

Upcoming Events

An Evening with Governor Simcoe

Join us on **September 11, 2007** at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street at 7:00 PM for an evening of historical proportions! Our guest speaker will be Governor Simcoe, the first Lieutenant Governor of the Upper Canada.

The Wives of Canada's Prime Ministers

Join us on **November 27, 2007** at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street at 7:00 PM. Our guest speaker will be Ken Weber, Professor Emeritus from the University of Toronto, who will provide a humorous but informative visual presentation filled with anecdotes about the women in the lives of Canada's prime ministers. Their stories are a truly fascinating part of Canadian history many of us have never heard before. No doubt you have heard about this hilarious lecture! Well we have him. Due to the special nature of this lecture we will be soliciting donations from the vast crowds in attendance.

Join Us!

Join us to learn more about the history of the Town of New Toronto. New Members welcome! Please phone Wendy Gamble at 251-1349 for more information or check out our website at www.newtorontohistorical.com

Premier Hepburn Will Break Strike In Campbell Factory Kent Growers Asked To Send Men To Toronto

If the Toronto growers will provide the labor to keep Campbell factory going, they may start shipping their tomatoes to Toronto this afternoon, Premier Hepburn tell Chatham Daily News in interview.

Provincial government to pay fare of Works to Toronto and return.

Provincial Police will protect the workers in the factories and in their homes – Campbell company will house and pay all temporary workers who come from Kent – Workers will to accept proposition may register with W.E. Reid, Chatham – Prompt response needed.-

Kent county tomato growers, under contract to provide tomatoes for the Campbell Soup Company of Toronto , may start shipping all the tomatoes they have on hand direct to Toronto, starting this afternoon – providing they accept the proposition offered by Premier Mitchell Hepburn, which involves sending all available workers from this county, to take the place of the striking employes (sic) of the Campbell plant.

Result of Conference

This was the message telephoned to the Chatham Daily News late this morning by Premier Hepburn. The Premier had just concluded a conference with a delegation from the Kent County tomato growers, outlining the unfortunate condition prevailing in this tomato growers, outlining the unfortunate condition prevailing in this tomato producing area, which tons of tomatoes being dumped on farms near the city limits, as a result of the inability of the Campbell company to accept them due to the strike conditions in their factory.

Premier Will Act

At the conclusion of the conference Premier Hepburn announced the strong stand he will take; primarily to relieve the loss which is now being sustained by the tomato growers.

"I appeal to the tomato growers of Kent and Essex," he said, "to send down here to Toronto all the help that is available in their districts, to assist the Campbell company to keep their plant running to capacity. The province of Ontario will pay the railway fare of these workers from their homes to Toronto, and return. The Provincial Police have been instructed to provide these men with adequate police protection at the plant, and to guarantee that there will be no intimidation on the part of the strikers, at the homes in which they will be placed."

"The Campbell Company will see that these men who come are properly housed and paid for their labor."

Appeal To Growers

"I am today appealing to the tomato growers of Kent and Essex to act immediately, and send to Toronto all the help available. There is no time to lose; and if the tomato growers act promptly in response to this appeal, they can commence shipping their tomatoes to Toronto this afternoon."

"All the men who are willing to accept employment in the Campbell factory here, until this crisis has passed, are invited to register with W.E. Reid, their representative in Chatham, who will arrange the transportation, and see that they get to Toronto. The provincial government will carry out its obligations in the matter to the very letter."

Sending Representative

"In addition, I am sending Douglas R. Oliver to Chatham to supervise the whole movement for the Provincial government. He will arrive in Chatham tonight, with full authority to act for the government in all matters relating to the transportation of workers from Kent and Essex, to the Toronto plant."

In addition to this statement from Premier Hepburn, W.E. Reid of this city appeals to the tomato growers of this district to get in touch with him as

soon as possible and he will arrange for their immediate transportation to Toronto.

Mr. Reid states that he has over 25 men all ready to go to Toronto and accept this employment and they will be dispatched from Chatham on the first train leaving the city.

Police Get Orders

Premier Hepburn informed The News that he issued an order to the Provincial Police this morning to protect the workers now engaged in the Campbell plant in Toronto. He has also ordered them to give protection to the workers in their homes so that they will not be intimidated.

This action was taken when it was learned that some of the pickets around the factory were inclined to use force to keep the loyal workers from entering the factory.

It was intimidated (sic) by the Premier that the Campbell Company is now paying the regulation pay to their workers in the Toronto plant; and from what he can learn the company has always treated their growers decently.

C.I.O Behind It

"It is just a case in which the C.I.O. have entered the picture" said Mr. Hepburn, "and they have got in at a the very worst time, when they are bringing the burden not only upon the company but also upon the growers of tomatoes and the Province is not going

to permit this burden to continue. If the growers give us proper co-operation in accepting our proposition we will see that the strike is broken and that the tomato growers of the province receive a just and fair deal in spite of anything that the C.I.O can do”

Mr. Reid Active

When this message was received The Daily News got in touch with W.E. Reid, and finds that Mr. Reid is working at top speed to provide this co-operation. The men will be sent to Toronto, and Premier Hepburn will be given every assistance in his efforts to thwart the plans of the C.I.O. and to bring a much-appreciated relief for the tomato growers in this district.

With Premier Hepburn during the conference this morning were Douglas Campbell, and Hon. St. Clair Gordon members for the two Kents in the Legislature. They are standing behind Premier Hepburn to the fullest extent in the policy the Premier has adopted.

Suggesting that the delegation of county farm workers, 150 strong, be sent to Toronto to occupy and assist in running the Campbell Soup plant until such time as the C.I.O. strike there is ended, representative Kent tomato growers convened last night in Harrison Hall in an effort to prevent heavy tomato losses that will be suffered within a matter of hours unless the canning plant begins to operate soon.

Asking that each producer in the county send a man to Toronto for every ten acres of tomatoes grown, W.E. Reid declared that “waiting any longer is pure folly.” The growers, however, agreed that no action should be taken on the suggestion until word was received from Toronto today regarding a hoped-for settlement of the labor dispute.

Conferring with a Toronto official during the meeting, the growers were asked to wait “a few more hours” while government representatives and plant men met in a board of conciliation. A committee was appointed by the growers to rush to Toronto to meet with the premier, Mitchell Hepburn, D.M. Campbell, M.L.A. for East Kent and Hon. A. St. Clair Gordon in an effort to settle the plant dispute. The committee was advised to wait until last minute word was received today from the Board of Conciliation.

It was suggested at the fiery meeting last night that soldiers from No. 12 Basic Training Centre be dispatched to the strike bound factory to take over the jobs workers have refused to keep for 45 cents an hour.

“The soldiers would be glad of that money,” said one grower. “It seems unfair that these plant workers should ask for increased wages now while soldiers are only making a dollar and thirty cents a day.” Another grower accused the strikers of hitting at Canada’s

war effort.

Yesterday afternoon laborers spent hours dumping 13,000 hampers of tomatoes into the dust outside the city limits not far from the Libby plant grounds. Libby’s are already working to capacity and Vernon Proctor, representative of the firm told The News this morning that they would not be able to accept any of the Campbell tomatoes at any price as it was impossible to refine them.

Leaders of the Toronto Growers Marketing Board, and other leading agriculturalists were present for the discussions. The meeting was called at the last minute and did not get under way until nine p.m.

It was revealed at last night’s meeting that Campbell’s have released all growers from their contracts, and that they are now free to sell their tomatoes at the minimum price to “any market they can find.” All refineries however are packed to capacity and are unable to buy the fruit. D.D. Gagner, clerk of Dover Township and H.W. Eagleson, clerk of Chatham Township his morning allied themselves with Kent county tomato growers in demanding an immediate settlement of the Campbell Soup factory strike, stating that any continued delay at the refinery would have a tremendous effect on the prosperity of the entire county.

“The only solution to the problem is to take possession

of the factory,” declared Mr. Gagner. “The farmer has taken the rap too long. I agree with Reeve Eugene King that soldiers or citizens should take over the plant.”

Mr. Eagleson stated that it was essential that something be done immediately declaring the entire crop in danger of disaster.

*The Chatham Daily News,
September 10, 1941*

Strike – Campbell Soup Company – New Toronto

September 13, 1941

Honourable M.F. Hepburn,
Prime Minister of Ontario,
Buildings

Dear Sir:

I have the honour to forward herewith for your information and retention, please, copy of a report submitted by Inspector A.S. Wilson of our Criminal Investigation Branch, regarding the marginally named subject, the contents of which are self-explanatory.

Your obedient Servant,

William H. Stringer

Commissioner of Police For
Ontario

Industrial Unrest At Campbell Soup Company, New Toronto, Ontario

SECRET AND CONFIDENTIAL

September 14, 1941

For some considerable time the Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committee has been making strenuous efforts to organize workers in various plants throughout Ontario. Usually a cell strong enough to call a strike has been organized before the company involved becomes aware of the fact. In the case of the Campbell Soup Company their activities had been suspected by officials of the company, and organizers who were discovered by the officials had been quietly liquidated. Three of the employees, Jack Scott, Ainslee Burke, and Lou Barnett, had been directing the work of organization and were not suspected by the company. Failing to make appreciable headway within the plant, a nucleus of the Communist Part of Canada, or an affiliated organization, had been holding meetings for a period of time in the basement of the store at 252 6th Street, New Toronto, and also from time to time at the Steam Baths on 6th Street, New Toronto.

Within an area of approximately three blocks immediately south of the Railway tracks on 4th, 5th, 6th

and 7th Streets in New Toronto is a community of Ukrainians. Most of the male members of this community are employed in the various industries in the district, such as Hinde & Dauche, Canadian Industries Limited and Anaconda Brass Company. The female members of the community accept seasonal employment with the Campbell Soup Company, this work usually lasting from six to eight weeks during the so-called Tomato Season. When the Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committee failed to make progress in organizing within the Campbell Soup plant, they organized about 100 of these seasonal employees, the strategy being calculated as follows:

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 had begun, and the seasonal employees had commenced work, a surprise strike should be called, and that the Company would be compelled to make some overtures because there would be a strong protest from the producers which would compel the Province to step in and appoint some conciliation board or force a settlement. 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,(to be continued)