

Ottawa Report

By Patrick Nicholson

Officials in labour departments and labour organizations here are remembering the old saying "There is no fun like work" and beginning to worry that specialisation is breeding boredom and taking the fun out of work.

Specialisation by which is meant job simplification, is a North American device to overcome the acute shortage of skilled craftsmen and to facilitate mass production. What began as an industrial necessity has become an economic evil, and in many industries one hears of older workers being very worried about it. The effects have tended to reduce the differential paid to skilled workers, and hence to remove the incentive to young men and women to learn a trade.

Before the war, the skilled worker was paid twice or three times the wages earned by an unskilled worker in the lower categories. Today the premium on a pair of hands rather than on a head, coupled with the post-war system of across-the-board wage increases, has reduced the skill differential so that in, for example, the shipbuilding industry, average wages for unskilled work of the easier categories are \$1.20 an hour, while the skilled shipyard worker starts at around \$1.65 an hour.

Lazy Specialisation

In the Maritime coalmines, one

hears the sentiment expressed that it is not worth the trouble of learning a skilled task and the hard work of doing it, when without any prior training and present sweat wages can be earned which are very little lower.

In the automobile manufacturing industry, one hears the similar sentiment that over-simplification of job brings boredom and even danger, so relief is sought either by periodic change of task or by breaking up the 50 minutes work in each hour.

North America is far behind Europe in craftsmanship, which alone can bring pride and interest in work. The average production-line employee here can only perform his simple allotted task, probably installing the two screws which hold the waffle to the waffle-plate or some similar routine operation which can be learned in a matter of hours. As revolt from this, the Minister of Labour here, Hon. Milton Gregg, and his staff are working to create more widespread use of the system of apprenticeship, even on-the-job apprenticeship, whereby workers can learn trades with greater variety and less boredom.

Many industries are finding that over-specialisation can reach the point of diminishing returns, with boredom leading to an inferior product and wasted materials, not to mention time lost through accidents caused by careless boredom.

Unions Want Equality

Some Unions, especially the C.

C.L. unions, act as if they are opposed to "skilled" jobs just as they are opposed to "skilled" workers, and the tradesman who finds that he is compelled to belong to a union of unskilled men soon discovers that his union is chiefly interested in eliminating the difference in pay between the skilled man and the sweeper.

The United Church Board of Evangelism and Social Service has now joined some of the forward-looking unions and managements in questioning the ultimate economic benefit of this trend. Some unions admit that they are worried and support the widespread feeling that the skill differential has become too low.

Ottawa appears to have suddenly discovered with some surprise that here in its Ivory Tower it is remote from popular feeling on this point; as one official put it to me: "How can I know what the rank and file worker thinks when I see one as often as I see a hippopotamus?"

It is a healthy sign that many workers themselves recognize what leadership is only just learning, and that they have for years known the value of variety in a job. Keen workmen have resented the conspiracy to make work dull and monotonous, and the new fashion of job-broadening will be welcomed by them. It may soon reveal that in fact, if the workers are given the opportunity, they have no shortage in competent variety-workers after all; as the saying goes: There is no fun like work.

Receive First Aid Awards



Pictured above are the members of a First Aid class at Stanley Bridge who received the qualifying certificates after completing a course in First Aid which was held once a week since last November. The instructor during the course was Mrs. A. S. MacEwen.

Left to right, front row, they are: Mrs. Cranford MacKay, Mrs. Elmer Fyfe, Mrs. A. S. MacEwen, (instructor), Mrs. Earl Henry, Mrs. Frank Bell. Second row, Robert MacKay, Mrs. Lea Reid, Olga

Woolner, Mrs. Stanley Coles, George Carr, Louise Carr, Mrs. D. B. Reid, James Fleming, Back row, Betty Murphy, Marguerite Davies, Mrs. Carl Woolner, Mrs. Ray Douglas, Noreen Turner.

MELBOURNE, (Australia) (CP)—Prime Minister Robert Menzies opened a campaign for re-election of his Liberal-Country party coalition Tuesday with a promise to "fight Communists with whatever weapons we have."

OPPOSITION LEADER DENOUNCES DUPLESSIS' HOUSING AID PLAN

QUEBEC, (CP)—Liberal leader George Lapalme said today the Quebec government's decision to restrict provincial housing aid to persons borrowing money under the provincial plan "will punish thousands of citizens."

In a prepared statement released, Mr. Lapalme said Premier Duplessis' recent announcement that his government would not co-operate in application of recent federal housing legislation amendments is the third restriction imposed by the Quebec government since adoption of the Quebec Housing Act, in 1948.

Under the Quebec law the provincial government pays up to three per cent of the interest on loans made by government-approved companies.

Mr. Lapalme said the Quebec government imposed a first restriction shortly after the Quebec Housing Act was adopted by withholding provincial assistance to home-builders who borrowed from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a federal government agency.

A second move by the Quebec government was to restrict housing aid to persons building homes in the larger cities, except in few cases.

FOURTH MOVE RUMOR

Mr. Lapalme said the rumor now

was afoot that the Quebec government would soon announce insurance companies who are linked in some way with Central Mortgage would not be authorized to make housing loans under the provincial act.

"If this rumor is well founded, it will be a fourth restriction and probably the most serious one since it would cut off one of the most important sources of housing loans."

Mr. Lapalme said Mr. Duplessis in a recent press conference had called a 5 1/2 per cent interest rate on federal loans "exorbitant." But the provincial law, he said, allowed loans at an interest rate of six per cent.

C.N.R. Operating Revenues Down

MONTREAL, (CP)—Canadian National Railways Tuesday reported gross operating revenues in March for the entire system amounting to \$56,882,000, a decrease of \$4,827,000 compared with March 1953. Operating expenses were \$52,961,000 compared with \$56,089,000, with net revenue at \$2,911,000 compared with \$4,300,000 in March of last year.

Minister Shoots Wife In Accident

SEATTLE, (AP)—A minister in suburban Bellevue shot and killed his wife in bed Monday night, unloading a .22-calibre rifle to "make it safe for my children."

Mrs. Mary Strawmyer, wife of Rev. C. P. Strawmyer, pastor of the community first Congregational church, was hit in the head and died.

Mr. Strawmyer told reporters: "I was preparing to leave for a convention in Spokane Tuesday morning when I thought of the loaded .22-calibre rifle. We have three children and I was afraid one of them might get hold of it while we were gone."

"So I decided to unload it. While I was doing it, I stepped on a thumb tack with my stocking foot. The shock must have caused me to hit the trigger of the gun."

For the first three months of 1954 operating revenues were \$150,109,000, operating expenses \$150,578,000 and deficit of \$2,469,000. Comparative figures for the same three months in 1953 were: operating revenues, \$165,212,000; operating expenses, \$167,328,000, and a deficit of \$2,116,000.

The figures do not include taxes, equipment rentals and fixed charges.

NEW WAY -- Headquarters for Town and Country Needs!

COMPLETE June Bride HOME OUTFIT

87 PIECES ... 3 LOVELY ROOMS

ALL FOR ONLY — 3.75 weekly NO MONEY DOWN

LUXURIOUS 14-pc. LIVING ROOM SET including 2 EASY CHAIRS

14 Pc. Ensemble for Young Homemakers

See what you get:

- 3-pc. Chesterfield Suite!
- 2 End Tables in walnut finish
- 1 Coffee Table, walnut finish
- 2 Table Lamps - colour choice
- 2 Parchment Table Lamp Shades!
- 1 Three-Way Floor Lamp!
- 1 Matching Floor Lamp Shade
- 1 Handsome Smoker with Ash Tray!
- 1 Gleaming Silk Cushion!

199.50

or 1.25 weekly

12-pc: Deluxe BEDROOM ENSEMBLE

195.50 or 1.25 weekly

The Bedroom Suite You've Dreamed of Owning

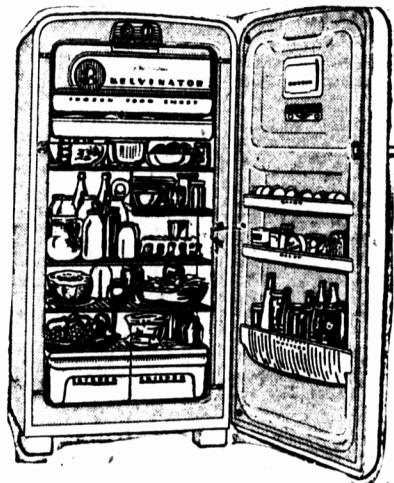
- 3-pc. Suite, dresser, chest, full-size bed!
- 1 Famous-Make, Spring Filled Mattress!
- 1 All Steel, Buoyant "Hi-Riser" Spring!
- 2 "Lady Pepperell" Sheets—81x99!"
- 2 "Best Waver" Pillow Cases—42x36!"
- 2 "Laurel" Downy Feather Pillows—17x25!"
- 1 Handsome Chenille Spread—wide colour range!

61 - pc. SUPER KITCHEN ENSEMBLE ONLY 119.50 or 75c weekly

Here's what you get: Gleaming chrome centre leaf extension table; four chrome chairs with washable plastic upholstery — a set that will add glamour to your kitchen or dinette—PLUS:

- Handy Steel Utility Table in White Enamel!
- Complete 52-pc. Gold Lace English Dinnerware Service! —beautiful 3-pc. Silverplated Tea Service prettily embossed!

BUY ANY ENSEMBLE SEPARATELY



PRICED FROM

259.50 or 1.65 weekly

NO DOWN PAYMENT REQUIRED !!

Very Special Offer!

2-pc. "Space Saver" Davenport Suites



A USUAL 109.50 VALUE

SPECIAL

79.50

OR ONLY

50c weekly

Designed for modern living, this functional suite includes armless davenport which opens quickly to a comfortable double bed, and smart hostess chair. Good colour choice. BUY NOW and SAVE! SPECIAL PRICE!

SAVE 20.00

on famous "SIMMONS"

All Steel BUNK BEDS

19.95

13.50 each

BOTH FOR ONLY 50c weekly



THISTLE DELUXE BICYCLES 59.50 or

50c weekly

Models for men, women, boys and girls. Also sidewalk bikes and tricycles — all made by THISTLE — known for quality!

NO MONEY DOWN UP TO 20 WEEKS TO PAY

NEW WAY Furniture CO. LTD.

161 GREAT GEO. ST.

CHARLOTTETOWN, P.E.I.

PHONE 6211