

CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS



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September 30, 1986.

To: Locals of C.L.C. Affiliated Unions

Greetings:

As I am sure you are aware, the strike at Gainers' Meats in Edmonton, Alberta is nearly four months old. The 1,080 workers at Gainers', members of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, went on strike on June 1, 1986 to back their demand for a contract which would bring them up to parity with other workers in the meat packing industry.

This letter represents an urgent appeal for financial assistance on behalf of your brothers and sisters at Gainers'.

This is no ordinary strike. It is a challenge to the entire trade union movement in Canada. I have personally walked the picket line at Gainers' and talked with many of the strikers. They are determined to win this strike but they need your support and they need it now.

To date the strike has cost more than one and a half million dollars, which includes legal costs of over three hundred thousand dollars. Strike pay alone costs about one hundred and forty thousand dollars a week.

In the first two weeks of the struggle for a fair agreement with Gainers' Meats, over four hundred union members and their supporters were arrested. Peter Pocklington, the self-styled champion of free enterprise, aided and abetted by the Alberta government, the Federal government, the Alberta justice system and the Edmonton police (over two hundred of which, approximately one-third of the Edmonton Police Force, have been detailed to the Gainers' strike) is out to smash the union. We cannot allow that to happen!

On behalf of all trade unionists, we must win this strike. Pocklington, who has vowed he will never sign another union agreement, cannot be allowed to set the stage for an all-out offensive against the movement. He must not be allowed to turn the clock back to the master-servant relationship.

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To win this strike, the union members on the front line of battle at Gainers' Meats need your full support. Don't let them down. We who enjoy employment and a collective agreement must be generous in our support for our striking sisters and brothers. A victory here also supports your future negotiations at the bargaining table.

This is not a situation where a one-shot donation will suffice. These members need continuing support in what is likely to be a long strike with an employer who has received every sort of aid and comfort from both the provincial government of Alberta and the Federal government.

The union members on strike at Gainers' would truly appreciate financial support from their brothers and sisters throughout the movement. A substantial upfront contribution from your local, and continued monthly support for the duration of the strike, would greatly assist the strikers, guarantee a successful strike and deter Pocklington and his ilk from further attacks of this kind.

Prove to Pocklington that we do have a committed trade union movement and help the striking members in the process. Set up the structure within your local to ensure one hundred per cent support and forward your contributions to the:

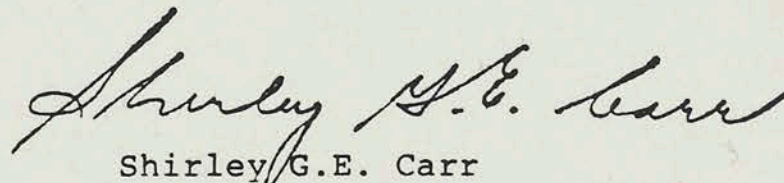
Canadian Labour Congress
Accounts Department
2841 Riverside Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1V 8X7

The cheques should be made out to:

"C.L.C. -- Gainers' Employees Strike Relief Fund"

I know I can count on your cooperation in this most critical effort.
With best personal regards, I remain,

Faternally yours,


Shirley G.E. Carr
President

SGEC/lr

cc: R. Mercier
D. Martin
N. Riche
CLC Headquarters and Field Staff
Members of CLC Executive Council
Ranking Officers of Affiliated Unions

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