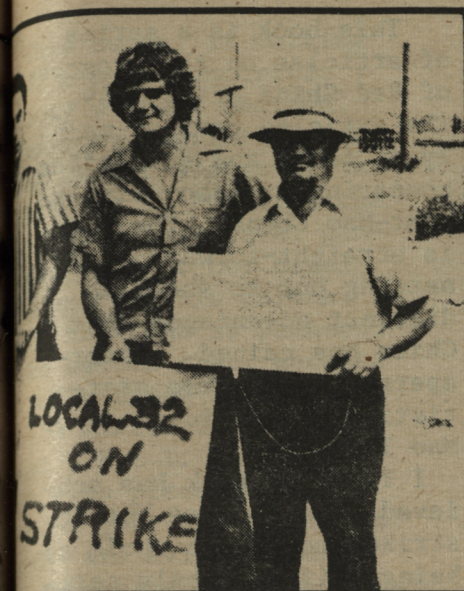


Seven-Month Pulp and Paper Workers Strike



their position is just and reasonable.

The response of the industry has been negative throughout and no real counter-offer has materialized. Their only reaction has been conspiratorial, carrying out a secret pact signed in 1973 to break strikes in the industry.

The document outlines a scheme whereby all the companies agree to help each other should any become strikebound, and provides for uninterrupted supplies to customers despite strikes. The plan involves secret billing and delivery methods, and clearly represents a blatant attempt to subvert the effectiveness of a legal strike.

another 10 percent to \$240.79 resulting in a 23 percent gain over two years, a small fraction of the gain the industry made in profits, and not enough to cover increased cost-of-living faced by remote communities.

Soon after the 1973 contract expired, negotiations between the companies and the national Canadian Paperworkers Union - which broke away from the US based United Paperworkers International Union in 1974 - collapsed. According to the report of the NDP members, the most commonly expressed opinion from members of the communities they visited was simply that the industry has decided to test, and if possible, kill the new national union.

The Union

The CPU had no financial base, no strike funds, and few real strong points other than determination of its members. If the industry could survive a lengthy strike by building up large inventories, and resting content with its record profits of the previous years, the CPU could be broken and the industry could minimize wage costs and further maximize profits.

The unions first asked for \$2.00 per hour across-the-board and a COLA clause in a two-year contract. Since then they have modified their demands to a level equal to the settlement made a year ago by the forest workers - \$1.10 in the first year and \$.65 in the second, with a COLA clause.

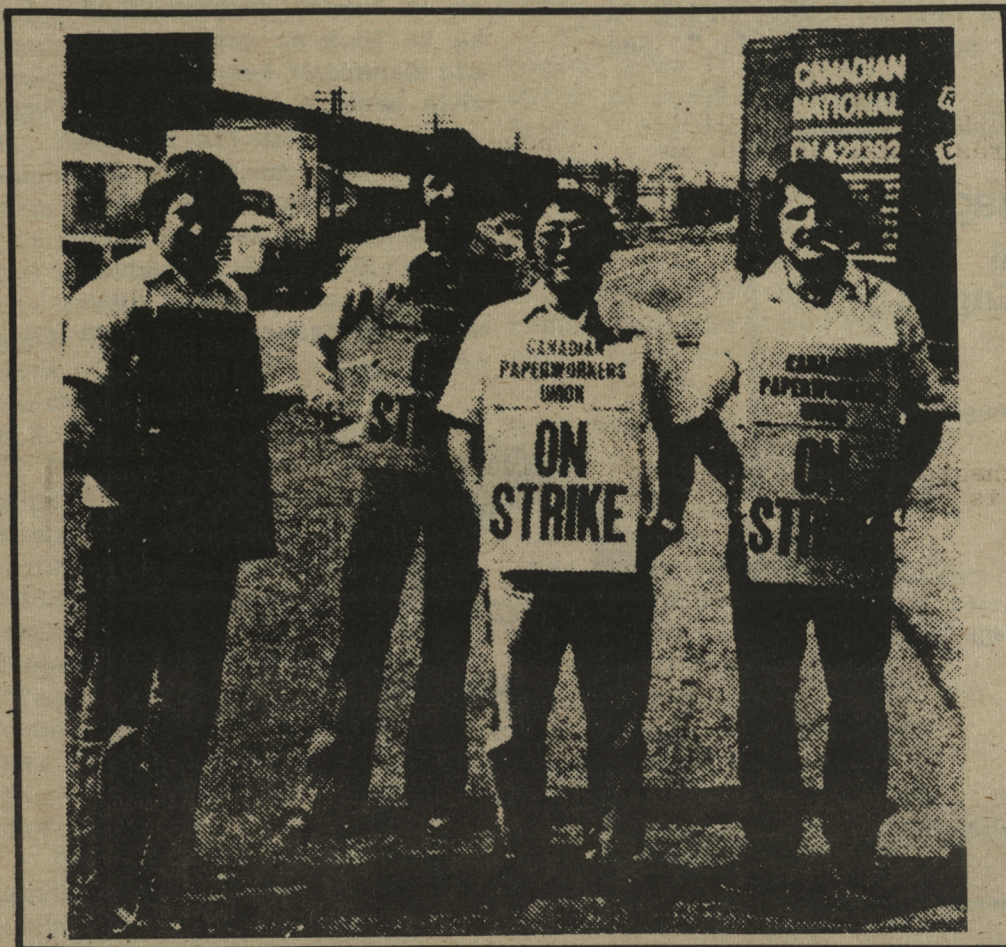
The CPU maintains that, given the historical relationship between paperworkers salaries and those of the forest workers, the loss of \$1.25 weekly in purchasing power since 1973, the attractive past performance of the industry and the bright prospects for future sales and profitability,

A critical event in the course of the strike was the submission to the Anti-Inflation Board of a collective agreement tentatively reached

between the Irving Pulp and Paper Company in St. John, New Brunswick and CPU local 30. This agreement was reached October 17 but predominantly negotiated prior to the October 14 announcement of the anti-inflation measures. The tentative agreement provided the Irving workers with 23 percent plus a COLA clause in the first year of a two-year contract, with the second year increases deferred for later negotiations. It looked as though a satisfactory end to

the ruling and returned to work, intending to appeal on the grounds that their settlement merits special consideration since their situation is identical to that of the postal-workers, whose settlement was eventually upheld by the cabinet after Pepin ruled it down.

Meanwhile, the other companies have used Pepin's ruling as justification for not increasing their offers and settling the strike. Pepin has since come out with the remarkable statement that only he can authorize appeals of his own decisions. And the actual anti-inflation appeal board has not even been appointed yet by the federal government.



With the companies so absolutely opposed to the workers demands, and uncaring about the human effects of their actions on the strikers, their families and communities, it might seem reasonable to expect that other concerned parties such as government, would be more sympathetic. Such is not the case.

the strike was in sight.

Enter Jean-Luc Pepin and his anti-inflation board. He disallowed the increase on December 18, and announced that the AIB would only look favourably on settlement for the paperworkers if it provided for no more than 14 percent in one year. The company and the workers at Irving decided to ignore

N.D.P. Press For Investigation

When Parliament opens on January 26 the N.D.P. intends to demand suspension of the order of business to hold an emergency debate on the strike in the paper industry.

The three N.D.P. members, want the Prime Minister to over-rule the AIB ruling on the Irving settlement, clarify the appeals procedures, demand that the companies return to the bargaining table and negotiate in good faith, and initiate a full investigation into the industry under the Combines Investigation Act.

As for the CPU workers, they're still out, getting poorer and further into debt. According to the N.D.P. report worker morale continues to be high and support from the community at large has been generous. The strikers remain determined to continue the work-stoppage until a just settlement is reached, despite the considerable efforts of the companies and the anti-inflation board to force them back on the companies terms.

