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August 25, 2003

HUNGRY IN HAZELTON

Support the Carnaby Workers

The following is a letter to the Editor that appeared in The Interior News on August 20, 2003

I have never been so infuriated by a local newspaper article in my entire years of following local issues and concerns. I refer to two articles in *The Interior News* July 30, one being the cover story about Carnaby union blockaders betrayed by New Hazelton, and the other was on your opinion page written by New Hazelton Mayor Peter Weeber "An open letter to striking Eurocan workers" on page A5.

First off I would like to remind Mr. Weeber that the people you are showing so little respect for by writing such a cynical letter, are the people that deserve much better.

As a mayor and community leader, you should in my opinion put their concerns first instead of worrying about Carnaby's unpaid taxes (that would come eventually).

Prince Rupert, Hazelton and other communities are also affected by this issue, but I never once heard Mayor Heb Pond or Mayor Alice Maitland say a derogatory remark about union members I.e. taxpayers, voters.

In fact, Mayor Maitland is on record of support to these people, her constituents. I think your mind has taken a leave of its senses on this issue. I remind you also sir that unions have fought for years to get a fair wage and decent working conditions for its members.

The real culprit is the former Skeena Cellulose, who for years

milked the forests surrounding the Northwest and made billions that were sent back East to run operations there, while not replacing aging equipment in its northwest B.C. operations.

The NDP government then sunk well over \$360 million of our tax dollars into the aging facility, only to have the Liberal government practically give it to NWBC and Dan Veniez for \$15 million -- without a financial plan in place (unless you can call harassing the workers and forcing them to make concessions) -- and who in turn just wants to break the union and have its people revert to working conditions and wages of 30 years ago.

By the sounds of Mr. Weeber's remarks, and the way he puts down the unions and people, one would think that he owns shares in NWBC.

I certainly hope that by the next municipal election time, the people of New Hazelton remember their mayor's remarks and vote him out.

In fact, if the people were really smart they would attend the next council meeting and demand he resign from office ASAP and vote someone in that has the guts to stand up for its people.

The people that live in the Hazeltons should rally behind these workers who just want to go to work and support their families with dignity, without being forced into submission by owners that could care less about them.

Nipper Kettle
Houston

Finning has sale for Wagner and threatens to act against CEP

CEP has learned that Finning has a buyer for the Wagner, a huge piece of heavy equipment at the Carnaby Mill. To be moved, the Wagner would have to be dismantled and trucked out in pieces. Finning has alluded that if the Carnaby blockaders are not prepared to cooperate with a crew dismantling and trucks hauling it out, the sale will fall through. Finning will then have to "take action against the CEP". Dave Coles, CEP Vice President, Western Region says, "Finning will have to do what it has to do. We are not letting equipment be removed from Carnaby." Mo Azaz, President of Local 404 said, "We are blockading for a reason -- and we are not giving up our jobs."