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Mac McLean of Georgetown dropped by Murray Motors Tuesday to pick up his new 1991 Oldsmobile he won in the Car Club Draw at Branch 120 (Georgetown) of the Royal Canadian Legion.

On hand to make the presentation were (from left) Marion Carney, Car Club Chairperson, Bob McNeilly, Branch 120 President and Andrew Murray of Murray Motors. *TED BROWN/Halton Hills Weekend*

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to

Georgetown District High School's

GRADE 9 PARENTS INFORMATION NIGHT

Thurs. Sept. 19, 1991

6:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Mr. Bill Harrison
Board Chairperson

Mr. B. Davies
Principal

Employees support striking co-workers

By JANET BAINE

Halton Hills wasn't exactly paralysed by striking federal employees this week.

There are nine government employees in Georgetown and only three are allowed to strike, all employment counsellors at the Canada Employment Centre.

"It's unfair that they're asking us to tighten our belts when the executives got a 4.2 per cent increase, some on the day the budget went through," said Judy Dame, a Georgetown assistant employment counsellor who's on strike. Dame and other federal employees are outraged that the Mulroney government "had the arrogance" to promise them a zero per cent increase in wages for federal employees, she said.

"A lot of people think that we get the cost of living anyway, but we don't," said Ellen Armstrong, an inquiry clerk who is a designated employee and must come in to work at the Canada Employment Centre.

Monday morning picketers tried to prevent three designated employees from going in to work at the Canada Employment Centre. They had to go home to get their letters, which say they are designated employees and have to go to work, Day said.

Both clerks say they support the strike, and are working to rule, by not doing anything unless it is in their job description. Normally they get information for members of the public, but they are only telling customers where it can be found, instead.

"Ninety-five per cent of people who come in support us on (the strike)," Day said. "I didn't think it would be that way, because we're dealing with people who have no jobs. But they're sympathetic."

People applying for Unemployment and other benefits will likely notice their claims will be processed more slowly in the coming months. But all the cheques will still be going out, Day said.

Dame said relations between those on strike and designated employees in Georgetown are very good. She said anyone who is dealing with processing and cheques as well as enquiries is designated.

The striking workers are dividing their time between the Canada Employment Centre, the airport

Picket outside Maple Lodge Farms

Government meat inspectors work at Maple Lodge Farms south of Norval were picketing outside the chicken processing plant as this edition went to press Thursday. Strike Captain Dianna Freeman-Hagerty said half of all meat inspectors in Ontario are on strike.

and Immigration Canada in Brampton. She doesn't know when they'll be picketing in Georgetown again.

It's business as usual at the Canada Customs office, the only other federal government office in Georgetown. The three employees there have been designated as essential, so there is still a full-staff working.

Customs Officer Russ Steel wouldn't comment on the strike, feeling the federal government wouldn't allow designated employees to express their views, but he wore a button proclaiming "my heart is on the line", showing his support for the strike.

The customs office clears shipments from the United States destined for local companies. It also identifies goods for export and gives out information to the general public about customs regulations.

Other issues in the strike include job security, pay equity, and the pension plan payments.

Treasury Board president Gilles Loiseleur said Wednesday parliament may be recalled early to deal with the issue. Members of the Public Service Alliance believe the government may legislate them back to work before Monday.

MP Garth Turner said that while he supports the government's cost-cutting move, he doesn't think the strikers should be legislated back to work.

"There's no indication so far that the government is going to legislate them back. That's a pretty draconian measure," he said Thursday.

His constituency office is busy helping people affected by the strike: those who need passports, government cheques, or have had to change their travel plans.

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