

New Toronto Historical Society Volume 10 No. 1 April 2008

Upcoming Events

History of the Town of West Toronto Junction

Join us on **May 20, 2008** at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street at 7:00 PM for a presentation on the history of the Town of West Toronto Junction by Gib Goodfellow, President of the Society.

Inside Toronto: Urban Interiors 1880s to 1920s

Join us on **June 17, 2008** at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street at 7:00 PM for our Annual General Meeting. Our guest speaker will be Sally Gibson, Heritage Consultant, who will give us a slide presentation of her new book *Inside Toronto: Urban Interiors 1880s to 1920s*. This is the first book to investigate the complex, interior life of a single city — the ordinary and extraordinary places where Torontonians lived, worked, shopped, and performed the rituals of daily life. Interior photographs are rare. Not many were taken; and fewer have survived. Copies of her book will be available for sale at \$63 per copy (GST included). An interview with Sally can be found at the following:

http://www.aia.org/nwsltr_hrc.cf?pagename=hrc_a_20070330_gibson.

The book won the City of Toronto Book Award in 2007.

New Toronto in literature

It is a little known fact that Morley Callaghan set the final chapter of his novel *Such Is My Beloved*, at the Mimico Asylum in New Toronto described as “the hospital out by the lake”. Published in 1933 the book follows Father Stephen Dowling as he attempts to reconcile the conflict between “Faith, Hope, and Charity and the stark and sometimes squalid realities of city living.” As you have probably guessed from the location of the final chapter he didn’t succeed.

Industrial Unrest At Campbell Soup Company, New Toronto, Ontario

SECRET AND CONFIDENTIAL

September 14, 1941

*Continued.....*The tomato crop is a perishable commodity and it was reasoned by the union organizers that within a few days after the movement of the tomato crop into the plant it was decided to: (1) Call a strike, (2) immediately plant mass pickets, (3) endeavour to get all the employees of the plant together at a general

meeting where they could be signed up as union members, (4) and then claim that the Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committee had enrolled a majority of the employees of the plant and was therefore entitled to act as the bargaining agent for the employees.

In a number of cases it has been disclosed that young boys and girls who had obtained their first jobs since leaving school were signed up without fee or dues as members of the Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committee. The first set-back the Union experienced was when the Company individually interviewed its employees at their houses and persuaded them to return to work. About 150 of the strikers returned to work and this led to a fracas in which six Ukrainian women were arrested, and in which a girl who had been elected to the strike committee was also one of those who returned.

It has been revealed from information obtained that, although a strike committee was elected with representation from each section of the plant, the three men, SCOTT, BURKE and BARNETT ignored the committee and directed the strike along apparently pre-arranged plans. A meeting of the strikers was held on Thursday, September 11, 1941, and at the conclusion of the meeting, SCOTT and BURKE, together with Fred W. DOWLING, Regional Director of the Packinghouse Workers'

Organizing Committee, left for Hamilton, Ontario, to approach the Canadian Congress of Labour, which was holding a convention in that city, in an endeavour to obtain the support of that body. DOWLING was heard to hint very strongly that steps were being taken to gain the support of unions affiliated with the Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committee who would refuse to handle goods manufactured by the Campbell Soup Company, and in this way force the Company to come to an agreement with the Union.

The action of the Premier of Ontario in facilitating the efforts of the producers to save their crop was a severe blow to the strikers' hopes of success, and following this action there was a noticeable dwindling of enthusiasm and lack of confidence on the part of the strikers, and, had it not been for the strenuous efforts of Messrs. DOWLING, SCOTT, BURKE and BARNETT, the strike quite possibly would have collapsed on Friday, September 12, 1941. In fact, the action of the Premier has forestalled and frustrated plans for immediate strikes in other food-producing industries at Leamington and Chatham, Ontario. A meeting of the strikers was held on Friday afternoon at 3:00 o'clock in the Church Street Hall, Mimico, Ontario, attended mainly by seasonal employees. At this meeting, which was not open to the public or the Press, it was reported that the Canadian Congress of Labour had

agreed to make strong demands to the Premier that the Ontario Provincial Police be withdrawn and the Company be compelled to negotiate with the Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committee as the representative of the employees. It was unanimously decided to remain out on strike, and a public meeting was announced, to be held on Sunday night, September 14, 1941, in the West Point Hall, 6th Street, New Toronto, to enlighten the public as to the reasons for remaining out on strike. There has been no activity Saturday and Sunday morning aside from routine picketing.

At the meeting of strikers held on Sunday evening, September 14, 1941, it was almost unanimously decided that the strikers return to work, accepting the proposals contained in a telegram received by the strikers' committee from the Provincial Department of Labour. Jack SCOTT acted as Chairman of the meeting and V.A. AYLOTT acted as interpreter. All employees returned to work without incident at 7:00 A.M. this date.

A.S Wilson, Inspector, C.I.B.

This interesting labour relations item dealing with the Campbell Soup strike of 1941 can be found in the:

Archives of Ontario, RG3-9-0-399, Container 216 – Hepburn General Correspondence, 1941.