were taken up by delegations to the premier of church ministers, women's organizations, and CCF MLAs. Public opinion was strongly in the men's favor. Both the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province* wrote editorials deploring the inaction of Pattullo. The *Province* editor's retort to the premier's curt assertion that he knew his duty, given when a CCF MLA reminded him of certain omissions, was: "If the premier knows his duty, why does he not do it? Why does he not mobilize all the influence he can command to force Ottawa's hand? Why does he not do the difficult and urgent job instead of the easy one of browbeating helpless, workless men...?"

Though the men were financially helpless, their spirit alarmed Pattullo to the point that on June 23, with the first 300 demonstrators on his doorstep, he wrote privately to Prime Minister King complaining that the RCMP was not stopping transients entering B.C.; he wrote of "illegal" acts, "subversive forces," and the likelihood of "serious bloodshed," with no mention of public works, etc. He ignored the fact that 75% of the sit-downers were legally British Columbia residents.

The urging in the song that Pattullo should fly to Ottawa had both a satirical and a serious aspect. The new Trans Canada Air Lines (now Air Canada), founded in 1937, was high in people's minds for expeditious travel. MLA Dorothy Steeves of the CCF significantly used words similar to those in the song when the CCF delegation met Pattullo in Victoria on June 20: "We suggest that you go by plane to Ottawa with Mr. Pearson (B.C.'s Minister of Labour), and take one of the men's representatives with you. We are at one with you that it is a Federal responsibility ultimately to look after them (i.e., the single unemployed)."

Memories and Realities

From the Vancouver Province, May 1935.

TOURIST GUIDE!

Holiday seekers and Tourists—welcome to Vancouver. Through the facilities of our excellent, high-pressure tourist promoters, you know of the majestic mountains, the cool mountain streams, where the spas are located and where the best fishing is to be found. But that is only the half of it—the city of Vancouver alone has scenes which it is too modest to admit are uncomparable on the continent.

1. We have plain ordinary roads of the rural variety leading into the City—not Highways—so that the tourists will know they are in Canada immediately they cross the line and come to Vancouver.

2. In the various sections of the City, we have slums, which have been appraised by Slum Clearance experts, who testify that they lead even London, England for delapidation, and our Civic authorities are conserving them with a good deal of pride for tourist attraction.

3. Probably the most outstanding feature attraction however, is the spectacle which every Tourist should see—it is the scenes at the Post Office and Art Gallery, where the youth and workers of this glorious civilization, waste away, while the authorities pass the buck from one to another and refuse to accept any share in the responsibility for the problem of Unemployment.

SEE VANCOUVER FIRST?

"Then swap your car for a Bull-Dozer and blast your way to our Natural beauties of the interior."

Helpful Hints to Tourists

1. *See your nearest Insurance dealer.*
2. *Remove tires and equip with Caterpillar treads.*
3. *When travelling at night, carry flares. This will assist searching parties to find you in the wilderness.*
4. *Stick to the center of the road. One side is the ditch, the other is oblivion.*
5. *A small boat is standard equipment during the rainy season.*
6. *Extra balast to keep car from bouncing off the road essential.*
7. *We suggest you do as the Premier does—Ride on Airplane.*

Issued by Single Unemployed Committee

Sawmill

The greenchain scrapes, lurches,
dragging waste along.
The market's up and every mother's son, like me,
is singing, awhile, the dollar song.

Pushing brooms, wheel barrows,
we keep the chains clanking,
the stinking sea-soaked waste moving down the lines.

Metal burns against ears—
everything's noise, concrete,
and the high sea stench of teredo worms, mangled bark,
salt water.

Afterwards, we go out, out to the ocean in dark night,
stripping down to swim, laughing, dipped in phosphorus,
then towelling away noise of metal, stench of rot, chains.

Twenty years after things aren't so good.
My friend lines up at the employment office
for nothing.
Heavy newspapers and magazines say workers live too easy,
have to pull their belts tight.

I don't believe it. My friend has nothing.
I have little.
The lumber market's gone all to hell, they say.
But a piece of two-by-four
is one-and-a-half by three-and-a-half inches now
and costs more per cubic inch than prime steak.

Capitalists still play on white sand in molten sun,
still go down to the sparkling blue-chip sea
tan-limbed and beautiful.
Their galleons, laden,
still push, smoothly, out of the green-trimmed harbour
towards a perpetually golden future.

from Robin Matthews, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, 1978.

The Typist's Revenge

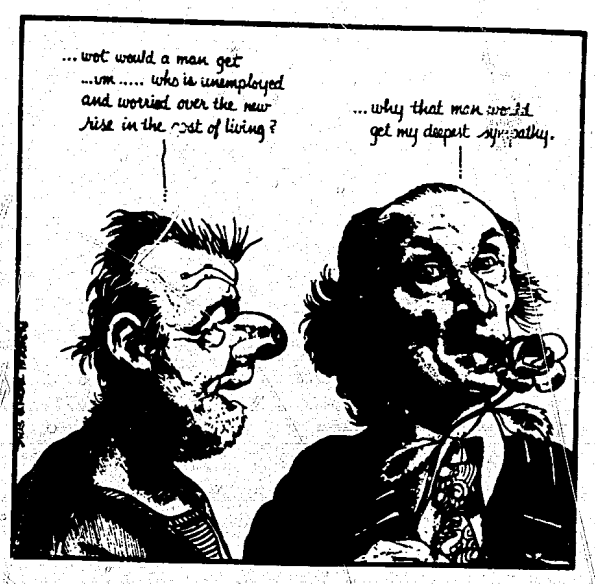
A man, reading a prepared address to a meeting of industrialists, swung into his peroration.

"The average businessman is tired. He has worked long and diligently in the war effort and in the difficult times which preceded it, and he is weary. He is physically and mentally tired. But he isn't nearly as tired as the girls who have to type all this eyewash."

Then came a long, tense pause while a delighted audience came to its senses and began to yelp its appreciation. The speaker stared at his script in unbelief.

"Why," he blurted out at last, "I never wrote anything like that!"

Oshaworker, Oshawa, Ont.



Cream Separator Economics

(Or Guess Who Gets the Skim Milk)
By the Hon. T. C. Douglas,
Premier of Saskatchewan

Our present capitalist economy can best be likened to a cream separator—the laborer turns the handle; he is the one who supplies the power which keeps the entire machine in operation. The farmer, on the other hand, pours in the milk; he it is who supplies the raw material and the foodstuffs without which our economy would collapse. Between them these two produce the wealth of the nation; the one pouring in the milk, the other turning the handle. However, there is a third figure on the scene who is sometimes overlooked. He is the capitalist who owns the machine.

He does not pour in any milk, he does not turn the handle, but by virtue of the fact that he has a piece of paper giving him legal ownership of the cream separator he is allowed to sit on a stool with the cream spout fixed firmly in his mouth. The other two take turns at the skim milk spout. Now one can stay alive on skim milk—he will not get very fat, but at least he can stay alive—that is, providing the skim milk keeps on coming; but unfortunately it does not. Every once in a while the capitalist gets so full of cream that he decides to shut off the machine, whereup the skim milk stops too. The farmer will probably blame the worker and his trade union for the stoppage, but the worker is only too anxious for the opportunity to turn the handle. It is not until the capitalist feels that he wants more cream that the machine is set in motion again.

FLASH

The Garrison in the Federal Fortress report that they need the following additions to the Commissariat:

SOCKS *galore to improve atmospheric conditions.*
FRUIT *to remind them that it is Spring outside.*
SOAP *to present a shining face to the audience.*
SMOKES *to kill time while awaiting word from Parliament Hill.*

All donations of bread, butter, vegetables as well as the above-mentioned items may be brought to O'Brien Hall, 404 Homer Street, *or if you call* Trinity 6371 *we will send a car to bring it in.* THANK YOU!

Post Office "Sitdowners" Gazette, Vol. 1, No. 1

LOST AND FOUND

LOST: *All sense of responsibility. Finder please return same to Parliament Buildings, Victoria.*
FOUND: *Locations for public works projects. Government may have details on application.*

PERSONAL
Prosperity please come back. All is forgiven.

Reprinted from the *Post Office "Sitdowners" Gazette*
Vol. 1, No. 3

LOST: Mr. A. Job. *Anyone knowing his whereabouts please notify* Mr. Desti Tute.
LOST: *Faith in the Government Policy. Finder please leave at the Work and Wages Dept.*
FOUND: *Solution to unemployment. Government may have same by applying at Union Headquarters.*

Reprinted from the *Post Office "Sitdowners" Gazette,*
Vol. 1, No. 3

LOST: *Lease on four local hotels. Finder please leave at City Hall.*
LOST: *By single unemployed men, all desire to travel. Finder may keep same.*
FOUND: *One thousand good reasons for a works program. Government may see same by applying at Union Headquarters.*

Reprinted from the *Victoria Jobless Journal,* Vol. 1, No. 1.

Social Notes

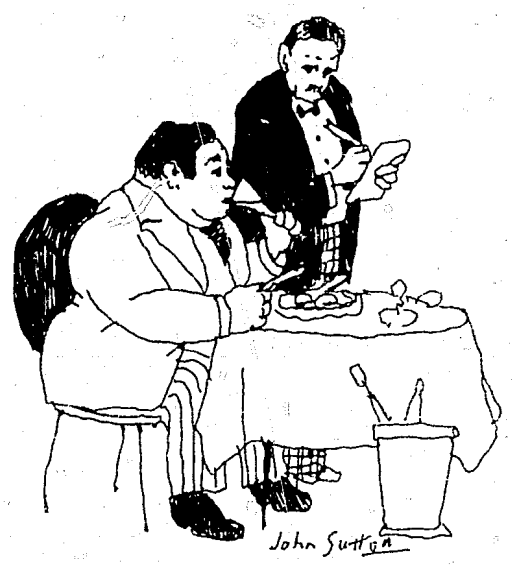
The social and dance to be held in the new Union Hall of the Single Unemployed, corner of Hastings and Granville streets, promises to be the outstanding social event of the season. The persistent report that Mr. Pearso will sing "Is It All a Dream" has not been confirmed as yet.

Mr. Pay-too-low, Premier of British Columbia, is paying a diplomatic visit to the capital of Canada this week. It is rumored in diplomatic circles that he will try and make arrangement between these two countries regarding homeless men.

Miss Fortune is still courting Mr. Job Less in spite of his attempts to ditch her.

A pie-eating contest will feature the afternoon tea being held for the guests of the Federal Building at 3 p.m. Sunday. A close contest is expected with the odds on General D. Livery and Parcel Post.

Reprinted from *Post Office "Sitdowners" Gazette*, Vol. 1, No. 2



A Model Citizen: *"The people are hollering about high prices. My meals cost many times more than their's and I never complain."*

Leftwing Humor

Mark Goutz

The Task Eternal

Robin Matthews

He hadn't thought very much about the other union's moving toward a strike. But when it came, Danny knew he had to go on the line; though he didn't really want to go. He knew there are people who really want to do that kind of thing, like Marvin, a member of the Communist Party. Marvin had even been a Communist Party candidate several times. He'd want to go to the strike because he always wanted to do anything that helped show up the contradictions of capitalism. Danny knew, without being told by Marvin, that a strike of the Support Staff at Carleton University would certainly show up the contradictions of capitalism.

That didn't please or displease Danny. For him it was just a fact, like the season of the year. A lot of the teachers wouldn't like the Support Staff strike. They would lose all their so-called academic objectivity, and they'd call the Support Staff dirty names and pass through their picket lines. The president of the university and all the deans would act like little capitalists, saying that they'd like to give the strikers more, but.... They'd have a million reasons for arguing that teaching faculty and administrators should make three or four hundred per cent more money than Support Staff. They'd show that beneath their rhetoric about being selfless people seeking truth, they were, in fact, people who supported all the inequalities of the society as long as the society paid them for their loyalty.

Of course, there'd be members of Support Staff who wouldn't want to think of themselves as *workers* in a *union*, and would cross their own picket lines. Danny didn't know how that would show up the contradictions of capitalism, but he knew Marvin would have an explanation.

Danny would go to the strike. He knew that; but he really didn't want to go.

He was worried that his students would suffer if he didn't go in to teach them. That was the core of the matter, he told himself. The students. The night before, he'd been at Florence Cole's house for a drink. One of her friends came in, a lovely, unearthly woman. Her name was Elizabeth Maripose. She was tall and slender and lively, with electric movements and dark eyes that flashed and cooled and laughed as she talked. She was dressed in beautiful flowing clothes and silver jewellery that made her look like a princess in a fairy tale, a princess with long, elegantly combed hair. Danny marvelled that anyone could be so alive.

"I'll do anything," she said, "give money—how much they want—but I can't leave my students. They come first." When she said that, her eyes filled with a soulful look as if she could see the crippled destiny of each one of her students spreading out before her. Danny felt stabbed. He'd made up his mind to go on the line, but he didn't want to. And he didn't want to refuse to cross. The soulful eyes of Elizabeth Maripose looked at him as if to say, "I'm a teacher. That's my existance." Then she added, "I think we're like firefighters and medical people. We shouldn't be allowed to go out ourselves or to support a strike. There should be a law. What if our students lose a year? Who can replace that?" Then her mood shifted and her emotion focussed elsewhere. "Of course, those poor people, those women on such small salaries. That's why I want to help."

Danny didn't argue. He agreed with her, almost. He was worried about his students and told himself he'd work very hard when it was all over. He'd give his students extra work and extra classes. He told himself they wouldn't suffer. But he said nothing.

He felt old, and that made him a little afraid. Was it really his students he worried about? Or was it all the stress and tension he'd feel going on the picket line, the police officers there, the screeching cars trying to push their way through the line, administrators spying—spying so they could dock his wages? He told himself he was worried for his students. But he didn't like the tension that was building in him already. He knew the teaching faculty would mostly stay away from the strike, would cross the picket lines and attack the strikers. He knew he'd be accused of abandoning his students. He knew he'd have to face resistance. He worried about the resistance.

Then he thought the reason he didn't want to go to the strike was very plain and simple. He was afraid of all the resistance he'd face. He cared about the students, of course. But to be photographed on the picket line, and to trudge back and forth with a sign while his teaching mates—even his friends—were going through the line, that would be hard. They'd say, "he's being paid to go into work, but he wants us to think he cares about the sweaty poor."

He did care about the poor. That's not something you talk about a lot, even at the time of a strike. Nevertheless, it was something large and real to him. Danny came from the poor, and he remembered what it was like, always. He'd never forgotten the pain his parents suffered, his mother saying to his father, "Arthur, we can't make it to the end of the month. No matter what we do, we can't make it with the money we have." Down through many years that remark had been repeated. He'd come from the poor.

He remembered one occasion when he was very young. He'd gone with his father to visit a wealthy man who was a vague connection of the family. Danny's father hadn't given up an ounce of his self-respect, but he'd explained to the man that there was very little work, that the family was large, that they were ill-clad and sometimes without food. The man expressed sympathy. Danny remembered that. But he didn't understand, and he did nothing, though he saw his visitors politely to the door.

Danny had knowledge that he kept locked away from all the people he worked with, knowledge he didn't talk about. But that knowledge moved him again and again in his life.

He was no longer poor, but he was tired now, sometimes. He had begun to feel old. He had begun to find ways to avoid tension and resistance. That's why he didn't argue with Elizabeth Maripose, the beautiful Spanish teacher. She was right. But even where she wasn't right, he didn't care to argue. He wouldn't convince her, and he'd set up tension. They'd resist each other.

He got up quite early the next morning, shaved carefully, and put on his suit. I'm a teacher, he said to himself. I dress the way teachers dress. Then he went on his bicycle down to the picket line on Bronson Street. The strikers were assembled already. They looked at him as they wound round and round over the sidewalk, across the road.

He put his bicycle against a tree, picked up a strike sign, and moved to join the picketers. A few of them smiled; though he didn't know them. He saw a few eyes light up. The woman beside him welcomed him. He felt awkward, as if he didn't want to be welcomed. He didn't know whether he felt awkward because he was embarrassed at being noticed or whether he thought everyone he knew should be on the picket line, as the most natural thing in the world.

"You're on the teaching staff, aren't you?" She seemed to recognize him, but he didn't know who she was.

"Yes," Danny said. He introduced himself. She said who she was, and told him they were all glad to see teaching staff supporting them on the line.

"It's encouraging," she said. "We should really all know each other better. But it takes something like this even to have us meet—or some of us at least."

"You see so many people you think you know," Danny said, "then you get to the strike line and you realize your hardly know anyone on campus. There just doesn't seem to be the time."

Danny and his companion turned sharply at the sidewalk, nearly colliding with a police officer. There were lots of police and they were big. The officers were trying to separate the line faster as traffic increased so the cars wouldn't pile up. The police were officious and used their bodies aggressively. Danny was offended by them, surprised at their size. They dwarfed everybody on the line. He knew that's what they were meant to do, and he knew they were supposed to keep the peace. But they always seemed to be keeping the peace with a slight prejudice against the people who were on strike. He couldn't help feeling offended by them, though he tried not to. He knew they had a job to do. He was thinking about their size and their aggressiveness when a car careered through a very small break in the line, nearly striking a picketer. One of the women turned sharply on a police officer.

"You like that to happen," she snapped at him. "You want somebody run over?" The police officer was as surprised as everyone else, taken completely off guard. And he was aggrieved. He didn't think he should be talked to like that.

"You want me to stop it with my hands?" He spoke sharply, too.

"What are you here for? The photographers?" She wasn't letting him off.

"I think we were all surprised," Danny said

to ease the situation a little. "We'd better keep a sharp eye out." Before more could be said Marvin was in front of him, wearing blue jeans with threadbare cuffs and an old army fatigue jacket.

"Middle aged, middle class, middle brow, middle America," Marvin said to him.

"Middle Canada," Danny made the correction. "You Commies are never good on the national question. I'm trying to make a little peace. What's the point of fighting uselessly?"

"What's the point of striking?" Marvin came back at him sharply. "Maybe the cops'll do their job if somebody shouts at them." Danny didn't say anything. He wasn't going to defend the police. If they were all different sizes, he might have done so. But they were an obscene size, and they used their size to be coercive. They really were a symbol of State policy forced on the people. He couldn't find it in himself to be generous to them. He didn't like them, because he didn't like being coerced. He kept silent.

"I guess you like the role of peacemaker." Marvin tried to provoke him again.

"Yeah," Danny said. "That's why I'm walking on the picket line."

"Where's the rest of your department?" Marvin looked over the line with a critical eye.

"Where's yours?" Danny kept his face deadpan. Marvin smiled.

"They're scared shitless," he said. "Or they want to get Brownie points from the dean."

"Some of them don't want to abandon their students," Danny said. "They care a lot about their students."

"You mean we don't care about our students?"

"Well, I guess it's a matter of priorities." Danny didn't want to go further. He didn't want to fight with Marvin, who was aggressive and sharp-tongued.

"Yeah," Marvin said. "Priorities. They want to have a union themselves. They make themselves a union to get more money. But they won't help another union, in their own workplace, making chicken feed. That's their priority. They know the students won't lose. They know they can teach as much in five months as in six if they really have to."

"Some of them have families and mortgages," Danny said.

"Yeah, yeah. So they get behind in their mortgages. Who's gonna take houses away from university professors?" Danny left off. Marvin had an answer for everything. He was single and he lived in an apartment by the river, and he was always uncompromising.

"Hey, hey, hey!" Marvin had left Danny's side and was running and shouting across the road to a car stopped by the picketers. "So you're going through," Marvin was speaking very loudly through the car window. "You're going in, and you on the union executive. *My* union!" Marvin let his voice ooze out public contempt. "Have you no shame? You're a scab, you know. You're what's called a scab. You like that name... " Two police officers stepped in and moved the car through the line. Marvin was back at his side. "Help me," he said. "It's harder for the police to keep a smooth flow if more of us do it."

"I don't like shouting at people," Danny said.

"If you want to win a strike," Marvin said, "you shout. You think they aren't shouting at us? The papers report negotiations wrong, on purpose. The administration threatens punishment for supporting the strikers. And we're supposed to be quiet." Marvin went off to the coffee wagon, as quickly as he'd appeared. Danny felt that Marvin didn't like him for failing to be militant. Maybe he wasn't doing what he should do. Danny even wondered if he should have come. He hadn't wanted to. He didn't think he'd be challenged by someone on the picket line when he was here, supporting; though he should have known Marvin would want him to be a guerilla. Marvin was at his side again as quickly as he'd left it. "Look Danny." Marvin was being confidential. He had his hand around a plastic cup of coffee. "You better realize this is class struggle. You better realize Canada has classes—classes at war—and they fight each other to keep their power. Some of them don't even know it. But when they crash through this picket line in their sports cars they're saying this is a class society, and it's going to stay that way, whatever happens. You better lose your innocence." Marvin said.

"I don't think I'm so innocent," Danny said, smarting a little from the lecture.

"Well, learn to fight, then. Class struggle means struggle. Get it?" Marvin was gone again, this time to have an intense conversation with the strike captain. Daniel mostly walked slowly, talked to a few people, went round and round the circle for about four hours. Then he put his sign down, nodded to the picket captain, who smiled at him, lifted his bicycle from the tree, and rode off.

He rode his bicycle along the side of the canal feeling tired and a little fulfilled. There'd been the

moments with Marvin, but mostly he'd done what he should have done without fuss or attention. He'd talked to a few others from the very small group of supporters among the teaching faculty, and they'd agreed to meet so they could plan some strategy to be more useful in their support. That would happen over the next few days. He began to see committee meetings and phone calls and flyers and fund-raising and arguments with unsympathetic friends growing ahead of him until the moral stand he was taking would become a full-time institutionalized occupation. There'd be threats from the administration that would increase as the support group became effective, and there'd be rancor and back-biting. There'd be the mixed tension and boredom of the picket line, rising and falling hopes as negotiations began and broke off and began again. And Danny would go on worrying, more and more as time passed, whether his students could manage till he got to them.

He stopped at a restaurant at the side of the road. It had bright colored windows, hanging plants everywhere, and hand-picked waitresses. He wondered if the waitresses could see what he could see. There were four of them on the shift. They all weighed the same. All had long, blond hair, flawless complexions, and straight white teeth. They didn't wear uniforms, but their bodies were uniforms. They were magazine waitresses, and he wondered how many able applicants had been rejected so the waitresses could be matched ed with the hanging plants and the colored windows and the natural wood finish of the tables.

He went outside into the sunshine, got onto his bicycle and pedalled home.

When the phone rang, much later, it caught him by surprise. He jumped nervously. It was late at night. The girl he'd met on the picket line was at the other end. She told him there'd be a small surprise picket of the president's house the next morning before work, so they could greet him as he left for work and his daily crossing of the picket line. The strikers wanted one of the teaching staff to join them for the look of it, she said, so the president would see the faculty support. She emphasized the importance because the press would be there, and there'd be pictures.

Danny guessed those were all the reasons he didn't want to picket the president's house, and he wondered why they didn't ask someone else, why they didn't ask Marvin, who loved confrontation and combat. But he said yes. He was sure the president wasn't a bad man, and he wasn't sure the president's house should be picketed. But there wasn't any doubt he'd go, because he was sure it was the right thing to do in principle.

He was afraid, though. If the president got nervous and phone the police, things could get nasty. If their pictures appeared in the papers, the administration would have a long memory about his support for the strike. His colleagues would disapprove, he knew very well. "So that's the way we get our department known," he could hear them say sneeringly to one another. "Maybe if he'd spend a little more time on research, the department might be better known." There'd be worse resistance to what he was doing than he could feel even now. There'd be long-term rejection, and he'd be made to pay over and over.

Danny wanted to go to bed, but he knew he wouldn't sleep. He wanted to phone someone and talk, but he didn't want to tell anyone how he felt. He didn't want anyone to know he was afraid, and he thought if he phoned somebody he'd give himself away.

His bell rang. When he opened his door, Jim Creighton was standing there, Jim who'd always been so good on issues. Danny was pleased; someone he could talk to. Jim was on his way to Sandy Hill where he lived, and had stopped, obviously, for a few minutes to talk about the strike. Danny and Jim had done lots of things together—paddled the Coulange River, lobbied MPs on the Hill, and travelled to professional meetings together. Jim always seemed to have a natural intuition about justice and the right things to do.

"I'm not staying," Jim said before Danny could get a word out. "I'm just passing by."

"Well, come in for a drink at least," Danny insisted.

"No," said Jim, equally insistent. "I hear you were on the picket line this morning. I think you're crazy. Those people make plenty of money. They've all got cars. They're all families with two jobs. We've got too many of them anyhow—we could do with a lot fewer."

"Is that what you really think?" Danny couldn't believe his ears. Jim went on. He wouldn't step into the apartment, but he spent several minutes at the door, delivering himself of the words he was almost compulsively spitting out at Danny. Finally he stopped, and a small silence ensued. Danny spoke very quietly.

"I didn't think you'd go through the line," Danny said. "After all, we're a union, too, and we have to respect the union movement."

"Look," Jim said, ignoring Danny's remarks.

"There's too many of them. Their strike vote was only 55 per cent, and their offer was good."

"What do you make a year now, Jim?" Danny wasn't going to retreat as long as Jim stood at the door haranguing him.

"I've spent 20 years of my life getting an education," Jim replied more angrily, but holding himself in. Danny wanted to ask how much of the taxpayers' money—how much of the strikers' money—went into his education. But he wasn't going to push anymore. So he said nothing.

"Listen, Danny," Jim said, thinking Danny was softening. "You'll do yourself no good at all. We're in hard times. Budget cuts. We're all being watched. You know that. You can't do anything for the strike. It's already lost. They're falling apart already, fighting like cats and dogs." Danny felt a heavy, sore feeling inside. He wanted free. He wanted Jim to go away. Danny turned from the door, wondering if Jim would follow him in. He was testing Jim, without knowing it himself. Jim would have to follow, sit down, and change the subject if he were willing to be there for any other reason. But he spoke from the doorway.

"Think it over, Danny," he said. "If it'd do any good, I'd be there with you. But you're only hurting yourself." Jim left without stepping in or shutting the door. When Danny turned, Jim was gone.

The next morning was crisp, clear, beautiful. Frost would hit hard soon. The black trunks of the trees would take over the landscape, and the snow would fall. Gray and black and white would predominate for months.

The sun was rising when they picked Danny up to drive to the president's house. The strikers tumbled out of their cars and walked to the public sidewalk that bordered the president's property. The house was university owned, in an expensive area of the city. The strikers were all dressed for the photographer and a visit to the president's house. Danny couldn't help feeling—as he sensed the others did—the difference between the picketers and the president. His house was a palace compared to any of theirs. It was quietly, unpretentiously lavish. The grounds extended out and connected to the public land bordering the canal. The president made about 600 per cent more than their average salary. They all really felt, in the first fresh rays of the morning sun, that he wasn't so good or so important that he should be set off from them by so much.

The eight or nine picketers spread themselves out and began their almost silent vigil, waiting for the press and the president to appear. Elaine passed the word that she had just seen the president shaving, and all the picketers looked surreptitiously. Then Anne Marie Lepine saw the president's wife look from between the curtains. The word passed that the people in the house knew the quiet picket line was outside. Danny looked up the street for the press people. The street and the houses on the street reminded him of the visit he had once made with his father to the wealthy connection of the family who lived in the luxurious house. A cameraman arrived and stood beside his car waiting for the reporter to tell him what to photograph.

Danny thought that if the president were really smart, he'd have his wife deliver a tray of coffee and cookies onto the lawn for the picketers. The press would leap on that. They'd give it front page. They'd show the poor, harassed, humane president as someone who always cared for his employees and wanted the best for them. If the president would do that, the picket line would backfire and the strikers would lose the round, most surely. But nothing like that happened.

The picketers made a continuous elliptical path and went round and round on the public sidewalk. The reporter drove up and stopped by the photographer's car. He stepped out and began moving toward the picketers. The picketers were looking toward the reporter and the photographer and hardly saw the upstairs window fly open until they heard a noise, and then they turned. The president's daughter, a student at the university, was standing in the open window. She looked down on the picketers, anger and contempt on her face.

"Can't you just leave us alone and let us live—you bunch of bastards!" The president's daughter shouted her taunt loudly, for all to hear, and then she slammed the window and was gone.

The people on the picket line were caught by surprise. A few laughed.

"Did you get that message," Carol said. "Did she really say what I heard her say?" she asked.

"That'll make a good story," Elaine said to the reporter, and the reporter wrote something into his notebook. Then he took the picket captain, Joel Nordenstrom, aside and talked, and the photographer took a few shots of the marching picketers.

When the president stepped from his doorway, briefcase in hand, suited in dark gray, nobody moved at first. Then Danny stepped off the sidewalk to address him, simply so he wouldn't get into his car and drive away before

anyone could speak to him. Others followed up the driveway.

"Good morning, everyone." The president wanted to be genial, but he looked ill at ease. He looked old, and his skin was gray. He was trapped, and he knew it. He'd allowed his daughter, somehow, to open the window and broadcast an attack on the picketers which was almost impossible to believe. Now he was there, in front of a luxurious house such as the people in front of him rarely even visited. He looked rich and frail and pampered. He looked old and nervous, as if he was not managing very well.

"Good morning," Danny said, in a fairly loud voice so the others could hear him. He was filling in a gap so the president wouldn't step in the car and drive away before the strikers got themselves together to talk to him. "Your daughter just called us a bunch of bastards," Danny said. "We wonder if she's expressing your view of the people on the picket lines in this strike?" The president looked as if he'd been struck. He looked lost for a minute. A small piece of flesh by his right eye was leaping uncontrollably with a darting tick that must have been an embarrassment to him. The hand holding the briefcase was still, but the other hand was shaking. Danny couldn't believe what he saw. The president showed such discomfort that Danny's heart went out to him. Maybe that's why his daughter had screamed from the upstairs window. Maybe she saw what Danny saw. Danny had a sudden insight, looking at the president. The strike was a huge, personal test for the president. He was terrified of it. Did he see it as a key to his career, to his success? Did it mean his place among the people who made policy for higher education in Canada? Whatever the strike meant to the president, he was clinging to self-control. Danny felt sorry for the president, but he couldn't draw back. He couldn't retreat from the confrontation with him.

"Oh no," the president said. "I'm sure she didn't say that." Danny looked the president in the face, saw the darting tick by his right eye, felt himself very cool, very logical in the situation. He was surprised at himself.

"Well, sir," he said cordially, "there isn't a person on the street who missed or mistook what she said. She spoke loudly and clearly."

"I believe," the president said, "she was doing an assignment for her theatre class. She was practising. She wasn't speaking to the picketers, I'm sure." The others heard the president. Danny didn't argue. The president looked right past Danny. He wanted his denial of his daughter's words to be heard, but he didn't want to look Danny in the eye. That would be asking Danny to assent to the lie, and the president hoped he could get his public statement past Danny, out into the world, so to speak, without Danny's obstructing it, without his sending it back, refused. He didn't want to provoke Danny, who was for a short moment lost in thought, seemingly dumbstruck by the president's statement. Danny was wondering what kind of blindness could see the harmless, quietly dressed people, cheerfully walking outside the president's house as "a bunch of bastards."

"This strike isn't doing anyone any good, the way it's going," Danny said to let the president off the hook. "More harm's being done than a small raise in wages could cause."

"I'd like to see everyone making better wages," the president said. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see everyone making higher wages." That wasn't what Danny meant, and he began to be annoyed at the reflex way the president slipped into empty rhetoric. He'd helped the president by changing the subject, but the president took advantage immediately.

"That's a motherhood statement if ever I heard one," Danny said and the president looked uncomfortable.

"You must want to talk to the press and the picket captain," Danny said. "I'm sure they have some questions." Danny extricated himself and stood back. The president turned to the reporter and they spoke for a few minutes, the picket captain listening and adding a word every now and then. But the president didn't seem interested in the picket captain.

Then the president opened the door of his car and sat down in the driver's seat. He didn't wave to the picketers as he drove out of the driveway, but he wore a smile, a brave smile, and he nodded to them as he went by.

When the paper came out that evening, there was a small item about the picket line at the president's house, and he was quoted as saying he was working very hard to reach a quick settlement of the strike. For the good of everyone concerned, he said, nothing could be gained by a long withdrawal of services. He said he wished all the strikers and picketers would think of their own best interests.

There was no mention in the newspaper of the conversation Danny had had with the president, nor of the voice that shouted from the upstairs

window of the luxurious house. No picture was carried of the picketers beside the house nor of the president talking to them as he was leaving for work.

That night, Danny sat alone in the window seat of his apartment looking out at the passing traffic. He knew that if one of the strikers had loudly and publicly called the president's family a bunch of bastards, the newspaper would have found a way to report the statement. He wondered about the girl who took for granted her right to a luxurious home in which she would live undisturbed by others who would never have a chance of similar advantages.

That night, the first hard frost hit the Valley, and the next morning, leaves were falling in flurries, like snow, making all those who saw them realize that a long winter was about to begin. Danny rose early to go out on the line. All night, he'd dreamed that he was holding up a wall that was immensely large. Despite his hardest efforts, he couldn't diminish the weight of it. Others were holding it up, too; he could sense them, and that gave him the courage to go on. But the weight of the wall didn't diminish, and when he woke up, he felt tired. He felt old, too, so he put on an extra sweater against the morning chill and the cold wind that would blow across the picket line on Bronson from the north.

"The Task Eternal" is based on a strike in 1981 of the Support Staff affiliated with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). Robin Matthews teaches English at Carleton University.

After Secondary School

Secondary school students nearing graduation have a genuine concern for the present economic crisis. They express this concern in classroom discussions with teachers and among themselves. The following writings are samples from Grade 11 students at Burnaby Central Senior Secondary School.

I think the job situation now is awful! So many people—single, married, old and young—are out of work that it is going to end up in disaster. I know men who are fathers supporting a family, who come into the gas station I work at, begging for work. That makes me feel bad, because I don't need the job as badly as they do. And it is getting worse every day. Businesses go bankrupt, people are laid off, and more people go on welfare. If more and more people go on welfare because there are no jobs, where is the money going to come from? Someone has to pay that money too! And for those people *who are* working, they are going to end up paying more and more taxes.

What has to be done? This is very hard to say, but something has to be tried. For instance, get rid of all the people who run this country and get new people. Maybe they, who have the job problems themselves, can see what is going on, and can make some serious changes to stop this disaster. I hate to think of what is going to happen if nothing is done.

Bjorn Grimsmo

The job situation today can only be labelled *dreary*. There are simply very few jobs. Many secondary school graduates are going to university, not because they want an education, but because there are no jobs for them. They hope that two, three, or four years down the road, the situation will be better. But, I am afraid they are postponing the inevitable—unemployment. If our society stays on the same road we are on, we will fall into turmoil. Face it. We are a highly material society, and to gain material possessions, we must have money. The only way we get money is through employment. If there are no jobs, people are unhappy and unproductive as human beings.

However, the blame for unemployment should not rest on government totally. The initial blunders were theirs, but many potential employees are also at fault. They are so caught up in the syndrome of "Why should I look for jobs when there aren't any?" that unemployment rates are soaring. Another problem is technological development. Computers and robots are taking the place of human beings.

The numbers and statistics of unemployment are frightening. But this country is one of people, not of numbers and statistics, and people need jobs. I can only pray that they will be there in the future.

Darin Barney

Right now the world is in a deep recession. I don't think any one country can climb out of the pit unless we all help each other. No country will come out of the recession by "protectionism." Open trade can stimulate the world economy. Although I am not an American, I feel that with Reagan around, there'll be more bombs created than jobs.

Name Withheld

The job situation now scares me. I should be earning money for university, but I cannot find a decent job with hours that complement the school day. When I leave school, I will need to continue working to cover the expenses of university, but I am afraid that there will be no jobs available, especially for someone without experience. If I cannot afford to go to university, my chances of obtaining a good job will be minute.

I do not think anything can be done to prevent a depression. Employment follows a vicious cycle. Fewer people working means that fewer people have money to spend. The smaller amount of money spent means that more people will lose their jobs.

After the depression, I hope that the country will be able to rebuild itself. However, I consider that highly unlikely considering Canada's worsening international standing. Foreign investors have been chased away by Canada's high taxation laws for foreign investors. Also, I think that the government should begin reinvesting in Canada, rather than being so "charitable" to other nations. For example, I consider sending $40 million to South Africa to build a statue a waste of money.

Jill Tancowny

Perhaps five years ago we could have sat back until the last day of school, and then looked for a job, but in 1982 that option does not remain. Many students have to pay for their own schooling, clothing, and necessities by getting any job that they can. There are many things in the job market against a student—age, sex, race, and NOT ENOUGH EXPERIENCE. Most employers don't realize that we cannot get the experience when we can't even get the job.

Some of us were fortunate enough to get a job, but now that the recession has hit, there are layoffs, and even stores and restaurants are closing. These closures could be prevented with the help of the government. Unfortunately, the government is only creating jobs for the skilled laborers of our society. What are we supposed to do if we don't have the money to finish our education because we don't have a job? Surely we cannot be skilled laborers.

Computer technology is also a disadvantage to some students when they get out of university. Not all students are going to take a computer course, which will help them be more efficient in their job, but employers now are looking for efficiency in a worker. Certainly the computer fills that position.

My only suggestion is that the government and the employers, who have the power in our society, create jobs for unskilled laborers to become skilled laborers.

Zainul Sachedina

The job situation is very poor, and the unemployment rate is at its highest since the 1930s. This situation creates a lot of economic problems. A lot of shops go bankrupt and people get laid off work. Even the government doesn't have sufficient funds to maintain its services and benefits to people. When I leave school, which will be in 1984, I think the situation will be the same because high unemployment is a world-wide problem. I think the situation will improve slowly but steadily. Perhaps five to ten years from now, it will climb back to its highest point if the government and the citizens co-operate.

I think the government should make good use of its budget. For instance, I don't think the Rapid Transit project is necessary at this moment. There are a lot of buses to supply all the routes in the city, and the buses are convenient and cheap. Why spend a lot of money for transportation? Right now, we need enough jobs for all workers.

Government should use the budget to create jobs and not to spend it on unnecessary projects. Citizens should put in their best efforts to work something out. They should go out and look for jobs. They should not sit back and just wait for welfare or criticize the situation and expect that the government will work everything out for them.

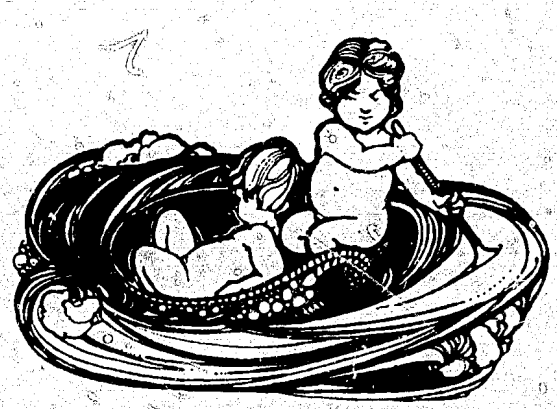
Name Withheld

Between 1929 and 1939, North America was covered by a "Black Cloud"—the Depression. Now, in the 1980s, unemployment seems to be the same as in the Depression. The working class of B.C. seems to depend largely on unemployment insurance and welfare. Where are our jobs? Who caused this so-called recession? What is the outlook for employment?

Everything looks dismal when you read a newspaper. The want ads are more limited than in the 1970s. When a new restaurant opened in Burnaby (Night and Day Restaurant), the owner asked for 51 applicants. The 51 turned out to be 350. The owner was shocked and still has not decided who to hire.

Is this the outlook for me or any student who will soon be out of school? I hope it is not. Without a job, it's impossible to make a living in this society. When 1984 comes, and I am out of school, I will possibly have no choice but to continue my studies. That is, if I can afford it. If employment is to improve in the future, the government should not continue its current policy. They should learn from their mistakes.

Paresh Unadkat



The Unemployment Insurance Commission Poems:*

1. The Nationalist

I know you, countrymen.
I have lived here my whole life.
I know your nature. If the Reds
should swarm out of Asia
or earlier still the imperial
Japanese had set foot in
Esquimalt, how you would fight!
If they imposed on us
so horrible a government
that hundreds of thousands of us
had no work, were promised
compensation, and retraining for jobs to come
and then this was forgotten
or given in dribbles or
lost in the filing system
between one desk and another
—the nation would rise.
The middle class
would stop reading novels
and join the thick-fingered carpenters
in the most secret of underground cells.
No one would watch TV for a week.
Everyone would arm themselves
at the newest outrage
the sports pages would die
of loneliness, lecturers would give up
preparing material on
Comic Books and the Canadian Soul
poets cease looking at
histories of animal stories
for proof that Canadians side
with the weak, and the beaten.

What riots there would be, my countrymen.
What slogans appearing by night.
What murderous and continual gunfire
and strikes to turn a whole city
into a snowstorm of fear.

Ah, but when it is not an invader
but your own people
who condemn you to a lifetime of sand:
what a heaviness is here.
To be assured that the money is yours
that you are entitled to the money, and so
to plan for the money, to need it
to go somewhere warm, out of the cold
without the tedious and embittered
asking of friends.
To know that you don't have to worry
that you have the money.
And then to have the money never arrive.
To be told to come back Friday
and on Friday to come back Monday
and on Monday to wait
until Friday's mail, and on Friday to phone in
Monday to see and on Monday to come in
for an interview Friday.
To be informed by print-out
that you do not have enough weeks
when you have enough weeks.
What is there to do now? Now
you must wait
until the phone is free, until
the line moves up another man
until your case can be re-opened
until they locate your file
until you can get another appointment.
And in the meantime
ask them what you should eat.
"Sand," is what they say.
"Open your window and eat sand.
Scoop what you can live on
out of the passing air."

Now you know what it means not to have a country.

Tom Wayman
from *For and Against the Moon

The UIC Poems:
2. A Cursing Poem

This poem curses the Unemployment Insurance Commission.
This poem curses it.
This poem curses it in the centre
and on the left hand and on the right.
It curses each clerk and official
every benefit control officer
who does not flare up like a fire in the night
and cry down the masters of the Commission
and drag them out, the mad animals who have turned them
into the policemen of lives.
Let them tear off their own shirts
and cry in the streets for pity
for the nation they have built
out of anger and black despair.
Where do they think a man goes
when they turn him away?
Where does a woman go?
on two-thirds of a salary already not enough?
They turn into a country of hatred and fear.

Then let them cry this out.
Let them cry for forgiveness
for it is they who have fashioned a nation of clear wind
into a pit of tar.
Let them leave quickly now
so the wickets stand empty, the tills ajar
no one standing behind the counters.
Let them move to the rear of the line-ups facing themselves.
Otherwise the curse of this poem will strike them.

A small red maple leaf
will appear in both of their eyes.
Everyone will see that they are Canadian.
Each one knows what a Canadian
does to his countrymen.

That is the curse of the centre.
And Welfare is on the left hand, where you go
when there is no money.
This poem curses it.
That one person should hand another so tiny a sum
and ask him to live out his days on it
in this country
cannot be forgiven.

Though they pretend this woman will drink away the money
they cannot be forgiven for what they do to a single life.
Though they complain that this one is retarded
they cannot be forgiven
for what they do to a single life.
Though they say this one could get a job
if he really wanted to
no one sees them leaving their own odious work
to get the other job they could find it they really wanted to.
They believe that the poor are the same as themselves
but have fallen from grace. For this
there is no forgiveness.
I cannot forgive them. Jesus cannot forgive them.
In the eyes of every man and woman they meet
is their curse: they will burn with shame
through their lives on the ground.

And on the right hand is Manpower.
Manpower is a slime, it is a room of fools.
They exist to dispense jobs that do not exist.
They are a palace of lies: upgrading courses
that do not lead anywhere; faked statistics
based upon work paying less than a loaf
promoted by men who have already stuffed themselves this day.

The poem curses it.
It names it a mouth, of useless advice:
"The yellow pages are full of jobs. Begin with the A's."
But it is a mouth with teeth, the teeth of rats:
"If you do not co-operate with us
your unemployment benefits will be withdrawn."
So it is a sink of oil
all the arrogance of those with jobs
talking to those without:
"Do you know how to conduct yourself at an interview?"

This poem curses it, stupidity grown so fine
it appears as thin as paper.
It is the curse on everyone who lies:
none of them shall escape. They will dig a hole
in the weary sand. Presently they will be told
to fill it in. Soon
they will be directed to dig it out once more.

The UIC Poems:

3. To the Listener

Do you believe that I lie?
Would you show me what your newspaper thinks?
What your member of Parliament writes in a
bulletin for his constituents?

Then go yourself to the offices of rage.
In the waiting rooms of the Commission
the waiting rooms of the agencies
of the welfare department, of the counselling services
you can speak with your nation.

And if then you tell me I lie
I will put down my pen.
I will put nothing on paper but job applications
and cheques for the rent.
But if, instead, you believe I have not said enough
I will tell you that there are more unemployed
than stand at the various counters, more who are poor
than enroll. There is a nation
that sits in their houses
and looks at the weather.
They sit in a room by an old window.
The government wants them to die.

I say that you will not find your country in books.
The worst thing that is happening in my country
is not the takeover by Americans of the Departments of Fine Arts.

The UIC Poems:

4. The Manpower Résumé

Ultimate goal: In this section, list your ultimate occupational goal, the job you would like one day to have, for example, "general manager of a national retail credit plan."

Ultimate goal:
I would like
one day
men and women
poor and working everywhere
to whisper to each other
the simplest of phrases:
that the bosses
are other men and women
and they are fewer than we are.
To speak out loud
the word
"union"
not the unions of bullies and thieves
but the union of us
of each other
wherever we are
whatever we work at
or wait for.
After hearing ourselves say
that
to each other
to begin again the endless
conversation
about what's next:
to start in at
the awful and frightening
growing and lovely
changes
that can be made only together
and only by hand.

That is all.
But it is to this goal
that wherever I work
or don't work
or write
I have set my hand.

And it is only my hand.
And it may fail.
As I write this
the City is moving under its mountains.
It is a City of people who are going to die.
I would like one day
the men and women
poor and working everywhere
to whisper
the simplest of phrases
to say
the simplest words
and the most beautiful.

BOOK REVIEW

Goodbye Sarah
Geoffrey Bilson

The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 was one of the greatest strikes of that year. Its causes were increasing unemployment due to the returning Canadian troops, and the rising cost of living. While the working class suffered from the higher prices, employers and landlords continued to make large profits.

Goodbye Sarah is set in Winnipeg during the general strike. It is the story of the friendship of two girls, Mary Jarrett and Sarah Wright, and the strike's effect on their friendship. Mary's father is active with the strike committee, while Sarah's father is opposed to the strike, which he sees as a communist plot to take over Winnipeg.

Initially the girls' friendship withstands the criticisms from Sarah's family and from school.

"What was going on this morning?" Sarah asked when we met to go to school. "Father was really angry. He said a lot of things about Bolshies and revolution and starving children. I'm not starving! I don't know what he was on about. Then, he got really mad when mother reminded him that he had to leave for work early because the streetcars weren't running." Sarah giggled. "You should have seen him. He got so red I thought he would burst."

I knew what she meant. I almost wished he would burst, but I didn't say so.

When we got to school, Ben and Joe and some of their friends were waiting at the gate. They pointed at me and began chanting, "Bolshie, Bolshie."

Ben snatched the tam off my head.

"Stop it Ben." Sarah said, and she pushed him away, while I grabbed my tam. "Leave Mary alone."

But, as the strike continues, the friendship weakens, and eventually disintegrates completely.

World War I, living conditions for workers on strike and their families, and the reaction of the government to the strikers are secondary themes in the story. *Goodbye Sarah* provides a good description of the strike through the eyes of a sensitive and inquisitive girl from a working-class family. This book is suitable for upper elementary and junior secondary students.

Goodbye Sarah is distributed by Clarke, Irwin and Company Ltd., 791 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M6C 1B8.

The Day the Fairies Went on Strike
Linda Briskin and Maureen FitzGerald

Generally, children's literature does not reflect the economic or political realities of the adult world. Instead, it idealizes that reality or disregards it entirely. One exception is *The Day the Fairies Went on Strike*, which presents a strike action in a way comprehensible to children.

Seven-year-old Hester has one wish—to have a cherry tree behind her apartment building, but all her attempts to grow a tree are unsuccessful. In her determination to fulfill her dream, she realizes that fairies might be able to solve her problems. On meeting a fairy, Hester learns about a serious disagreement between two groups of fairies. One group, the Mefirsts, dominate the worker fairies, insisting that their own countless wishes be satisfied immediately. As a consequence, the worker fairies are forced to put children's wishes on a 42-year-long waiting list, and to shut down the tooth-fairy service.

The Day the Fairies Went on Strike is a delightful story that introduces children to a strike for better working conditions. Because the book is both entertaining and informative, it may be extremely useful to elementary school teachers who are interested in investigating current issues with their students. The book is available from Ariel Books, the Women's Bookstore, Octopus Books, and Press Gang Publishers.

Children's Literature on the Working Class in Canada

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_____ *First Spring on the Grand Banks*, James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, Toronto, 1978.

_____ *The Last Voyage of the Scotian,* James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, Toronto, 1978.

_____, *Shantyman of Cache Lake,* James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, Toronto, 1975.

de Groisbois, Louise, Nicole Lacelle, Raymonde Lamothe and Lise Nantel, *Mommy Works on Dresses*, The Women's Press, Toronto, 1980.

Hamilton, Mary, *The Tin-Lined Trunk/La Malle Doublee D'Etain*, Kids Can Press, Toronto, 1980.

Hewitt, Marsha and Claire Mackay, *One Proud Summer*, The Women's Press, Toronto, 1981.

Jiles, Paulette, *The Golden Hawks**, James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, Toronto, 1978.

Montero, Gloria, *Bill Higgins Rides the Freights*, James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, Toronto, 1982.

Moore, Tom, *Goodbye Mamma*, Breakwater, Newfoundland, 1976.

Repo, Satu, *Marco and Michela**, James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, Toronto, 1978.

_____, *What's a Friend?**, James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, Toronto, 1978.

*These books are part of the *Where We Live* series, which may be used in a Grade 4 reading program. A Teacher's Edition, by Anabel Kennedy and Margaret Simmons is also available. James Lorimer and Company books are distributed by Clarke, Irwin and Company Ltd., 791 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M6C 1B8.

LABOUR HISTORY
Budget for 1982-83

CODE	INCOME			
901	Balance on Hand June 30, 1982		deficit	$ 224.38
	Amount of fees unearned (as of June 15)		$1243.13	
	a. Income surplus (deficit)		$	
903	BCTF grant	116 @ $10		$1160.00
904	Fees			
	a. BCTF members	150 @ $12.00	$1800.00	
	b. Student members	15 @ $ 5.00	$ 75.00	
	c. Non-BCTF members	40 @ $12.00	$ 480.00	$2355.00
905	Other income			
	a. Grants		$ 200.00	
	b. Contract with VSB		$2500.00	
	c. Sale of resource materials		$1200.00	
	d. Miscellaneous interest		$ 10.00	$3910.00
		TOTAL INCOME		$7200.62
	EXPENDITURES			
	Meetings			
906	Executive (6)	1.4%	$ 100.00	
907	Table officers			
908	PSA Council delegate (5)			
909	Subcommittees			
910	General meetings (1)	1.4%	$ 100.00	$ 200.00
	Publications			
911	Journal (1)	41.7%	$3000.00	
912	Newsletter (2)	5.6%	$ 400.00	
913	Other publications (2)	12.5%	$ 900.00	$4300.00
914	Conference and in-service			
	a. Delegates to conferences			
	b. Conference development			
915	Chapter support			
916	Affiliate fees and meetings	.4%		$ 25.00
917	Operating expenses	.7%		$ 50.00
918	Curriculum development	34.5%		$2500.00
919	Other projects			
	a. Membership recruitment	1.4%		$ 100.00
920	Miscellaneous	.4%		$ 25.62
		TOTAL EXPENDITURES		$7200.62