

Canada's Federal Employees Strike — cont'd

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pose a pay freeze.

The strike was regarded by many as a sign of just how frustrated a growing number of Canadians are becoming with the Mulroney government's handling of the economy. The federal employees joined postal workers and Toronto transportation workers already on strike.

PSAC represents a wide range of federal employees ranging from tax collectors and social welfare staff to border guards and parole officers.

Long regarded as little more than a staff association, the strike was the first in the union's history, leading both union leaders and activists to predict a new age for the Canadian civil servants.

"Everyone thought that we were just a bunch of office workers who couldn't put it together," PSAC's Nick Stein told a rally in Windsor, Ontario.

The government expected the strikers to win little support from either the public or other unions. But PSAC members worked hard to cultivate a positive image, saying they work for Canada—not for Mulroney.

Dissatisfaction with Mulroney has been steadily rising and the strikers found a high level of support from the public.

The Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. has cost Canada thousands of jobs. The introduction of a Goods And Services Tax cut the spending power of millions of Canadians, while the sale of public assets and the deterioration of welfare benefits further undermined the government's popularity. Polls show Mulroney with just 12% support, an all-time low in Canadian political history.

LAST STRAW

For PSAC the last straw was the government's refusal to even consider a wage offer after having given a 5% raise to management. Instead

Illinois — cont'd

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AFSCME intends to continue organizing university clerical workers. Williams and the Harvard local are doing support work for an organizing campaign at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

AFSCME representative Joe Lawrence said that the union will soon be ready to undertake campaigns at several other sites. "Certainly, back-to-back wins at two large state schools—the Universities of Minnesota and Illinois—put us in a good position." □

the government announced that the union had to accept a pay freeze before any negotiations would take place.

On top of that the government refused to accept the findings of a four-year-old union/management study which proved that pay equity does not exist in the federal government. And it continued to cut staffing levels by not filling vacancies. Over 13,000 federal jobs have been lost since Mulroney took office.

PSAC countered by charging the government with unfair bargaining

practices, a charge sustained by the government's own staff relations board.

As the strikers took to the picket lines the government moved to introduce back-to-work legislation in Parliament.

"All we wanted was for the government to bargain with us in good faith," says John Alexander, a shop steward with the Windsor Employment and Immigration service.

"What has happened locally is that you've taken a bunch of fractured

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Teamster Election — cont'd

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raise funds. The firm previously worked for the Ferdinand Marcos government in the Philippines and for anti-union Senator Jesse Helms.

In August, Daniel Ligurotis, Sr., Shea's secretary-treasurer candidate, shot his son to death in an argument at his union hall in Chicago. Ligurotis has said that he was acting in self-defense, after his son, a Local 705 trustee, pulled a gun on him during an argument.

The case is expected to go to a grand jury soon.

New York Teamster Barry Feinstein, also on the Shea slate, may drop out of the race for at-large vice president, after the death of his wife and son in July. And on September 17, Joseph Trerotola, regarded as one of the most powerful Teamster leaders, agreed to pull out of the race in exchange for the government dropping charges that he is tied to the mob.

The loss of Trerotola and possible loss of Feinstein will hurt Shea's chances. His slate was expected to pull most of its votes from the East. The weakening of the Shea slate will probably benefit Durham; both slates are competing for the same pool of money and votes—the union's local level officials.

MILLIONAIRES' SLATE

It's not that the Durham and Shea slates need more money, however.

A report released on August 29 by the Teamster Rank and File Education and Legal Defense Foundation—affiliated with TDU—shows that 15 of Durham's 22 slate members earned over \$100,000 in 1990. These 15 officials, many of whom draw multiple salaries from locals, joint councils, and the International, were paid a total almost \$2.5 million last year.

Two other well-paid officials were included on Durham's initial slate, but subsequently withdrew: Arnie

Weinmeister, who pulled down \$525,000 last year, and Weldon Mathis, who got \$251,000.

Shea's slate is poor by comparison; only seven of his 14 running mates were paid over \$100,000 in 1990. Those seven earned a total of \$1.5 million.

Not one member of the Carey slate made the exclusive "\$100,000 Club."

Though the Carey slate trails in contributions, it was able to get its reform message to Teamsters nationwide in the union's magazine, the *International Teamster*. Thirty-five pages of the September issue were devoted to campaign material from all the candidates for International office.

CARHAUL NEGOTIATIONS

While the campaigning continues in full force, reform Teamsters point to the negotiations between the union and the carhaul companies both as an example of the need for change at the top, and as an indication that changes at lower levels are already beginning.

In late August the union's carhaul negotiating committee agreed to a tentative four-year contract. The agreement establishes a second-tier wage scale at 64% of the current hourly and mileage rates. It contains wage increases much less than the freight and United Parcel agreements. And it puts no obligation on unionized companies to stop setting up non-union subsidiaries, a practice known as "double-breasting."

However, local union officials—perhaps wanting to show their newfound responsiveness to the ranks during an election year—rejected the tentative agreement 59-8 on September 19. This is the first time in Teamster history that local officials voted down a tentative agreement against the recommendation of International officers.

Union bargainers are expected to go back to the table. □