



The OMMB district representative, Sarsfield O'Connor, responded by setting up his office inside the plant. When the bulk milk truck drivers refused to cross the picket line, O'Connor attempted to coerce the drivers, many of whom were independent operators. He reminded them their contracts could be terminated and that under the terms of their contract, they were responsible for the milk in their trucks.

O'Connor did this, even though the National Farmers' Union had given the Ontario Milk Commission a list of small cheese factories willing and able to handle all the milk diverted from Kraft. Some of these plants had even offered to pay up to fifty cents per hundredweight above the market price. They were willing to pay the higher prices since they suffered under the Ontario Milk Marketing Board's milk quota system.

The milk was finally diverted, but not to the small plants. It was sent to the Ault's plant at Winchester, Ontario. (Ault's is owned by Labatt's Breweries which is also in the chicken and egg business.)

At noon of the second day's picketing, the OMMB announced a price increase of \$1.15 per hundredweight for industrial milk. The farmers decided to remove the picket line and hold a mass meeting the next day.

The following morning over 1000 people assembled in the parking lot across from the Kraft plant for a meeting called only 19 hours previously. Knowing the Ontario Milk Marketing Board could change the price the next month, the farmers decided to demand collective bargaining rights with Kraft, without any government intermediaries.

The decision was reached realizing, the farmers contend, that the government agencies are merely vehicles through which corporations were assured a cheap supply of milk.

On August 19, 1971, the NFU called for a nation-wide boycott of all Kraft products to back the farmers' call for collective bargaining rights.

Kraftco has refused to talk with the National Farmers' Union. However, people writing the president of Kraft of Canada received a form letter reply. (R.J. Greenwood, 9600 Devonshire Road, Montreal 307, Que.)

Although Kraft refuses to publicly discuss the Boycott, associations to which Kraft belongs or over which it has influence have attacked the NFU.

The National Dairy Council, on which Kraft has two seats, has attacked the NFU for spreading "lies". The Dairy Council claimed farmers have no legal right to obtain collective bargaining agreements. Because the laws have been set up to prevent farmers from obtaining a collective bargaining agreement, the Dairy Council's claim is accurate. The Boycott is designed to force a change in the law so farmers can bargain collectively.

Kraft's influence indicated the issues raised by the boycott are related to the fight against corporate monopoly. The domination of Canada's economy by foreign corporations and the control of food quality and distribution by these corporations are all part of the Boycott.

Besides the economic questions, critics have questioned the quality of Kraft's products. James Turner in *The Chemical Feast* quotes from Ralph Nader's study group on the United States Food and Drug Administration:

"...one Food and Drug Administration official believes that Kraft has been responsible for a major decline in the quality of cheese made in the USA, but the agency can do nothing about it in spite of various cheese standards."

"...three of the most important features in the (American) law were the "distinctive name" provision, the failure to require an indication of quality on labels, and the failure to require that food products clearly identify their contents on labels. The "distinctive name" provision in the

1906 Act meant that if a manufacturer was clever enough to think up a distinctive designation for his product, it would not have to meet standards for similar products under law.

"One such item was Kraft's **Miracle Whip**, which appeared to be a salad dressing but did not meet dressing standards because it was designated as a "whip". Kraft and Borden used the distinctive name clause of the law to escape requirements for process cheese. These cheeses gave Kraft and Borden a way of using up unsaleable cheeses. The low quality, hard, and mould cheese that the public will not buy, can be conditioned, ground up, heated, and combined with salt, water and an emulsifying agent, then poured into packages ready for sale. **Velveta** and Borden's **Chateau** are similar but by their use of a distinctive name avoid standardization..."

With the help of concerned citizens, the NFU is now widening its boycott activities, establishing urban support committees across Canada to carry out actions in urban areas. These groups are presently involved in informational picketing and leafletting at supermarkets.

Some committees are already established. The Ottawa committee is carrying out weekly picketing at supermarkets, using bilingual leaflets. Organizers report consumer response has been very favourable.

The Moose Jaw committee circulated a petition which thousands signed, demanding the provincial government order the organizers of the Saskatchewan summer games not to purchase or use any Kraft products.

The provincial minister of youth and culture responded by writing to the chairman of the organizing committee, asking him to seriously consider not using any Kraft products and to avoid purchasing Kraft products with the government money allocated to the games. The Saskatchewan caucus of the New Democratic Party has also given moral support to the boycott.

Its position represents a switch from the provincial NDP convention last December when paid party organizers had members of the Regina City police seize Boycott material from an information table operated by Boycott co-ordinator Don Kossick. The move stemmed from a motion passed during the convention's first day limiting information tables to organizations directly affiliated with the NDP. Ironically, much of the material seized had just been printed by Service Printers, which is owned by the NDP.

By the end of this year the NFU hopes a solid network of urban support committees will be operating across the country. Once the network is established, co-ordinated actions against Kraft will take place across Canada.

The Kraft Boycott is essentially a power struggle. If it succeeds, some power will be taken away from the corporations and redistributed into the hands of small Canadian farmers and consumers. If the Boycott fails, the quality of food will continue to deteriorate and prices will continue to rise, with little opposition to corporate power.

Since profits are the major consideration for the corporate decision-maker, Kraft will grudgingly press for legislative changes when the Boycott starts to hurt seriously. Because the laws now favor Kraft and the company has money to tap from its other subsidiaries around the world, the struggle could likely continue for years.

The American United Farm Workers' Grape Boycott required five years to win collective bargaining rights for California grape pickers. But the grape workers did win and so can Canadian farmers - with the help of the Canadian consumer.

For further information, write to Don Kossick, NFU, 250C 2nd Ave. South Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.