

Page 92 - Part One of a Two-Part Story: We Worked for General Instruments ISSUE : <u>Issue 49</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1988/8/1

hind the K-Mart. They went on strike, and they came down with a picket line in front of the gate, and they kept some of our peo? ple out.... We went in that day. I went in, and I told the fellow on the way in where he could go. I told him I didn't think he was being fair, because what he would make in one day, we were making in a week. "And," I said, "you're keeping people away from work." And guite a few came in. Quite a few didn't. 'Cause they were scared to, scared of the men, eh. Bully fellows, you know, half in the bag.... Custom Draperies Custom Valances Hard Window Coverings Harding Carpets Wail Coverings Amish Country Spas Residential, Industrial and Commercial Custom Drapery Service FREE: IN HOME CONSULTATION 15 McKeen St., Glace Bay 849-7666 "" pepsi... ThECHorceoF AN • W(i • Ne'ATION. CAPE BRETON BEVERAGES LIMITED Management paid our shifts that day. Every? body that went in to work, they paid all our shifts. They let all the union execu? tive off to go to a meeting with these fel? lows at 2 o'clock that afternoon, even pro? vided us with a car to get down there. (So they paid the full shift of anybody who crossed the line.) Full shift of anybody who crossed the line. Yes. That's the only strike we ever had. We never ever had a strike. (I've been told that they had a kind of sit-down strike trying to find out, "Is this plant going to close, or not?" Is that correct?) We did have--sort of. Sort of. "Is it going to Mexico?" We went in that union office. In fact, I ended up in bed-- blood pressure. All the boxes, everything, down at the end of the lines--all addressed to Mexico. Into the office: "Are you going to Mexico? What were all the boxes doing there?" "No. We had no official word." Man? agement were almost as dumb as we were. Like he said, "It looks like they're going to Mexico." Woodhouse was the manager. He was a fellow from Montreal, the first Cana? dian we ever had. Mind you, a lot didn't like him. I really appreciated him. He seemed like he would do anything for us. He said, "Look. I haven't been notified. How can I tell you we're going to Mexico, or not?" Then, this New Waterford boy came. He had got the offer to go to Mexico. So we kind of knocked off of work. So Mr. Woodhouse called everybody in the caf? eteria. He said, "Now what have you got to say?" Everybody sat there like dummies. I hated to get up. Because I wasn't the one complaining. But I did it. I got up and I said to him, "I think we're having this slowdown in work to see, is this plant going to Mexico or not." He explained to them what he had explained to me about 4 times, what I had explained to them. He explained it to them, and they ac? cepted it, and went back to work. (And what was it that he said?) He had not been notified. "My job is on the line the same as your job. I am not going to Mexico. I haven't been invited to Mexico. I don't know the plant is go? ing to Mexico. My wife and my family-- we're still here. We don't know any more than you know. Maybe if our pro? duction is up, maybe we can stay here." But he knew, like I knew, it was go? ing. But we couldn't get any definite --everything was packed up, everything was going. (Once you were told that, was there anybody among the workers that wanted to try to do anything to try to stop the plant from leaving?) Not really. We knew there was nothing we could do.