

(cont'd) fruit industry workers. Rent, light, food, fuel, clothing and other household expenses are just as high here, on the average, as elsewhere in B.C. Evident proof that wages are insufficient is borne out by the fact that wives of most workers in the fruit industry have to work in order to make ends meet, this excepting the so-called career girls."

"CAN THE INDUSTRY STAND THE RAISE?"

The stock answer given every trade union that has ever requested a raise in wages, improved hours or working conditions, is that the industry cannot stand it. The industry is not making any money, it is bordering on bankruptcy, and the few cents the workers request will wreak economic havoc. The same story was echoed by the fruit growers' spokesmen, and has been said by the lumber industry every time negotiations come around. The fact is that the owners of the fruit industry, the growers, are making a good living, as can be witnessed by their homes, cars, trucks, and the amount of money that is being spent on luxury items as recently reported by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Finally, the Industry's Negotiation Committee did not produce a case, satisfactorily showing that an increase in wages would create economic chaos in the fruit industry.

WAS THE STRIKE FAIR?

Strike action is a form of economic warfare, to put it bluntly. However, most unions employ the strike weapon wisely, and only when all other methods of negotiation have failed. Too, in most unions, strike action is taken only if a majority of its membership vote in favour. It is not my intention to question the writer's opinion that for certain reasons, this strike was ill-timed and ill-advised, nor do I intend to concern myself with the internal policies of the FWU. I do say however that in my humble opinion, I consider the following to be facts: 1. -The hourly wages paid fruit industry workers are grossly inadequate for a worker to bring up his family in keeping with his station. 2. The Fruit Industry's Negotiating Committee did not produce