

Extreme Hardship and Human Suffering Corporations Resting on Record Profits While Workers Attempt Survival on \$20/week

OTTAWA (CUP) ---- Two NDP members of parliament and one NDP member of the Ontario Legislature who recently toured northern Ontario communities affected by the seven-month strike in the eastern Canadian pulp and paper industry say the picture they encountered of human suffering was "profoundly disturbing".

MP's Cyril Symes and Arnold Peters, and MP Bill Ferrier also charged in their interim report that the four major pulp and paper companies have engaged in collusion tactics to break the union and the strike. They backed up their charge by supplying the press with copies of a 1973 agrmment signed by the presidents of E.B. Eddy, Domtar, and Rolland Paper Company.

For the most part, the commercial press ignored the document, which outlines a scheme for using the output of producing mills to cover orders placed by customers of struck mills and sets out secretive billing and delivery arrangements. The media also failed to cover the th-

ree member's report of the hardships being faced by the 20 thousand striking workers and their families.

The hardships they describe are severe: the workers in the northern Ontario communities of Kapuskasing, Smooth Rock Falls and Iroquois Falls have been on strike for over seven months, receiving only \$15 to \$20 per week in stike pay.

Many families have used up their life savings; or have had to take out second mortgages on their homes; and some have lost their homes due to mortgage default. Most families have been forced to go into debt, with finance companies charging interest rates as high as 24 percent.

Welfare has been denied because the needy are involved in a labour dispute, many families are now without transportation in these isolated areas because they can't pay auto insurance rates or licensing fees, and local merchants report that business is down by over 30 percent, forcing them to lay off staff and borrow money

to restock shelves.

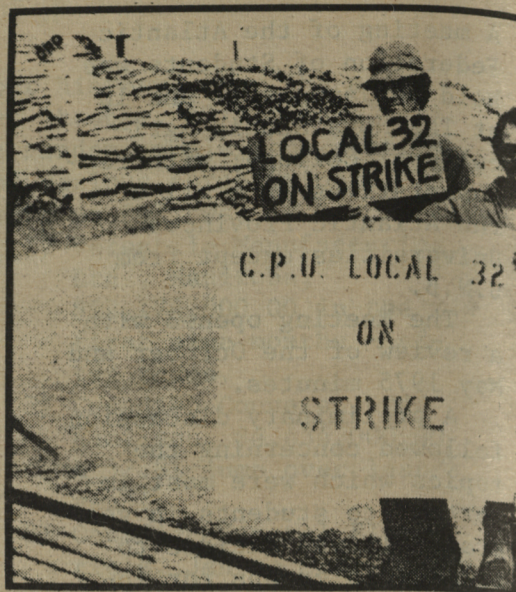
The local doctor in Smooth Rock Falls told the NDP members that he has seen a general deterioration in the health of the townspeople, and that ulcers, high blood-pressure problems and heart attacks are growing in frequency.

Abitibi paper in Smooth Rock has even refused to provide separation certificates to strikers whose retirement date fell during the strike, cutting them off from their retirement benefits, and many have depleted their retirement savings trying to make ends meet.

Ontario hydro cut off the power to some homes in the dead of winter, and resumed service later, while furnace repairmen have refused to make repairs to household heating systems unless paid in cash.

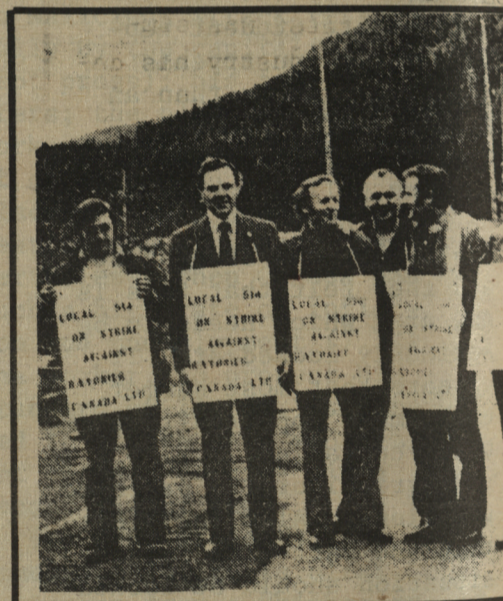
Additionally, there are 90 thousand cords of wood laying unprocessed in the river near Smooth Rock Falls which will pose a major pollution problem if they sink and rot in the river.

Result of



In short, the human effect of the strike in the three communities visited by the NDP members, communities in which 90 cents out of every dollar spent flows from the employment and activities of the paper companies, is nothing short of disastrous.

Abitibi's plants were shut down by the Canadian Paperworkers Union in mid-July, while Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company was closed early in December. These shutdowns followed the industry's outright rejection, at every available opportunity, of union demands. The comp-



anies have not even made a counter-offer bid which could end the strike.

In 1973 the industry had made a tidy profit of \$320 million compared with \$89 million the previous year. This trend in increasing industry prosperity continued in 1974 as net profits doubled to \$685 million. Underlying this increased profitability of the companies were price increases ranging from 52 percent for newsprint and 118 percent for pulp.

While prices and profits were climbing for the industry as a whole, the worker was locked into a two year contract signed in the spring of 1973. In 1973 the average wage in the industry was \$192.35, rising 13 percent to \$218.43 in 1974. By January 1975 it went up

What
Will
Be
First
To Sink
and Rot?



The Anti-Inflation Board?

The Canadian Paperworkers Union?

Probably the logs.