

From Georgetown beginnings taxi union 1,000-plus strong

By MICHAEL HOLLETT
Herald editor

After its fiery and sometimes bitter beginnings in Georgetown, the Ontario Taxi Association has blossomed into a growing union with well over 1,000 card carrying members in Ontario.

Georgetown became the scene of a labor drama with national implications last November as workers at Glen Taxi set out to organize the first taxi union in over 40 years in this country.

The labor-management struggle at the local cab

company finally had to be resolved at the Ontario Labor Relations Board after organizers were fired from their jobs and allegations of threats, violence and vandalism flew back and forth.

Finally, in January the first local of the Ontario Taxi Association was certified with a handful of members signing their first ever contract. Jack McDowell, a driver with Glen Taxi who was not rehired after his firing during the organizing attempt became the union's first president.

Mr. McDowell now works fulltime as the union's presi-



dent and has been spearheading the organizing drive across Ontario.

BIGGEST SUCCESS
The union's biggest success so far has been the organization of Grayline Taxi in Ottawa. The union has over 1,100 members in this one company alone and a certification hearing will be held for the union on October 5.

At press time, Mr. McDowell was in the process of organizing two cab companies in

Windsor employing over 300 workers.

The union also has card carrying members in St. Catharines, Thorold and Toronto.

Attempts are being made to organize the Metro Cab company in Toronto, one of the biggest taxi companies in the city.

Ralph Ortlieb of the Canadian Labor Congress explains that when organizing, all efforts are concentrated on one major firm in a city with the hope that after the initial success, other cab companies

in the area will also become interested in forming a union.

Mr. Ortlieb told the Herald unionizing efforts are also in high gear in Edmonton, Alberta and Nova Scotia.

"Things are really breaking," said Mr. Ortlieb who was involved in the organizing campaign in Georgetown.

He said the union has yet to run into the same type of difficulties as were encountered in the Georgetown organizing campaign.

"The first one is always the hardest," he said.



FALL FAIR MAGICIAN

The Georgetown Fall Fair will include performances by magician Eddie Diljon, sponsored by Robert Real Estate. Mr. Diljon will be performing daily during the fair, using children from the audience as his assistants. Mr. Diljon has performed on television 167 times and has made 8,000 personal appearances before audiences totalling 2 million people. Among the feats of magic he will be performing are the disappearance of a ten-pound Australian rabbit and the chop chop trick from Hong Kong.

TENNIS ANYONE?

The Erin Township Recreation Board is sponsoring a "Tennis Anyone" night at 8 p.m., October 10 in the Hillsburg municipal building. Anyone interested in forming a tennis club is invited to come out and make themselves known to the board.

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