

On strike at Grew

Pickets were set up outside the Grew plant in Penetanguishene early last Friday morning after workers represented by United Auto Workers, Local 1411, voted 98

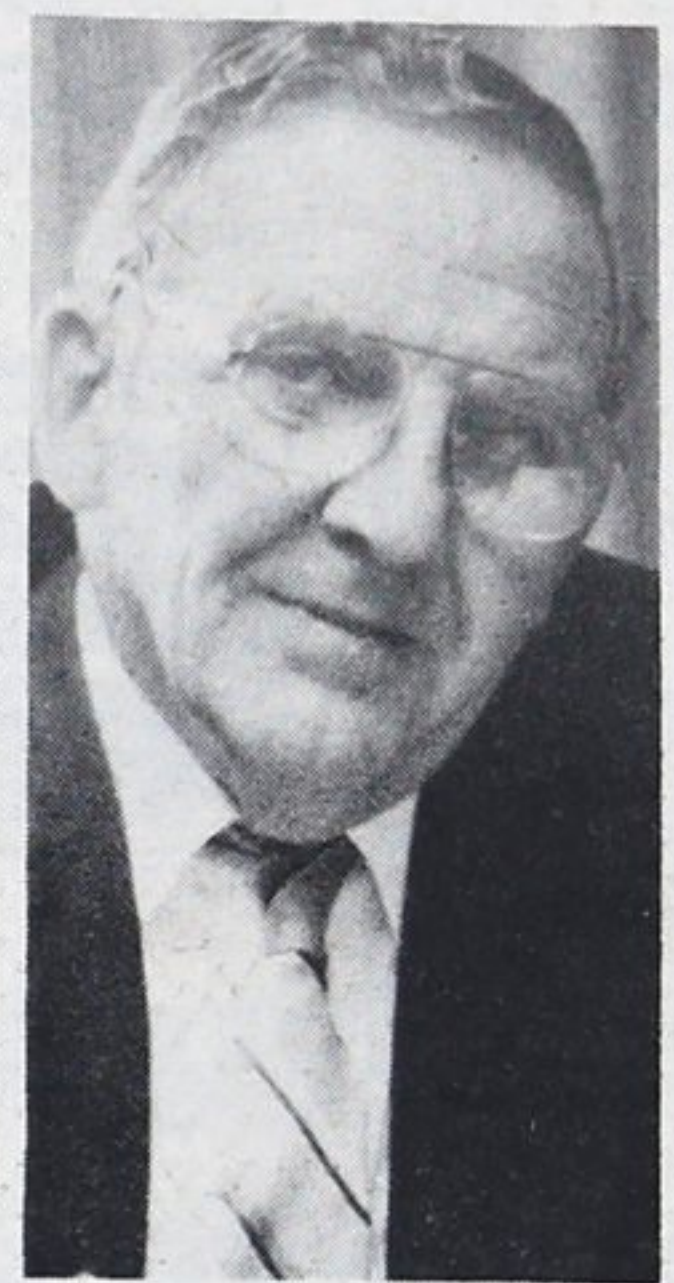
per cent to strike the boat manufacturer the previous day. Local 1411 chairman Ernie Earle, second from the right in this photo taken Friday morning, said the

workers are seeking a "substantial" pay increase. They rejected an approximate 6 per cent average wage increase made by Grew president Peter Francis.

Strike settlement at Grew no closer

There does not appear to have been any movement in the direction of settlement of the five-day-old strike at Penetanguishene's AFC Grew plant.

That was the view offered late yesterday afternoon by Grew president (and principal owner) Peter Francis and by United Auto Workers negotiator Carole Phillips. (Phillips is the UAW's international representative and is working with Local 1411 in the negotiations from the UAW's Canadian headquarters in Toronto.) The Grew plant closed at 12:01 a.m. last Friday after workers voted 98 per cent in favour of strike action.



Peter Francis

There also appears to be some disagreement over what are the respective positions of the two sides.

Francis said his six per cent wage package offer hasn't changed. On Friday Local 1411 chairman Ernie Earle told this newspaper only that the union is seeking "a substantial increase." Francis says the union is seeking 16 per cent in wage increases but Earle said Friday, "Sixteen per cent is what Peter Francis is saying." Neither side in the dispute has told this newspaper that the other is bargaining in bad faith, but both appear to be frustrated with each other.

Francis says the average industrial wage increase negotiated in Canada for the first six months of 1985 averages only 3.2 per cent and that in comparison, his offer is good. Phillips said that throwing out the 3.2 per cent figure is a red herring. "We know (Grew) is making record profits," she said. Earle added that the company asked the workers to restrain wage demands during the years when the plant faced bankruptcy. "They told the workers 'Help us now and we'll help you later,' and now we're saying it's time for you to help us," Earle said. Francis said he's owned the plant for the past 30 months and can't be held accountable for what happened before he bought it.

Earle said the union is trying to get pensions for plant workers, job security, particularly for those working in the plant's upholstery division, a cost of living allowance, and better holiday pay, which is currently 4 per cent of the annual wage rate. Francis said, "I have a certain amount of money to give to them (and) they can do what they like with it."

From a picket site set up at the foot of Main Street, one striking worker said Friday, "we're not greedy." "We feel we've tried to go halfway (with management)," Earle added.

The lowest paid worker at Grew is paid \$7.43 an hour and the highest is paid \$8.88. The company is offering average 35 cents an hour increases in each year for the next two years.

Phillips said union officials are "willing to sit down to talk to Peter anytime."



Spectacular Friday night crash

A series of charges were laid by Midland OPP following this smash-up last Friday evening on Highway 93 just north of Vinden Street. One of the vehicles in-

volved sustained \$6,000 damage while the other received an estimated \$4,000 damage. Two young passengers, riders in one of the cars, were rushed by ambulance

to HDH for treatment of minor injuries they received in the spectacular crash.

-Photo by Bob Murray