

THE CITY



Blue-collar workers sweep into the street during yesterday's rally on Papineau Ave. *Gazette, Len Sidaway*

# 1,500 blue-collar workers hoist brooms to protest slow talks with city

By SHEILA MCGOVERN of The Gazette

Blue-collar workers employed by the city and the Montreal Urban Community hoisted brooms and took to the streets of Montreal yesterday — but they were protesting, not working.

As threatened, 5,000 blue-collar workers staged a one-day walkout to protest the lagging pace of their contract talks.

Only a handful of employees were on the job to maintain such essential services as water-purification and emergency communication systems.

There was no routine maintenance and no garbage collection for about 10 per cent of Montreal residents.

### 1,500 gather

Instead, about 1,500 strikers gathered outside their union's head office on Papineau Ave., where they hoisted brooms instead of picket signs.

Union president Jean Lapierre said the union had obtained a permit to demonstrate at La Ronde, but instead they were going downtown to sweep out every floor of city hall.

"We're going to city hall to pass our message to politicians," said Gilles Charland, chief negotiator for Local 301 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. "We want to clean the place."

While new politicians have been elected in recent years, he said, the old managers and foremen remain and still promote the same ideas — such as arguing that it's cheaper to have work done by private contractors than city employees.

With Lapierre urging the strikers to keep the demonstration peaceful, they boarded 39 buses and headed downtown.

Pedestrians chuckled as the procession of yellow school buses snaked through the streets, with the strikers twirling their brooms out the windows.

But motorists weren't laughing. Traffic was snarled along Papineau Ave., Dorchester Blvd., Viger Ave. and through Old Montreal.

Inside the bus, the blue-collar workers assessed the quality of their brooms and tried to make out if the labels — which were in Spanish — indicated they were union-made.

Pierre P., 34, who wouldn't give his last name for fear of reprisals from his bosses, said he's been a manual laborer for 14 years "doing all the hard work no one else wants to do."

He intended to march up to Mayor Jean Doré's office, drop a paper on the floor, and sweep it back and forth for an hour.

He didn't get a chance. As the demonstrators arrived at city hall,

they were met by seven MUC police officers standing shoulder to shoulder blocking the steps.

A few strikers swished a bit of dirt around at the base of the steps. As the crowd grew larger, a few protesters tried to force their way past the police.

But finally they settled for cheering and hoisting their brooms in the air as Lapierre gave a speech on the justice of their cause.

They then shouldered their brooms and marched to MUC headquarters at Complexe Desjardins, where they paraded through the business complex before dispersing and going home.

### No vandalism

Police and city officials reported no major problems or vandalism resulting from the strike.

The city and union will resume negotiations Tuesday with the help of a provincial conciliator.

Both sides say they have made progress on the crucial issue of guaranteed employment, but were deadlocked over working hours and fringe benefits.

The union wants its work week reduced to 37.5 hours a week from 40, and wants the guaranteed number of full-time jobs in Montreal increased to 4,500 from 4,000.

# Vandals cut Bell service on South Shore

Long-distance telephone service was disrupted for hundreds of thousands of Bell Canada customers yesterday, and 1,000 St. Lambert residences have no service at all after vandals damaged three major cables.

"It's a mess," Bell official François Pagé said.

Most of the damage to long-distance lines had been repaired by mid-afternoon yesterday, but the disruptions on the South Shore will continue through the weekend.

Pagé said a vandal or vandals climbed into a manhole near the south end of the Victoria Bridge in St. Lambert about 1 a.m. yesterday.

There are 10 cables inside the manhole, he said, but only the three most important were severed — apparently with a metal saw or cable cutters.

"It was a real clean cut," Pagé said.

He said one fibre-optic line and two trunk cables were severed.

The damage knocked out 16,000 long-distance circuits. Calls to Halifax, Moncton, Quebec City, Drummondville, the Eastern Townships and the South Shore were disrupted.

Pagé said the cables also carried the U.S. long-distance services such as GTE, Sprint and MCI. The damage made it difficult for many companies to contact their U.S. offices.

Some calls were getting through, he said.

Pagé compared the cable damage to someone knocking out all but one of the four bridges that link the South Shore and Montreal island.

Traffic could still get through, he explained, but very slowly and in much smaller numbers.

The main long-distance circuits were repaired by 2:30 p.m., but Pagé said it will take all weekend to restore long-distance service on the South Shore and full service in St. Lambert.

Crews have to splice the halves of 4,800 wires contained in the cables, he said.

"They've got a spaghetti pile of 9,600 wires that they're trying to make sense of."

Bell has complained of more than 400 cases of vandalism since its 19,000 operators, repair workers and installers went on strike June 27 in Quebec, Ontario and the Northwest Territories.

Negotiations aimed at ending the dispute continued yesterday in Ottawa.

The key issues in the conflict are job security, pensions and wages.

# Here is what's open and closed on Labor Day

Most businesses and services will be closed on Monday, Labor Day.

All government offices will be closed and there will be no garbage collection. Municipal arenas, cultural centres, libraries and swimming pools will be closed.

Banks and supermarkets will be closed, but most convenience stores will remain open.

Post offices will be closed and there will be no mail delivery. There will, however, be a collection from street mailboxes. Special delivery service will also be provided.

The La Ronde amusement park, Montreal Aquarium, Garden of Wonders zoo, and the Botanical Garden will be open.

Tennis courts will also be open.

The only liquor stores that will be open are at Le Faubourg on St. Catherine St., Marche 440 in Laval, Marche de l'Ouest in Dollard des Ormeaux, and Halles d'Anjou in Anjou. Loto-Québec booths will be closed on Monday, but will open Tuesday at about 8 a.m.

The Gazette will not publish on Monday.

# Air-show security tighter after crashes in Europe

By MIKE KING of The Gazette

The 10th annual Montreal International Air Show will take off in St. Hubert as scheduled next weekend despite the recent tragedies at similar events in Europe.

There was no question of cancelling the show after about 50 people were killed and another 500 injured at a military air show in West Germany last Sunday, organizers told a news conference yesterday.

### No 'fly overs'

Pierre Thérout, president of Wings of Hope which is organizing the show, told *The Gazette* there will be no "fly overs" at Expo Air — the name given the Montreal aerobatics demonstration since it became his organization's main fund-raising event in 1985.

Unlike the case at some European air shows, spectators at Expo Air 88 "will be in secure areas away from the flights," Thérout said.

"Recent events (in Europe) made us reaffirm our tough regulations," Thérout told reporters yesterday.

Robert St. Pierre, Wings of Hope secretary-treasurer and assistant director of Expo Air 88, said there are strict Canadian military regulations that must be followed at international air shows.

Military precision teams must fly 450 metres away from spectators and no less than 900 metres above the crowd when surpassing speeds of 483 km/h. The limit above the crowd is halved when pilots are flying slower than 483 km/h.

Thérout said aerobatic teams are always carefully screened to weed out pilots with a reputation for taking risks.

Event director François Chénier said security has been tightened this year and additional emergency procedures added to guarantee Expo Air 88 will be as safe as possible.

Chénier said police from the city of St. Hubert, Sûreté du Québec, the Police Institute of Quebec and the Department of National Defence will be on hand for the two-day show, Sept. 10-11. St. John Ambulance as well as personnel from the nearby Armed Forces base and Transport Canada will also be added to the esti-

mated 300 regular volunteers. Although the show has been moved to St. Hubert from Mirabel for the first time, Thérout hopes it will maintain its popularity.

"It was an enormous success last year," he said, adding that Expo Air is the country's second-largest air show.

"We were a close second to Abbotsford," he said, referring to the annual show in British Columbia.

### String of disasters

The string of European air-show disasters this year includes:

- Ramstein Air Force Base in West Germany where Italian pilots crashed last Sunday, killing about 50 people and injuring 500;

- Kleine-Brogel Air Force Base in Belgium, where a Finnish pilot was also killed last Sunday when his small aircraft crashed;

- Mulhouse Airport in France, where an Air France plane carrying 130 guests crashed June 26, killing three people and injuring 50;

- Hanover, West Germany, where a British military helicopter crashed May 7, killing two people.



Sun Youth's Victor Rodriguez (in back) with sailors at Welcome Hall Mission. *Gazette, Richard Arless Jr.*

# Mexican ship deeper in turmoil as sailors bail out over pay delay

By AMORELL SAUNDERS of The Gazette

The problems of the stranded, dilapidated Mexican freighter *Feder Gulf* continue to worsen.

Its seven remaining crewmen jumped ship Thursday afternoon after learning there might be no paycheques for working aboard the unsafe ship.

A few of the sailors worked on the *Feder Gulf* for as long as four months and are owed as much as \$1,300.

Some had been flown in from Mexico at the end of July to replace other crewmen.

### Taken to mission

The seven tired and penniless Mexicans who fled the vessel stayed in the homes of Valleyfield residents Thursday night. Last night, Sun Youth Organization worker Victor Rodriguez took the sailors to Welcome Hall Mission on St. Antoine St. W.

The *Feder Gulf* has been a nightmare ship for crew members this summer. It has been anchored in Lake St. François near St. Zotique since June 16, when its last shipment of steel was unloaded.

The Federal Court of Canada then ordered the vessel seized be-

cause creditors claimed the owner, Flota Maritima Mexicana, owed at least \$180,000.

The Canadian Coast Guard forbade the ship to leave until 51 fire and safety defects are repaired.

Mexican consul general José Luis Vallarta and Sun Youth officials spent yesterday negotiating with Flota Maritima Mexicana to pay the crew's wages and for plane tickets home.

"They (the ship's owners) have said they are going to receive a lot of money from another ship to pay the crew and to continue repairs," Vallarta said.

The sailors were told by a company agent's wife that there was no money to pay them.

Vallarta said the crew members don't trust the company because it hasn't kept promises to pay them. He said the company kept telling the crew "next week, next week. The sailors said enough is enough."

Rodriguez said the sailors refuse to return because "every week it's the same old thing. They are obviously fed up. Their families depend on their salary."

He said the sailors, whose average age is 23, feel that "they've been taken for a ride."

Vallarta said the company is experiencing economic problems.

"They are trying to survive," he said. "I told them they need the crew and the priority should be to pay them for their well-being, but they didn't follow through before. I told them to keep them (the sailors) happy."

Vallarta said the company might bring in seven more sailors as replacements.

Donald Beaulieu, public affairs director for the coast guard, said the ship is still not ready to sail even though some repairs have been done.

### 'Quite a bit to do'

"There is still quite a bit to do and we don't know how long the repairs will take," he said. "There is no indication when the ship will set sail."

Federal Immigration Department officials say there is nothing they can do to help the sailors.

"We can't consider them deserters because the ship is still there," said Jacques Girard, a program specialist with the department.

"It is a funny situation," he added. "They might be there for a while."

"We are banking on the fact that the owners will send airline tickets but it is still a matter between the owner and the ship."

# Man died after eating mussels laced with acid used in insecticides: coroner

Demoic acid should never be used as an insecticide in regions where mussels are harvested, says the coroner who investigated the death of a Pointe Claire man who ate contaminated mussels.

Albert Pomeroy, 71, was one of three people who died last year after eating Prince Edward Island mussels. More than 100 Canadians fell ill during the outbreak that resulted in

a temporary ban on the sale of East Coast oysters, mussels, clams, quahogs and cockles.

It is not known whether the P.E.I. mussels eaten by Pomeroy became contaminated through a natural process, or as a result of demoic acid used as an insecticide. Dr. Michel Larose said in an interview yesterday.

In his 40-page report, Larose not-

ed that demoic acid is found in plants growing in P.E.I. rivers. The acid has been used both as an insecticide and a home remedy for parasitic infections in Japan.

"We found (demoic acid) in the mussels," Larose said. "Where it came from we don't know."

Last Nov. 27, Pomeroy ate mussels at a Montreal restaurant. Eight other diners ate mussels from the

same batch, but only Pomeroy became ill, the report said.

Two days later he was admitted to Montreal General Hospital's emergency department and he died on Dec. 10.

Larose also recommended that tests to check for the presence of toxins in mussels be carried out more frequently.

Andrew Roy, an official with the

Fisheries Department, said in an interview that inspectors from the health and fisheries departments now monitor shellfish weekly and P.E.I. mussel beds more frequently.

Larose urged that new and quicker tests to determine the presence of toxins in humans be developed and money be spent to find a specific antidote to demoic acid.

He also recommended that provin-

cial and federal governments pass legislation to cover the cultivation, transportation, distribution and consumption of mussels.

A specialist with the Montreal Neurological Hospital and Institute found that damage to Pomeroy's brain was similar to that of a man who died of mussel poisoning in Ontario, Larose said.