

Acton firm acquitted

# OLRB dismisses Superior charges

By MAGGIE HANNAH  
Herald staff writer  
Superior Glove Works Limited of Acton was acquitted last week of charges the company tried to stop employees' attempts to form a union by laying off 14 employees.

Charges were laid before the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) in February when the company's co-owner and general manager, Frank Geng, began laying off employees within days of the beginning of an attempt to form a local of the Canadian Union of United Brewery, Flour, Cereal, Soft Drink and Distillery Workers. In their submission to the board the union asked for reinstatement of these workers.

Super Glove is one of the largest glove factories in Canada. It employs about 80 people, mostly women.

The OLRB decision handed down July 10 was a majority decision rather than a unanimous one with vice-chairman Arthur Haladner and board member C.G. Bourne feeling the company had justified the layoffs on economic grounds while the third board member, C.A. Ballentine, disagreed.

**NEWLINE**  
In their decision the majority members said the company "discontinued production of a new line of heavy gloves and laid off the employees hired to produce it. When the company's evidence is examined in its totality, there can be no doubt that the lay offs can be justified on economic grounds."

In view of Mr. Geng's admitted anti-union bias they said, "it is not surprising that when lay offs occurred, they were regarded by employees with suspicion" and the complaint was laid. However, the board felt "in this proceeding" members were "not concerned... with employee perceptions" but with the "motivations of the respondent" (Geng).

The fact that some union members were not effected by the lay offs also influenced the judges.

"Apart from the fact that the lay offs were so clearly warranted on business grounds, there is the fact that none of the union organizers were laid off or in any way made the subject of reprisals," the board said.

The board stressed it has made "no finding as to whether the respondent's conduct in the period preceding the lay offs constitutes a violation of the act." Nor has it "expressed any opinion as to the effect of such conduct upon employee desires or free wishes."

Dissenting board member C.A. Ballentine filed a separate statement saying "in my respectful opinion their decision is wrong in relation to the board's jurisdiction and does not provide a remedy for those employees whose rights have clearly violated by the respondent. The respondent gave evidence that it was his original plan to lay off gradually by a weeding out process but when he became aware of the union organizing campaign he laid off en masse, the onus falls on the employer to prove on the balance of probabilities that it did not contravene the Act. The respondent must prove that the economic reasons it advances are the ONLY reasons for lay offs. In regard to the anti-union animus of the respondent, the very least the Board should do is direct the employer to recall the laid off employees in preference to any new employees, as economic circumstances require."

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## Agricultural museum brimming with history

**Herald special**  
The newly opened Ontario Agricultural Museum in Milton already has enough exhibits to keep a person busy for two days, and there is much more to go before it's finished.

Stepping into the main building is like stepping into the past. All the displays are arranged in roomlike settings from possible to give a natural feeling to the museum. Exhibits trace the evolution of power on the farm, from man to huge steam powered tractors standing more than eight feet tall to the combustion engine and beyond. This exhibit is open all year round, while most of the site closes for the winter in October.

Through private donations, loans and purchases, the museum has collected more than 12,000 artifacts.

"The displays in the theme hall are arranged to take the visitor through the changes in agricultural technology and rural life," says Bob Corbett, the museum's general manager.

Organized group tours have been going through the museum all spring, and now that summer is here museum staff expect more and more individual tourists will be taking advantage of the facilities.

One such facility which can be of more than entertainment value is the research library, which is open to the public. Anyone doing a research paper on the subject or anyone with an interest in the period will likely find a healthy supply of material there.

Summer visitors can be ferried around the grounds in wagons to save wear and tear on the feet. A picnic pavilion will keep body and soul united during a long day sightseeing.

The museum is open all summer until after Thanksgiving from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

Union lawyer John McNamee said that the decision was "most certainly disappointing" but it will in no way effect an application for certification. Documents were prepared to file for a certification hearing several weeks ago but at the last moment he decided against filing them until the board's decision was released on May 31. Now he will proceed to ask for a certification hearing. Although the decision could be appealed to the OLRB for reconsideration or the Ontario Supreme Court, Divisional Court, it is unlikely that an appeal will be launched, he said.

When the Herald contacted Inge Niestroy, a Superior Glove employee with 11 years experience in the plant and one of the leaders of the move to organize a union, she was unaware of the decision.

"There's no way we're going to give up," she said. "John (McNamee) has the papers and statements ready to file with the judges for a certification hearing and we'll go ahead. Even one of the girls who has quit the plant is ready to come back and testify. There's no way he (Geng) can get away with the things he's done. I've lost a bit of faith in justice. We shouldn't have to fight to get something that's our right, but if we have to we'll do it. Just because we lost this battle doesn't mean we've lost the war."

**NO OPINION**  
Union representative Bill Rannachan could offer no opinion on the possibility that the OLRB was wrapping the union's knuckles for filing charges under the wrong complaints.

In the decision the board said that although Mr. Geng's anti-union bias "was referred to in the complainant's particular... it was not made the subject of a specific complaint or application. Accordingly we do not consider it appropriate for purposes of this decision to make any findings or express any opinion in these regards."

"I wouldn't presume to guess what the board might have been thinking when they wrote that," he said.

This year, after three years of construction, the museum is officially opened. It consists of 12 buildings on an 80 acre lot near the Kelso Conservation Area, with another dozen or so buildings to be built by 1986 when the 10 year building program ends.

The main building houses exhibits ranging in size from old photographs and labels from tin cans to tractors and period rooms.

**TIN CAN LABELS**  
In the upstairs hall, a display of tin can and bottle labels dating from the 1880s to the 1920s will be featured for six weeks. An agriculture hall of fame will be added as well, although this will not be officially connected with the museum.

The museum is not limited to inanimate displays. The Clark-McCleary House, originally built in the 1930's, has been restored and now houses spinning and weaving demonstrations, by women in period costume. A complete crossroads community will be built at the centre of the site, including a shingle mill, cider mill, blacksmith shop, John Deere farm equipment dealership and a women's institute hall as well as a church.

**HOMESTEADS**  
A farmstead in the 1885 style will open by mid-July, just one of eight homesteads planned. Visitors will be able to see a typical farm from the 1830s, 1900s, 1910, 1930 and 1947 along with the 1885 version when all

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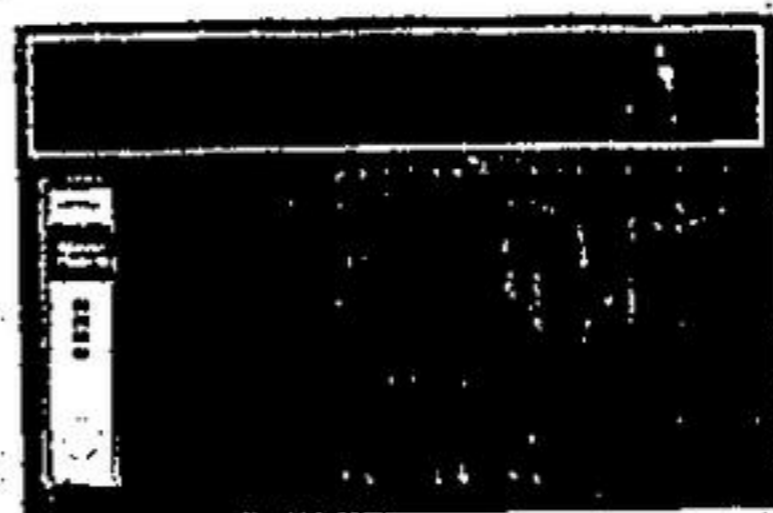


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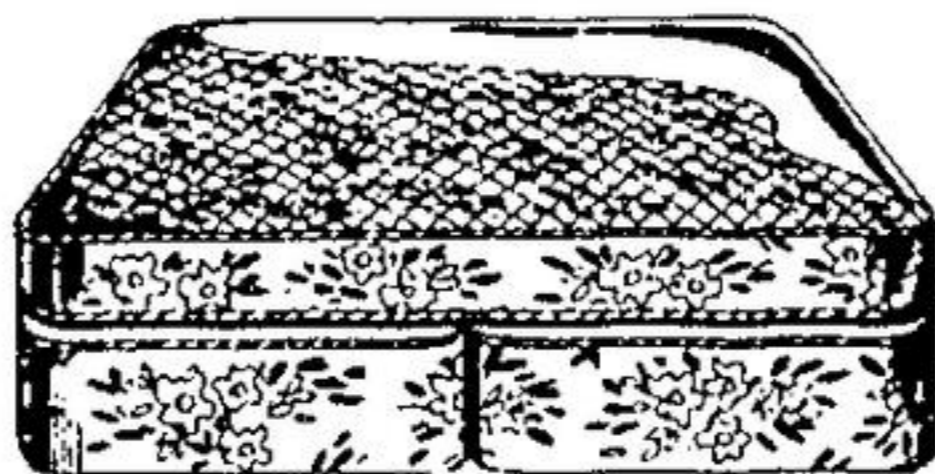
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