



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Union Local 2620 — which represents 110 public works employees — walked off the job Thursday morning after being without a contract since January, 1997. Here, they picket the Hwy. 25 landfill site yesterday morning.

Wages key issue in strike

• from WATER on page 1

watermain breaks.

Mr. Dean said making such repairs — which he explained happen almost every day — should be the least of everyone's worries.

"(Management) hasn't recognized the potential problem," said Mr. Dean. "Halton Region hasn't woken up and smelled the roses yet."

Barry Malmsten, Halton Region's chief administrative officer, said Mr. Dean's scenario "won't happen" and that all facilities are staffed by management supervisors whose sole intent is to maintain safety and meet all provincial guidelines for water quality.

Key issues in the dispute include wage increases and benefit reductions. Workers have been without a raise in six years and are seeking 50 cents more an hour across the board.

The union had been looking for parity with their counterparts in other regions but said it is ready to accept the 50 cents per hour raise. A Halton plant worker is paid \$16.88 per hour. Those in Durham Region, for example, get \$20.37 an hour.

Mr. Malmsten said both sides met for a 22-hour marathon session on Monday/Tuesday and eventually hammered out a deal. On Wednesday night this was taken to the union membership, which promptly rejected it by more than 70 per cent, said Mr. Dean.

Because of the 12:01 a.m. Thursday deadline, Mr. Malmsten said he remains unaware of "why it didn't sell."

"It's hard to say why it was turned down," said Mr. Malmsten, who adds that the ball is now in the union's court. "What's the issue that has to get done?"

Mr. Dean said the union had wanted \$2 more per hour but settled on the "absolute minimum" of 50 cents more per hour. The Region's latest offer — which Mr. Dean said is 17 cents an hour more for the first year — is unacceptable.

"(The bargaining committee) said if you don't go on strike we can't get you another dime," said Mr. Dean. Mr. Malmsten said he would not discuss the specifics of the agreement.

Although Local 2620 has been without a contract for 15 months, Mr. Dean said the Region is offering retroactive pay from only January, 1998.

At press time, Mr. Dean said the union and management are not speaking at all and no negotiations are planned.

Ms Savoline said she regrets that Local 2620's membership did not endorse the deal, which had been worked out with the aid of an external mediator.

"The agreement was both fair and reasonable and was within the mandate supported by regional council," said Ms Savoline.

Mr. Malmsten said Halton is in the precarious position of attempting to strike a balance between the needs of taxpayers and those of unionized workers, whom he characterized as "good employees." Particularly vexing is the \$24 million in provincial

downloading with which Halton must cope, he said.

"There are unique pressures on the Region," said Mr. Malmsten. "Council is agonizing over this."

Another sore spot with the union is the issue of pay raises linked to Ministry of Environment and Energy (MOEE) certification.

Currently older workers receive MOEE approval without schooling thanks to a grandfather clause which takes into account their skills and experience. Discarding grandfathering would make these older workers ineligible for pay increases.

Teachers find layoff picture disheartening

• from AS OF NOW on page 1

(teacher) representatives there was a good possibility of layoffs," said Ms Clarke.

The news is disheartening, said Ms Clarke, but not unexpected.

The Halton District School Board will get less operating money via the Ontario government's new funding formula.

As well, 38 elementary vice-principals decided to return to teaching with the uncertainty of management positions under the province's reorganization of education.

"I talked to the education director and some superintendents on Monday and we came up with these (layoff) numbers" after the board crunched some financial figures related to the new funding formula.

"We appreciate the difficult position the board is in," said Ms Clarke.

However, Ms Clarke said that there are circumstances that could result in the recall of some laid off teachers.

Al Tanner, president of Halton's public secondary teachers union, said the number of potential layoffs for his group should be known by late April, but specific teaching positions affected probably won't be known until mid-May.

"The board taking this step with elementary (teachers) certainly doesn't bode well for us," said Mr. Tanner, who noted 24 secondary vice-principals have opted to return to the teaching ranks.



Al Tanner

ONLY 39 CHANCES LEFT TO WIN!

Wallace
PONTIAC • BUICK • CADILLAC

1 in 100 chance to win!

The **\$10,000** Cash Giveaway

You can have a 1 in 100 chance of winning the \$10,000 jackpot. Yes, if you buy or lease a new or used vehicle from Saturday March 7, 1998, until 100 vehicles are sold, your name will be entered in the \$10,000 draw. The draw will take place in our showroom shortly after the 100th entry.

ROCK BOTTOM PRICES and a chance to win **\$10,000**

1998 **GRAND AM's**

\$17,598

- ABS brakes
- 4 cyl. twin cam 150 HP
- Auto transmission
- AM/FM cassette
- Dual air bags
- Rear spoiler

1.9% Finance Rates on all Sonoma's and Jimmy's

Over 110 new vehicles in stock

Over 40 used vehicles in stock

Includes NO CHARGE FIBREGLASS RUNNING BOARDS

1998 **SAFARI's**

\$248 per month

- SLX model, 8 passenger, 4.3L Vortec, V6, automatic, air conditioning, dual air bags, ABS brakes, deep tinted glass, AM/FM cassette, power locks.

...And we also want to introduce our **GM OPTIMUM USED** vehicles

- 150 Point inspection
- Full mechanical reconditioning
- Complete appearance detailing
- 1-time exchange policy (30 day or 2,500 kms)
- Consumer friendly buying environment
- Nationwide GM backed warranty - minimum of 6 month or 10,000 kms
- Roadside assistance included
- Preferred lease rates

You can now have a worry-free used vehicle, with a new vehicle purchasing experience for a whole lot less. We have over 40 optimum used vehicles in stock (many one owner trades).

Only retail customers are eligible for the \$10,000 giveaway. Fleet, As-is or Wholesale purchases will not qualify. Wallace Pontiac employees and relatives are not eligible. The winner must answer a skill testing question to qualify. *Lease based on \$3000 down payment plus freight & taxes plus 1st month payment, security deposit, licence due on delivery OAC. Customer must take delivery of vehicle to qualify.

BUY OR LEASE ANY NEW OR USED VEHICLE, AND HAVE A CHANCE TO WIN \$10,000

Wallace
PONTIAC • BUICK • CADILLAC

• WE WANT YOUR TRADE-INS •

409 MAIN ST. E., IN MILTON 878-2355