

# T O H R C NEWSLETTER

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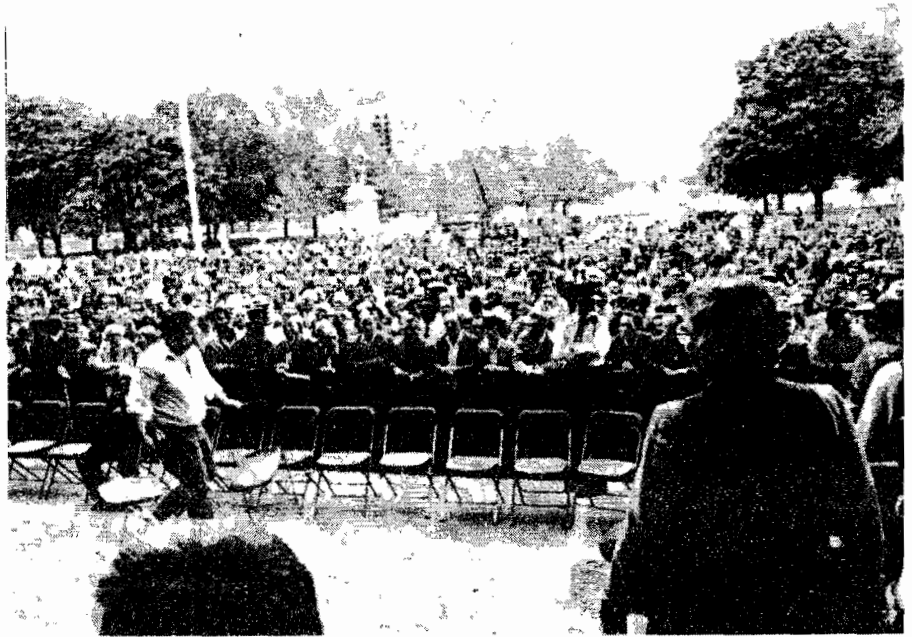
SUMMER 1983

THE TORONTO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH RESOURCE COMMITTEE

## Injured Workers Make Legislature History

On June 1st, well over 2,000 injured workers responded to notices sent out in WCB cheques to attend a legislative standing committee hearing on the future of workers' compensation in Ontario. The day's events proved to be a major victory for the Association of Injured Workers' Groups (AIWG) which has been pressing the government to scrap the White Paper and introduce real improvements to the WCB.

The AIWG had long been urging the Standing Committee to hold a day of public hearings for injured workers. It was their position that injured workers - the victims of the present WCB - have been totally excluded from the government's "reform" process during the last three years.



### WCB Forced to Advertise

On April 26, a breakthrough occurred when the Standing Committee agreed to the demands of the AIWG, not only to have a day of hearings for

injured workers, but also to direct the WCB to advertise these hearings by mailing notices with all benefit cheques.

The Committee had booked the Ontario Room in Injured workers; Cont. on p.2

### IN THIS ISSUE :

THE TROUBLE WITH  
THE TTC - AN  
EMPLOYEE'S  
POINT OF VIEW  
... p. 3

COMMUNITY  
SURVEYS -  
RIVERDALE AND  
JUNCTION TRIANGLE  
... p. 4

A NEW TASK FORCE  
ON OCCUPATIONAL  
HEALTH & SAFETY  
... p. 5

THE HAZARDS OF  
WAITING  
... p. 6  
THE RIGHT TO  
KNOW  
... P. 10

**Injured workers... cont from p.1**

the McDonald Block - a room with a capacity of 700 -

**Warnings Ignored**

despite warnings from the AIWG that this would be too small. By 9.30 a.m. on June 1st the room was overflowing into the hallways of the building, and even Committee members were caught in the crush. While many of those present had responded to the WCB notices and had never heard of the AIWG, there was a unity of mood - anger, frustration and distrust. As it was clear that the hearing could not proceed and equally clear that injured workers were in no mood to go home quietly, the AIWG proposed that the meeting adjourn to the Legislature, two blocks away.

**Committee Concedes - Hearings Held on Steps**

Once there, the Committee announced that another day of hearings would be held, but that those from out of town could return to the Ontario Room to make their presentations. This suggestion was shouted down. The AIWG then demanded that, as the Committee and injured workers were already there, the hearings should go ahead on the steps of the Legislature. The Committee, faced with an obviously angry crowd, had no choice but to concede,

and, for the first time in Ontario history, a committee hearing took place in front of the Legislature.

**WCB Condemned**

Chairs, tables and microphones were quickly produced, and a long line of injured workers proceeded to condemn both the current WCB and the changes proposed by the government White Paper. For hours, under threatening skies, injured workers stood their ground, notwithstanding sore backs and aching legs, while

The Toronto Occupational Health Resource Committee (TOHRC) addresses workplace health and safety issues from a workers' point of view by providing:

- health and safety information,
- a forum for the discussion of policies and politics of workplace health and safety,
- a network of information resource people, and an exchange of information and ideas among those interested and concerned with occupational health.

It is hoped that TOHRC can offer an alternative to the occupational health and safety positions of industry, government, and the WCB. This newsletter is an important part of TOHRC's efforts. Its objectives are to publish:

- TOHRC notices and proceedings,
- news items about TOHRC and other organizations,
- analyses of current events,
- information on recent developments in occupational health,
- opinions on the policies and politics of health and safety, and
- responses to readers' questions.

Other than TOHRC notices and proceedings, items published in this newsletter represent the opinions and research of the individual authors and not necessarily those of TOHRC. Authors are advised to be prepared to respond to readers' questions and to verify the content of their articles.

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speaker after speaker confirmed the right of the AIWG to speak on behalf of all injured workers.

**Increase Granted**

While there is no guarantee that the Tory government will accept the demands of the AIWG and drastically improve workers' compensation, it is clear that their voices have been heard and will continue to be heard until there is justice for those disabled on the job.

- Nick McCombie

**Footnote :**

As a clear result of the demands of the AIWG and the thousands of injured workers who came to Queen's Park, the government has now granted a 5% cost of living increase.

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**ANNOUNCING . .**

The Association of Injured Workers Groups

**P I C N I C**

to be held on Sunday August 7th, 1p.m. to 6p.m. at Earls court Park (St Clair and Caledonia).

Celebration and Preparation for Future Struggles

All interested are invited to attend.

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