

## Logger blockade

The logger blockade of the Quebec border raises a number of questions that those dealing with the problem ought to answer:

If half the logging jobs in northern Maine have been eliminated by mechanization over the last 15 years, why isn't there a surplus rather than a shortage of Maine workers?

Why, in the face of high unemployment in northern Maine, has the number of Canadian workers increased rather than decreased?

If there is a shortage of labor, why don't companies pay higher wages and offer better working conditions rather than allow logging wages to decline relative to average wages statewide?

If there is a shortage of labor, why don't companies institute training programs rather than require loggers to pay for their own training? Why does the government have border crossings on private roads that are used primarily to export raw sawlogs to Canada (losing potential jobs and taxes to Maine) and import labor from Canada (losing more jobs and taxes)?

A mill manager from Quebec

complained that stumpage prices (going to a handful of absentee landowners in Maine) have doubled and therefore he has to put the squeeze on labor to keep his prices down. If the benefits of our current policies are going to absentee landowners and foreign mill owners at the expense of Maine workers, who are our elected officials serving?

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