

Support Staff Deserve as Much Respect as the Rest of Us

Within its short history as a nation, Canada has experienced an inordinate amount of labour unrest and outright violence, much of it in the public sector. This unrest has been most serious in such vital areas as, rail and postal services, education, transportation, medicine, and police and fire protection. In 1974 about one out of every 10,000 Canadian workers was involved in a work stoppage, and only Italy surpassed Canada in numbers of per capita man hours lost to strikes. This is surely an unenviable record, aside from having traumatic effects on an already tenuous Canadian economy.

Many members of government and representative of the business and administrative segments of the population tend to lay the blame for this situation at the doorstep of the worker, especially the unionized worker. A share of the responsibility can be placed there, but in doing so one must question the reasons for this unremitting unrest. Most people will attribute it to general

greed. The more an employee gets in both wages and benefits, the more he wants. This attitude is reflected in the recent wage-price legislation, which is so vigorously opposed by organized labour. It is crucial for one to look beyond this too-simplistic explanation for the answer: Why are workers generally so discontent and why does productivity continue to decline while labour costs increase?

The answer, this writer believes, can be found in the alienated relationship which exists between workers and management in the public sector. Employees who are potentially conscientious and highly motivated receive little or no encouragement or reward, while incompetents often rise to the top of the bureaucracies and public institutions. Along with this incompetence goes an almost invariable insensitivity to the aspirations, abilities and general working environment of those "below". Any innovations or the questioning of judgements are rarely taken seriously by those

in authority, while breaches of tradition are often suspect. This has a decidedly demoralizing effect on those who try to do their job in a competent manner. As a result they tend to say, "What the hell" and do as little as possible, while "getting-back" at the employer or authority figure in the only manner they can, that is, at the bargaining table.

Consequently bargaining situations have become adversarial contests instead of forums for mutual discussion and exchange of ideas on an equal basis. If labour unrest and employee disgruntlement are to be averted, a just wage is a necessary, but not sufficient condition. The attitudes of both parties must change. Employers have to learn to acknowledge the potential of their own abilities and responsibilities. If these attitudes prevailed, morale would be higher and this would result in greater productivity. Many grievances could be averted through effective

labour-management committees, as they have been in other countries such as Sweden and Japan.

If the university environment it is necessary, and would be beneficial, if the support staff had some input into the decisions which so vitally affect them. This contribution, if not numerically equal, would be on an equal social basis as those of other segments of the university community (administration, faculty, students). At the present time there is no representation of support staff on any university decision-making bodies. Other segments tend to forget that the support staff exists unless they are conspicuous by their absence, as was the case during the recent maintenance worker strike. Our support staff are people too, and deserve more consideration.

Mail's Our Bag Continued

the Spanish Inquisition and Hitler's Germany. Surely the IVCF is not advocating a return to anything resembling any of these.

As for Marion McGaughey, I will not be too hard on her as she is a woman. I notice, though, that she took exception to my violent attitude. As she does not know me, how can she know that I am violent? This is obviously a typically overemotional and irrational woman. She says that apparently I cannot understand the concept of love. I love atheism but, contrary to her expectations, I would not bore the campus with the truths of atheism. Atheism. Atheism may be a religion but I would not degrade it by cheap advertising. I love it too much.

In conclusion, I must say that these trite letters have been amusing. I can only say that I look forward to somewhat more rational replies in the future.

Yours in Love,
Ponchy P.

Get Facts Straight

Dear Sir:

In the Guardian on Monday March 8, there was a report of a Student Union meeting opposing tuition and resi-

dence fee increases.

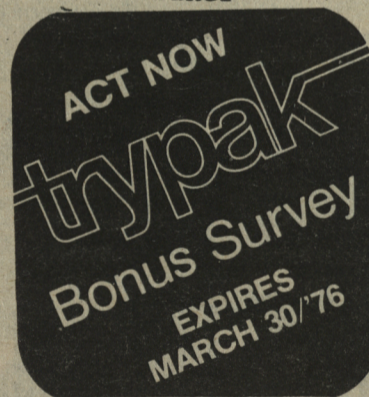
In the report, Mr. Gerald MacDonald, president of the Student Union, is quoted as saying, "It is disturbing to the students of U.P.E.I. the increases were announced to the press before they were approved by the Board of Governors and before the students directly affected by the increases were informed." In fact, no such decision has been made, and no such decision has been released to the press. In the Guardian of March 2 and March 3, there are stories of interviews with me in which I said, "I am unhappy that we will almost certainly have to increase the residence fees" and in which I "expressed pessimism about the prospect for keeping tuition fees at their present level." I thought that was in fact warning the students of possibilities rather than refusing to inform them.

Moreover, on March 3, the Association of Atlantic Universities issued a press statement which said among other things that "the universities had been reconciled to increasing room and board since food and services have gone up dramatically. They now reluctantly face the prospect of increasing tuition

fees."

I sympathize with the concern about fees. I would suggest, however, that the Student Union get its facts straight.

R.J. Baker



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burger?

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to 1:30 am

later on weekends

delivery to any residence 50¢
guaranteed hot food
pizza, lasagne
submarines and sandwiches