

Guardian

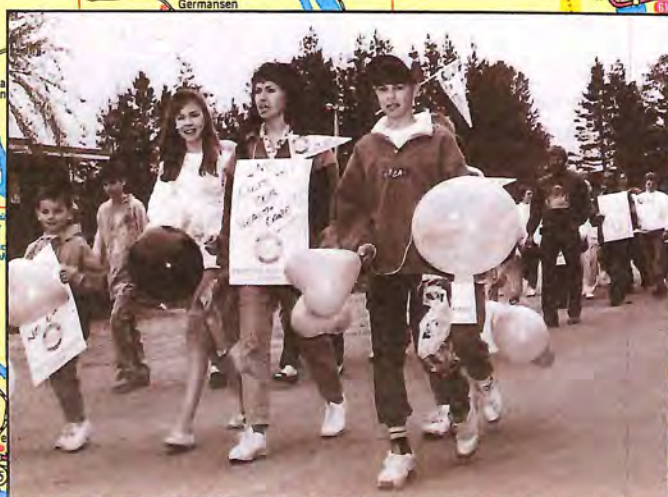


VOL. 10 NO. 3

THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

JULY/AUGUST 1992

B.C. communities fight to save their hospitals



Victoria's freeze on regional hospital spending has hit every B.C. community north of Vernon and east of Kelowna. Across the province, HEU members are helping to organize community coalitions to save hospital beds and health care jobs.

VICTORIA'S PLAN

PAGE 5

How the provincial government predicted the crisis last March.

CLOSING BEDS

PAGE 8

How we're organizing against the cuts.

MEETING CULL

PAGE 12

Health minister Elizabeth Cull debated the cuts with students at HEU's summer school.

Ending the violence

A new union handbook says we can help end domestic violence while we're on the job.

PAGE 13

SAVE CANADA? WE CAN DO IT!

When 3,000 trade unionists met in Vancouver in June for the Canadian Labour Congress convention, they changed their constitution, set out an ambitious action program and elected Bob White as president. His job: help organize a movement to defeat the Tories and build a better Canada. HEU was there.

PAGE 10

Health care restructuring is next challenge

HEU is emerging from a long round of collective bargaining facing an even tougher challenge – protecting our health care system and our jobs during a period of fundamental restructuring.

Since the recession of the 1980s, the corporate sector has been complaining about the cost of our health care system and the taxes needed to support it. The federal Tories are cutting off payments to provincial health care budgets. Provincial governments are closing beds, shutting wards and laying off thousands of workers.

But corporate leaders who attack the waste in health care have no intention of spending the savings on quality care, safe working conditions or pay equity. They want that money paid to them in the form of reduced taxes – or direct funding to run privatized health services.

The provincial New Democrats, by cutting health spending below the level needed to maintain existing ser-



COMMENT

by CARMELA ALLEVATO

vices before full consultation with health care unions, could be setting our health system on that corporate course for disaster.

Where is the commitment to universally accessible, quality medical care if rural communities face arbitrary cuts in service? And where is women's equality if health care workers – overwhelmingly women – are thrown on the unemployment lines by restructuring?

HEU has never stood in the way of changes designed to improve our medicare system. HEU members know that major changes are needed.

But those changes must meet the needs of our communities and protect

and improve the jobs of HEU members.

Even before our collective bargaining process wound down, HEU activists were turning their attention to the community coalition work needed to protect basic services around the province.

In the process, they're confronting basic questions about the kind of medicare system we want to leave to our children. Is health care spending out of control? What kind of community care is needed? And how can communities exert democratic control over health care services?

HEU has made its position clear to Victoria: layoffs and bed closures should be rescinded. Community programs must be in place before services are transferred. Existing health workers must be offered those jobs and be trained to fill them.

Meeting those needs will just be the beginning.

In the coming months – especially at our upcoming convention – HEU members will have to work with friends in the community and in health coalitions across the country to develop a plan for health care that meets peoples' needs, not the bottom-line obsession of the corporate sector.

Guardian

"In humble dedication to all those who toil to live."

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Letters

The Guardian welcomes letters to the editor. Please be brief. Write to 2006 W. 10th Ave., Vancouver V6J 4P5.

Thank you for the pay equity quilt

I was very impressed by the cover of the December *Guardian*. Any information you may have regarding this lovely and timely quilt on pay equity would be much appreciated. Is it possible to get a poster of this for framing?

Although I no longer work in a hospital, finding it too stressful, I still enjoy receiving the *Guardian*. At present I am affiliated with another union through the job I now have. However, I share my copies of the *Guardian* with other union members, as all union workers should be aware of other struggles and victories in the union movement.

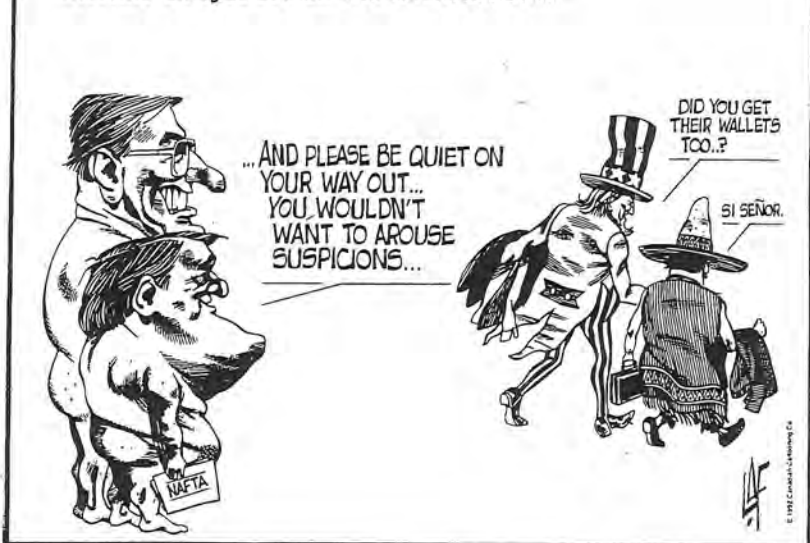
ANNE SPILKER,
Nanaimo

• Sorry, at present we do not have a poster of this quilt, but we are discussing the possibility of producing a series of such posters with Debbie Bryant and other artists.

HEU member angry at WCB attitude

• Following is part of a letter sent to the Workers' Compensation Board by the secretary-treasurer of HEU's Dania Home local after a kitchen worker passed out because of heat in the kitchen. A union call for an

...while all eyes are on the constitution...



inspection met with some resistance.

I realize the WCB is a busy place, but I thought someone passing out from the heat would have been a call for immediate action. What a joke! Not only does the employer not care, but it seems those who are there to help workers didn't care either.

Our employer thought that putting a small three-speed fan in the kitchen would help. Another joke!

I want to know what it takes before the average worker gets help. We deal with conditions like unbearable heat in a tub room trying to wash an

uncooperative patient, heavy workloads, violent patients, lifting pots much heavier than the required weight limit, and doing dishes on a wet, bare floor. WCB and our employers seem to think these are just things that go with our jobs. However, we in the health care industry do not! These things are not just all in our minds!

Unless an employer is actually hit, or has to lift a heavy pot, or work around hot dryers all day, he thinks there are no problems. Again, I say what a joke!

Please don't tell us that if we don't like it we

should get another job. That is not the solution.

We're doing jobs in health care because we care about the sick, elderly, lonely, etc. Our problems are real and it's up to the WCB to get this across to the employers. After all, doesn't the W in WCB stand for workers?

KIM GALLAHER,
Burnaby

Choice coalition appreciates HEU support

The B.C. Coalition for Abortion Clinics wishes to thank HEU in the most heartfelt manner for the ways in which you have

supported the activities of the coalition and the pro-choice movement.

Your support has been expressed in many ways and we are grateful for them all. But most particularly, we want to thank your members for their strong support as marshals for our events. We very much need this type of support and we also know we can count on the discipline and calmness of union members when they act as part of a marshalling team.

Thank you for your commitment and for demonstrating once again the ways in which the union movement can contribute so effectively to making change.

B.C. COALITION FOR CHOICE ON ABORTION,
Vancouver



What we're up to

People and events around the HEU. If you have news for us — a retirement, an election, a rally, a vote, or whatever — please, let us know.

HEU sponsors delegates to gay, lesbian conference

HEU is sponsoring 10 delegates, two from each region, to attend this fall's Second Pan-Canadian Conference on Lesbian and Gay Rights in Vancouver.

The three-day meeting, from Oct. 9 to 11, will revolve around workshops and group discussions on six theme areas, including topics like AIDS/HIV and the Law, and Mobilizing for Change.

The Provincial Executive has asked locals to inform members who would be interested in attending to submit their applications to the Provincial Office.

Conference organizers says the national gathering, called OutRights/Les Droits

Visibles, has been developed with input from gay men and lesbians from coast to coast. The goal is a conference "to forge alliances and develop strategies to carry the lesbian and gay rights movement into the future."

Bella Maud named as HEU rep on northwest review team

HEU staff representative Bella Maud has been named to represent HEU on a special Ministry of Health team to review funding cuts in the Kitimat - Terrace-Prince Rupert area.

Health minister Elizabeth Cull agreed late in June to ask each of the three major health care unions to appoint a member to the



TALKING EQUALITY: Women's equality minister Penny Priddy received careful attention and some tough questions June 16 when she addressed students at HEU's summer school on her programs to deal with child care, violence against women and pay equity.

team, which will examine the funding crisis in the northwest.

Maud was an HEU activist at Shaughnessy Hospital where she worked as a staffing clerk for a number of years before joining HEU staff in 1989.

Terry Griffin appointed HEU rep-organizer

Terry Griffin, formerly chairperson of HEU's Red Cross local in Vancouver, has been appointed a rep-organizer based in the Provincial Office.

Griffin was a member of the 1992 Bargaining Committee and has been an HEU activist for a number of years.

HEU action prompts benefits for terminally ill

Here's a reminder that the HLRA health and benefit plan has been amended to provide a new provision for terminally ill members.

As a result of the changes, which were won thanks to action by members of HEU's Cancer

Control local, such members will be entitled to receive up to 50 per cent of their group life insurance benefits under certain conditions.

The partial payout of life insurance benefits is meant to help with the heavy costs associated with terminal illness.

Working with Cancer Control management, HEU local members investigated Living Benefits with Vancouver AIDS support groups. The matter was taken to HLRA and the plan amended accordingly, thanks in part to the local's initiative.

Gibsons members support pulp strike pickets

HEU members in the Gibsons district dusted off their picket signs early in July to join striking pulp workers on strike at Port Mellon. By adding a few words to HEU picket signs, they were able to convert them to read "HEU supports CPU strike." The solidarity action won good local press coverage.

Cont. on page 4



CLC DELEGATION: HEU's delegation to the Canadian Labour Congress convention June 8 to 12 in Vancouver participated in important changes to the organization's constitution and leadership.



MESSAGE FOR MIKE: HEU members joined other health care workers and concerned citizens in a demonstration during Prince Rupert's Seafest in June to remind premier Mike Harcourt that the community is opposed to bed closures and layoffs.

Long-term care workers approve new contracts

Solid strike votes and strong support for HEU's job action against the Health Labour Relations Association have helped produce new contracts for the union's long-term care members.

About 3,500 HEU members working in facilities represented by the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association ratified the deal by a 94 per cent margin July 14.

Then 1,100 HEU members working in 21 privately-run facilities represented by B.C. Pricare approved a similar deal by a 92 per cent margin July 24.

Both the CCERA and Pricare contracts provide for a three-year agreement and include special pay adjustments won to bridge the wage gap with the master agreement. Workers will also receive wage increases of 52 cents-an-hour in the first year, 31 cents-an-hour plus one per cent in the second year, and a wage reopener for the third year.

Pay equity increases will equal those won in the HLRA contract.

The determination of long-term care members was the key to winning the new deals, says HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

"Within four weeks of ratifying the master collective agreement, we were able to win tentative agreements both from CCERA and Pricare," said Allevato.

"The high strike votes by our members working under those agreements defeated serious concession demands and won gains equivalent to the master contract in a very short time."

HEU's Bargaining Committee stepped up the pace of talks for a new CCERA agreement even before the HLRA pact was ratified. (HEU's 29,000 members under the HLRA agreement ratified it by

an 85 per cent margin in voting which concluded June 2.)

By June 17, both sides had agreed that mediator Don Munroe should write a report on outstanding issues. That report,

News

released a few days later, was recommended for ratification on June 23.

HEU then turned to talks with Pricare. Once again, Munroe was able to draft a report which provided a recommended basis for settlement.

The union subsequently achieved new contracts including similar improvements for K-Bro Laundry local on Vancouver Island and West Coast General Hospital in Port Alberni.

Bargaining still continues on a number of other fronts. HEU continues to press for bargaining dates to bring the union's Normandy, Willingdon and Kensington locals closer to the provisions of the HLRA master agreement.

A tentative deal was reached July 27 with Hilton Villa in Surrey covering about 100 newly certified HEU members. The deal provides the same settlement recommended by Munroe for CCERA and Pricare. Talks for a first contract at Westshore Laylum in Delta, another new HEU certification, resumed July 30.

Dates have been set to seek new contracts for Columbus Lodge, Windermere Retirement Lodge, Crofton Manor, VS Services Lodge and Vancouver Lodge in Vancouver, Simon Fraser Lodge in Prince George, Pine Grove and Ponderosa Lodge in Kamloops; Crossroads in Kelowna; and Castlevue in Castlegar.

UBC, GVHS members win master agreement deal

Two locals of HEU members who have long demanded to be included under the master collective agreement finally have their wish. The report by mediator Don Munroe which provided a basis for settlement of the master collective agreement with the Health Labour Relations Association left out those and several other locals.

HEU's Provincial Executive authorized renewed job action by 600 UBC local members May 20 and mediator

Vince Ready was brought into the talks. Rotating job action resumed June 5. The next day, HEU's Bargaining Committee announced HLRA had at last agreed to bring UBC under the master.

The 23 members of HEU's GVHS Fire and Security local also faced a struggle to get justice. Management-inspired layoff rumours were countered by a media campaign and those workers won inclusion in the master June 5.



NO BOMBS: HEU members were among almost 120 Vancouverites who turned out May 20 to protest the bombing of the Morgenthaler abortion clinic earlier that week in Toronto.

What we're up to

Cont. from page 3

Three-union action saves GVHS jobs

Quick joint action by HEU, BCNU and HSA helped save the jobs of Greater Victoria Hospital Society fire and security officers threatened by layoff.

GVHS advised the fire and security officers, all members of HEU, that 20 per cent of them would be laid off early in June. The move came just days before the HEU members were to begin talks to bring their local under the HLRA master collective agreement.

When the three unions learned of the action, they sent a joint statement to health minister Elizabeth Cull warning that the fire and security officers were in the front line "handling chronic alcohol and drug abusers as well as psychiatric patients."

The unions warned Cull that any reduction in staff would expose all GVHS workers and patients to increased risk.

HEU members followed up the statement with media interviews underlining their concerns.

GVHS rescinded the layoffs and agreed in subsequent talks to include the local under the master agreement.

Rupert HEU quick to challenge make-up of review team

Prince Rupert hospital administrator Doug Marrie can't make a move without careful HEU scrutiny.

When HEU Prince Rupert vice-chairperson Kim Horbach realized that Marrie hoped to leave the union off an in-

ternal review team investigating funding problems she dashed off a letter setting him straight.

She quoted correspondence between HEU and health minister Elizabeth Cull in which the minister promised that all review teams would include "union personnel." Horbach demanded an early meeting between unions at the hospital and the administration "to implement the proper review team composition."

HEU locals won union representation on the special team organized for the northwest.

Suze Kilgour joins HEU research team

Suze Kilgour, a veteran organizer and researcher in B.C.'s tenants' rights movement, joined HEU's research staff in June.

Kilgour worked from 1983 to 1991 with the Tenants' Rights Action Centre (TRAC) as an advocate, writer and researcher. Before that she trained as a legal assistant and worked for legal services for several years.

In 1991, she was appointed as a founding member of the board of the Plain Language Institute, a provincially-funded body which analyzes government, business and community communications with a view to making them accessible to the average person.

This includes the tough job of making laws clearly understandable to average citizens.

Rolfe returns to HEU after time at WCB

HEU veteran Bill Rolfe returned to the staff full-time in July after completing a one-year leave of absence.

During that time, Rolfe worked at the Workers' Compensation Board as a labour member of the boards of review.

Upon his return, Rolfe was appointed to head the union's disputes resolution department. He also is assisting the UBC and Shaughnessy locals in negotiations with their employer on merger of the two facilities.



HEU members at the CLC convention joined Daryl Bean (right), president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and hundreds of other delegates to condemn the Tory government's failure to make pay equity payments to thousands of women government employees.

Holy Family layoffs spark workload crisis

HEU members at Vancouver's Holy Family Hospital are hoping a promised visit to their facility by health minister Elizabeth Cull will win a reversal of layoff notices for 23 workers, including 17 nursing staff.

Holy Family care aide Kay Taugher won the commitment from Cull during an exchange at HEU's summer school June 16.

While HEU members around B.C. grapple with budget freezes, bed closures and layoffs, Holy Family workers are fighting with a workload crisis caused by sweeping layoffs with no reduction in beds.

The 230-bed long-term care and rehabilitation facility gave its bosses pay increases of 12.5 per cent in 1991. It received a 6.4 per cent funding increase in 1991/1992 and a further 3.39 per cent for 1992/1993. Despite the increases, the hospital projected a \$640,000 deficit on its \$12.6 million budget.

"Holy Family already was one of the most dangerous facilities in the province to work in," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato. "In 1990, more than 30 per cent of our members there filed a WCB or long-term disability claim, twice the rate of other Vancouver hospitals."

"Now the employer is cutting out 23 more people and expecting those who remain to pick up the slack. It's a policy that threatens the

well-being both of the patients and the workers."

HEU members have grieved the layoffs and demanded a full meeting with the facility's board to demand that the layoffs be rescinded. HEU also is seeking a special health ministry review team with union involvement to get to the bottom of the financial crisis.

At the hospital's 45th anniversary celebrations June 15, about 35 HEU members donned placards in silent protest against the layoffs. They also lobbied board members and NDP MLA Bernie Simpson for action to stop the job losses.

But the layoffs have continued and the workload is steadily increasing. Care aides have been told to ration rubber gloves and diapers in an effort to contain costs.

A local meeting July 8 agreed to resist management efforts to spread the extra load among the remaining workers. Dietary staff, for example, are now expected to do the work of a full-time cook who was a victim of the cuts.

Other consequences of the cuts include:

- deterioration of the cleanliness of the facility because of layoffs of maintenance workers;
- speed-up for remaining LPNs and care aides, who already were stretched to the limit; and
- speed-up in the kitchen, where a full-time cook has been eliminated.

Shaughnessy members seek voice in hospital's future

HEU's Shaughnessy local members are making some gains in their campaign to be included in discussions on the future of their Vancouver workplace.

The local learned earlier this year that the Greater Vancouver Hospital District was considering a wide range of options for the facility, including a recommendation to slash the facility to 240 beds from its current level of 420.

In a meeting July 10 with Vancouver NDP MLAs Tom Perry, Ujjal Dosanjh, Glen Clark and Joy MacPhail — and representatives of several others — a joint HEU-BCNU delegation demanded creation of a comprehensive hospital development plan that protects health workers' jobs.

"We're not included in any of the discussions, but we're the first to be thrown out the door," HEU member John McKenzie told the politicians. "Shaughnessy should not be eliminated. If there are changes, if the government is going to move to

community care, consult us at every step and assure us that those being displaced will be hired in the community."

Licensed practical nurse Sarah Drummond warned that LPNs' "jobs are at stake, we are being laid off wholesale. Please reconsider and take another look before you close beds."

"I've worked all my life, I'm a single mother and I'm getting to the age of retiring," said cook Sylvia Hill. "I won't get another job if I'm laid off."

Within days of the meeting, Shaughnessy's administration offered HEU a full briefing on the changes. MLA Tom Perry also promised to intervene with the hospital to investigate the threatened layoffs.

The local's campaign has included submissions to Vancouver City Council, which has supported the union's call for full consultation before any changes are made to Shaughnessy.

The HEU convention deadlines

The deadline for submission of constitutional amendments to the upcoming convention of the HEU was July 7, not the date reported in the last issue of the *Guardian*.

The deadline for submission of resolutions to the convention was Aug. 6.

The last issue of the *Guardian*

carried incorrect dates for convention deadlines. Correct dates, however, were communicated to locals in a letter to secretary-treasurers. We apologize for any confusion arising from the error.

The Wage Policy Conference originally scheduled has been cancelled.

By GEOFF MEGGS

THE wave of bed closures and layoffs now sweeping B.C.'s regional hospital system was anticipated by the provincial government and predicted in the March 26 budget.

Finance minister Glen Clark made much of the stiff spending curbs imposed on other ministries and the funding increases awarded to health, education and social services. But he knew his budget would mean reduced services and lost jobs in many areas.

It is true, as health minister Elizabeth Cull has pointed out, that B.C.'s health spending increases were the largest in Canada. Yet in the fine print of the Budget Briefing Package, the government acknowledged that the funds allocated to hospital spending would not be enough to maintain existing services.

Although overall health spending was increased by 7.4 per cent, both the Medical Services Plan, which covers payments to doctors, and the Hospital Care Division, which funds hospitals, were offered only 5 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively.

The money saved was shifted to community care. Why? Because "this kind of shift has been strongly endorsed by the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs and also reflects the priorities for health care that have been set by the present government."

"Hospitals will be receiving less funding than they desire," said budget background papers. "As a



WORRIED HEALTH WORKERS Eleanor Dueck (left) and Kay Taugher, of Holy Family local, press health minister Elizabeth Cull for a meeting about layoffs at their Vancouver facility.

Victoria's plan

Finance minister Glen Clark predicted layoffs, closures

result, hospitals may have to close beds."

And what of the workers? The background papers stated bluntly that "there will be staff displacement from the hospitals affected and not all of the staff will be able to be hired on the community side due to different skill requirements."

The government said blandly "it is planned that a labour adjustment strategy will be developed over the next few months."

In effect, the government committed itself to fundamental changes proposed by the Royal Commission almost nine months before its consultative process was to submit an action plan on the

commission to cabinet. Saving money — not quality health care — was the motive.

The result has been unemployment for hundreds of health care workers and political upheaval in northern communities.

By early June, northern NDP MLAs were telling Clark and Cull there was big trouble in their home towns. Communities were organizing and B.C.'s three major health unions were outspoken in their criticism of the "labour adjustment strategy" that never existed.

The New Democrats now are trying some damage control. Deputy health minister Krycia Strawczynski was dismissed and Cull convinced Peter Cameron, executive director of the Health Sciences Association, to become an assistant deputy minister with a mandate to develop the labour adjustment strategy.

Both Cull and Clark have hailed Cameron's July 10 appointment as proof of the government's determination to bring the crisis under control.

Clark candidly admits that his financial concerns outstripped the health ministry's policy process. In other words, he imposed the Royal Commission recommendations before any serious consultation had occurred. But the March 26 plan outlined in the budget remains in place.

Will he slow down, provide the funds necessary to stabilize communities facing cuts, allow consultation and insist on a properly-funded labour strategy? If not, Cull and Cameron face an unenviable task.

LOOK BACK

'200 women, two toilets'

We need your help to save the stories of HEU pioneers

By TRISH WEBB

The early days of HEU — when the foundations were laid for what is now one of B.C.'s largest unions — are in danger of being forgotten forever.

Union founders Alec Paterson and Bill Black passed away years ago. Many of the women and men who fought hard to stop the abuses suffered by health care workers in the 1940s and 1950s are also gone. Their stories have died with them.

Acting on a HEU convention resolution, the Provincial Executive began to gather the threads of HEU's history. But what seemed like a straightforward job began to turn into a detective story. There have been some exciting discoveries and some terrible setbacks.

I spent the month of June searching out elderly people and old documents. I met Joan Brimacombe who worked in the laundry at VGH in 1935. She noticed a big change in the way workers were treated after the union was formed.

"Before the union we worked 10 hours a day, and if they felt like giving us half a day off we got it," she said. "If they didn't feel like it, well

to heck with you, you didn't get it."

Working conditions improved, too, and Brimacombe had a hand in making sure they did.

"The first time I managed to go to a union meeting — and it wasn't easy because I had young kids at home — but the first time I got right up in the union meeting and I told them about the women's lavatories," Joan said.

"There might have been 150 or 200 women that worked in the main building, and they had one bathroom in the basement with two lavatories and one washbasin.

"When I told them at the union meeting those two — Alec and Bill Black — had the nerve to tell me I was lying."

Brimacombe convinced the two men to come and look for themselves. The next day they showed up at the women's washrooms and Joan gave them a tour.

"They took one look at that and went right upstairs and reported it to the administrator. And he accused them of lying! So Alec said 'come downstairs and have a look for yourself.'

"He came downstairs, he didn't have much choice. He couldn't believe his eyes. He said, 'I can't do anything about that today, but I guarantee that before this year is out, the women will have a proper place in this building.'

"The conditions were horrible until we got a union. It took the union to mend it," she said.

UNION ACTIVIST

Joan Brimacombe (centre) with friends at VGH in the 1940s: managers accused them of lying about conditions.



During the last 50 years the union has grown from a few hundred to almost 35,000 members.

Minute books and memories hint at the events that led a group of "lay workers" at Vancouver General Hospital to build a union that would fight for dignity, decent wages and safe working conditions for health care workers throughout the province.

Government archives, union archives, UBC special collections, newspaper clippings, hospital records, personal memories, *Guardians*, old photographs, organizing brochures, minute books — these are the only sources of information

about HEU's early years. Any help you can give to verify facts or provide personal anecdotes will be appreciated.

Right now I am searching for information about organizing drives outside the Lower Mainland. Anyone with photographs of hospitals at the time they were organized, stories about key players, job actions, and first contract struggles is urged to contact me at Provincial Office.

• Vancouver journalist Trish Webb is researching and writing a history of the HEU. Contact her at 734-3431 if you have memories, pictures or documents from our union's past.

ON THE JOB

She handles the retro!

Payroll clerk does key job

It's been a busy summer for payroll clerks across the province like Linda Layton, of Quesnel's G.R. Baker Hospital.

New wage rates from the three contract settlements with the health care unions have to be entered, pay equity adjustments made, and retro-active pay calculated.

At some hospitals with computerized payroll systems, the calculations have to be made manually.

Layton has just finished keying in the new HLRA rates for HEU members on her B.C. Info Health software. So the pay boosts won in the union's long struggle for a fair settlement will be on members' cheques for the last payroll in July. Then she'll turn to calculating retro pay for HEU members, which she hopes to get done as soon as possible.

The employer doesn't provide any additional help for her to enter rate changes and

STEPHEN HOWARD PHOTO



QUESNEL MEMBER Linda Layton enjoys her work as a payroll clerk and finds time (above) to leaflet the parade route during Billy Barker Days to protest funding cuts.

calculate back pay. She has to let other parts of her job slide.

A resident of Lillooet for 36 years, Layton, her husband and two teenage daughters moved to Quesnel four years ago. With three years of CGA training by correspondence and seven years of accounting and payroll experience at a Lillooet forest products company, she quickly applied for a job at G.R. Baker.

For Layton, on the job also means being active in the

union. She was elected secretary-treasurer of the Quesnel local in January, and took an active role in job action and essential services hearings. Now she's involved in the campaign to fight bed closures and layoffs in northern communities.

She describes this as a good learning experience. "If you're going to be in a union, you have to get involved so you can have your say and be part of change."

AFTER THE SHIFT

Accordion master Gerry Olsen

HEU member's musical gift

Ever since the days of his Stuart Island childhood, when fishermen, loggers and their families crowded the community hall for a weekend dance, Gerry Olsen has loved the accordion.

His father, his mother and two uncles could really make the instrument perform and their skills were in demand in their little Gulf Island community near the Yuclataw Rapids.

But it wasn't until his late teens — in 1953, to be exact — that Olsen himself picked up an accordion and found he could squeeze out a tune.

Today, Gerry Olsen is a maintenance worker (and secretary-treasurer of his HEU local) during his working day at Vancouver's Central City Mission, an intermediate care and alcohol rehabilitation facility in Gastown.

But after the shift, he's a champion accordion player who has carried off several first place trophies at Kimberley's internationally-renowned accordion competitions.

"Performing is pretty tense," Olsen says, "but the most enjoyment I get out of playing is sitting in a room full of accor-

GEOFF MEGGS PHOTO



ARMLOAD OF PRIZES: Gerry Olsen, of Central City Mission local, plays accordion like a champion.

dion players. We just pick up and play for each other — a shared joy."

His first encounter with the instrument was so successful his mother insisted he take lessons. The family had moved to the Lower Mainland by then and Vancouver boasted many teachers.

"It was the Golden Age of accordions," Olsen recalls, when famous accordion players were the lead performers on the Ed Sullivan show. During the next 20 years, Olsen perfected his skills in private, seldom performing.

But when a friend came back from Kimberley with a trophy in 1984, Olsen decided to take up the challenge. In five trips to

the contest, he won three first-place trophies and two seconds.

The competition, which draws entrants from all over North America and parts of Europe, is a deadly serious affair. Five judges evaluate: three monitor technique, phrasing and stage presence, while two dancers assess what it's like to dance to.

Accordion practice consumed several hours every day at peak periods until bursitis flared up in a shoulder earlier this year.

"The bursitis has hurt my playing, but gave me the time to get involved in the union," Olsen says with a laugh, as he launches into a Bach sonata.

editor's notebook

By GEOFF MEGGS



Your *Guardian* judged best of its class

IT IS just two years since the *Guardian* Editorial Committee sat down to undertake an ambitious redesign of HEU's flagship publication. Your committee wanted a

more membership-oriented paper.

That meant more frequent publication, more news from the locals and more opportunities for members to speak their minds. We switched to a more environmentally-friendly format and began mailing the paper to every HEU member.

The change has been challenging, but HEU membership response was positive.

Last month, the Canadian Association of Labour Media added its vote of approval by naming the *Guardian* the best provincial labour publication in Canada.

In a national competition judged by *Vancouver Sun* labour columnist Valerie Casselton, the *Guardian* took the prize for best overall publication, excellence in news coverage and excellence in layout and design.

Those responsible for the news coverage are pretty easy to recognize by their names at top of major stories.

But the credit for the paper's layout and design belongs to two people whose names are buried on the paper's masthead. One is designer Kris Klaasen, who converted your Editorial Committee's needs into an exciting design.

The other is Carol Bjarnason, the HEU staff member who produces every page of the paper on a desktop computer to a professional standard seldom found outside a commercial printshop. Thanks to both of them.

As for the credit for overall excellence, that clearly belongs to you, the members of HEU, whose struggles, victories, aspirations and concerns make for such interesting journalism.



Mailing list the target of a major overhaul

That's not to say we've produced a perfect publication. Readers are angry and frustrated by problems with our mailing list and they have every right to be.

HEU's mailing list is based on lists provided every six months by individual employers. They often are out-of-date before they arrive. Because some HEU members are employed at more than one facility, they may appear more than once — and get more than one paper!

The list is now loaded on HEU's computer system and development of programs to eliminate these problems is a top priority.

You can help: tell us when you move; tell us if you are getting more than one paper (or no paper); urge your employer to provide up-to-date and accurate information.

The result will be better service and less wasted paper.

Labour



Nova Scotia rallies for Westray families

At 5:18 in the morning on May 9, a massive explosion blew through the Westray mine near Plymouth, Nova Scotia, about 150 miles east of Halifax, with a roar that would be heard a kilometre away.

Its awful force turned the mine tunnel into a giant gun barrel with the coal dust as the gunpowder. It would blow holes through the roof of the minehead two kilometres away, smash every heavy steel ventilation outlet, throw around heavy tractors and create massive cave-ins.

In the southwest area of the mine where 11 miners were working, huge amounts of lethal carbon monoxide and methane poured into the tunnels, along with a huge coal-dust fireball, sucking out all the oxygen in the air.

The miners were killed instantly. One man would be found by rescuers two days later with his hands still gripping the steering wheel of his vehicle.

The 11 men whose bodies were recovered in that part of the mine never even had a chance to reach for their filtration masks. The other 15 who died in the blast, 11 of whom are still in the mine, probably met similar sudden deaths.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Labour has set up the Westray Disaster Memorial Education Fund. It will be for the children's training or education beyond public school.

Contributions may be sent to: The Westray Disaster Memorial Education Fund, 3700 Kempt Road, Suite 212, Halifax, N.S., B3K 4X8. For more information: (902) 454-6735.

The names of the Westray dead are: John Bates, 56; Larry Bell, 25; Bennie Benoit, 42; Wayne Conway, 38; Ferris Dwan, 35; Adonis Dolimont, 36; Robert Doyle, 22; Remi Drolet, 38; Roy Feltmate, 33; Robert Fraser, 29; Myles Gillis, 32; John Halloran, 33; Randolph House, 27; Trevor Jahn, 35; Laurence James, 34; Eugene Johnson, 33; Stephen Lilley, 40; Glenn Martin, 36; Michael MacKay, 38; Angus MacNeil, 39; Harry McCallum, 41; Eric McIsaac, 38; George Munroe, 38; Danny Poplar, 39; Romeo Short, 35; Peter Vickers, 38.

Bank workers beat the Commerce

They were on strike for almost five months, but in the end, 22 women workers at the Powell River branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce won a contract that gave them almost everything they were asking for.

The bank workers' winter-long struggle was about fairness and basic rights. Here's what the women won in their new contract:

- casual recall based on seniority;
- wage increases of 4.8 and 3 per cent; and

- language to protect against sexual harassment.

When the strike first started last November, things looked tough for the women. The bank brought in scabs from Vancouver, and hired a private detective to keep an eye on the picket line.

The two sides seemed unevenly matched. Once again, a small band of women were up against one of the country's richest corporations. But the strikers had community support on their side. Millions of

dollars were transferred to other financial institutions by individuals and businesses.

The bank returned to the bargaining table when the women's union, the B.C. Government Employees, began making plans for a province-wide boycott of the bank.

The first demonstration was planned for April 14 at the bank's regional office in Vancouver, but on April 13, the bank agreed to a new contract.

BCGEU The Provincial/CALM

New Brunswick CUPE workers win fight to protect contract

A bold, province-wide strike by 20,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees in New Brunswick has forced the McKenna government to honour contracts broken last year in the name of restraint.

All wage increases and benefits contained in the contracts will be paid as negotiated. In return, the CUPE members agreed to accept

modified restraint measures once the contracts expire.

It took an unprecedented display of solidarity by CUPE members across the province, along with the backing of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, to change the government's mind.

The government employees first walked out June 1, vowing not to return until their contracts were

honoured. That walkout was cut short after nine hours when a tentative agreement was signed.

However, the agreement stopped short of honouring contracts in full, and the strike resumed three days later when CUPE members across the province overwhelmingly rejected the deal.

Schools were shut down, liquor stores were closed, municipal services were interrupted and activities at hospitals and nursing homes were restricted to essential services.

Members of several other unions walked out in sympathy, including workers at N.B. Coal and NBTel, and PSAC members in the main federal building in Saint John.

After four days of strikes, then eight days of mediation, including two face-to-face meetings between premier Frank McKenna and CUPE president Judy Darcy, a settlement was reached, and then ratified by the members.

The showdown was viewed by many as the first real display of opposition to the McKenna government since it swept to power by winning every seat in the legislature five years ago.

Darcy warned that "governments all across Canada should realize that legislated controls inevitably result in conflict." She added "The successful outcome of this dispute shows that free collective bargaining must be allowed to work, even in the midst of a recession."

CUPE The Leader/CALM



RUNNING DOWN A PREMIER: New Brunswick premier Frank McKenna had to run a gauntlet of angry CUPE strikers on his way to work in Fredericton in June when he tried to rip up public sector contracts. A province-wide public sector strike including hospital workers forced him to back down and honour his commitments.

NY hospital pact saves jobs

New York's militant local 1199 of the Drug, Hospital and Health Care Employees' Union has won a breakthrough 40-month contract that virtually guarantees 65,000 workers a job for the life of the deal.

The union, which fought a tough strike against the same employers just three years ago, also won pay raises of 12 per cent over three years and improved benefits.

Under the pact, a housekeeper's salary will rise to an average U.S. \$23,640 from \$21,426. A nursing attendant's salary will rise to \$24,247 from \$22,635.

Union president Dennis Rivera said the agreement marked a "historic moment" for his members, who now will have first right to job openings at any of 55 hospitals covered by the contract.

While waiting for an opening, laid off workers will have improved unemployment benefits or retraining.

To tighten the system, no hospital seeking to fill a vacancy will be allowed to do so without first offering the job to those already laid off.

The union also agreed to participate in joint committees with employers to resolve major grievances and to improve patient care.

From Prince Rupert to the Okanagan, HEU members are organizing in the community to stop bed closures, layoffs

Closing beds

8



STEPHEN HOWARD PHOTO

By STEPHEN HOWARD

HEU and local union activists are leading the fight against massive bed closures, layoffs and cuts to vital health care services that are being implemented in many B.C. communities.

In the last 10 months, 625 beds have been closed and 566 health care workers laid off across the province, with provincial government funding cuts to blame for most of the damage. Since April 1 alone, 363 beds have been closed and 313 workers laid off.

While government funding boosts for hospitals averaged 3.4 per cent province-wide this year, there were widespread differences in what individual facilities received as Victoria used the budget process to implement recommendations of the Royal Commission. Communities in the North were hardest hit as all but three of about 30 northern hospitals received a zero per cent increase. Facilities in the Okanagan outside Kelowna and Penticton, and in the Kootenays were also hit hard, receiving increases between zero and one per cent.

The impact of the cuts on northern communities like Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace and Kitimat has been severe.

HEU responded quickly to the funding crisis in the North. HEU activists joined BCNU and HSA members to form community-based health care action committees in many northern communities to educate the public about the cuts, organize community opposition through peti-

FACING THE COMMUNITY: The funding crisis in Prince Rupert, Terrace and Kitimat brought health minister Elizabeth Cull to Terrace to meet local coalition representatives, including HEU's Cindy Russell (centre), from Kitimat, and Elaine Pigeau (right), of Terrace.

tion campaigns, and press the government for fair funding.

HEU's Provincial Executive also approved a plan to provide resources to local campaigns and to coordinate a provincial fightback strategy with HSA and BCNU.

The local committees are demanding that health minister Elizabeth Cull hold special reviews for northern hospitals to investigate the funding crisis. Until the reviews are complete, the committees want Cull to restore services, reopen closed beds and freeze the layoffs.

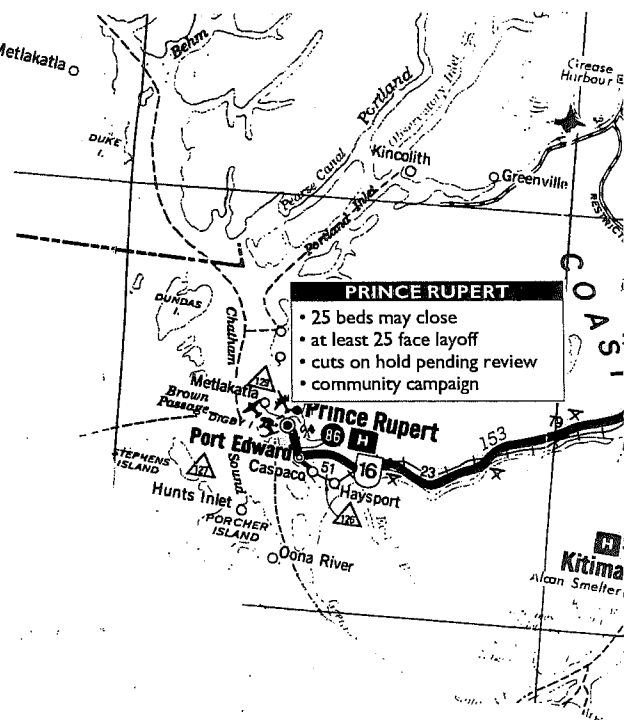
The community-based campaigns are gaining real momentum. Intense political pressure from northwestern B.C. residents has already forced Cull to appoint a special review for hospitals in Kitimat, Prince Rupert and Terrace.

The northwest review team includes a representative from each of the three health care unions, and should begin its investigation of the funding crisis faced by the three-area hospitals shortly.

Recently, about 40 health care and community activists from almost every town between Prince George and Prince Rupert held a special strategy session July 13 in Terrace. They adopted a new action plan to keep up political pressure for fair hospital funding and to continue building community support across the North.

Also on July 13, the Prince George action committee convinced city council to support the campaign for fair funding. After hearing a special joint presentation from local representatives of HEU, BCNU and HSA about the crisis situation at Prince George Regional Hospital, where 61 beds were closed and 100 care givers laid off, council voted to demand a special review of hospital funding. The mayor promised to personally deliver council's message to health minister Cull.

When the new NDP government unveiled its first budget March 26, the 5.5 per cent increase for hospital funding seemed healthy. But behind



the scenes, important political decisions about allocating the increase had already been made as early as December by government officials. Millions were diverted to fund community services, cancer research and treatment and other programs. What was left over — 3.4 per cent — wasn't enough to maintain the same level of services at all facilities, the minister said. Her goal was to treat hospitals "fairly, not equitably."

It wasn't until mid-April, while HEU was locked in battle with the NDP and health employers for a fair contract settlement, that the first warning signs of the funding crisis emerged. When hospitals received notice of their budget allocations for 1992/93, the alarm bells went off.

Northern hospital administrators began calculating the damage from Cull's version of fairness: Prince George Regional, a \$4.7 million deficit; \$500,000 deficits at hospitals in Kitimat, Terrace, and Williams Lake; close to \$1 million in Prince Rupert; and about a \$2 million shortfall in Vernon, just to name a few.

Then the axes fell. Service cuts, bed closures and layoffs were approved by hospital boards to meet the Ministry of Health's May 29 deadline for submitting balanced budgets.

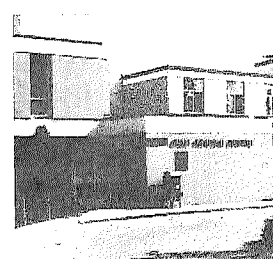
Northwest residents were the first to voice their anger about the bed closures, layoffs and service cuts. More than 500 people rallied for fair hospital funding in Terrace May 22. A week later 400 people took part in a similar protest in Prince Rupert.

Local action committees in these two communities and Kitimat launched successful petition campaigns, collecting more than 25,000 signatures before the end of June.

Northwest residents have deep concerns about the cuts — shared by all northern communities — that are based on historic social and economic disparities between the North and the Lower Mainland.

HEAVY CUTS face Terrace Mills Memorial Hospital unless Victoria provides more funds.

GEOFF MEGGS PHOTO



The damage so far:

Massive bed closures and layoffs in the last 10 months mean many B.C. communities have lost vital health care services which could cause a loss of public confidence in the big changes for the health care system being considered by health minister Elizabeth Cull. Here are the details:

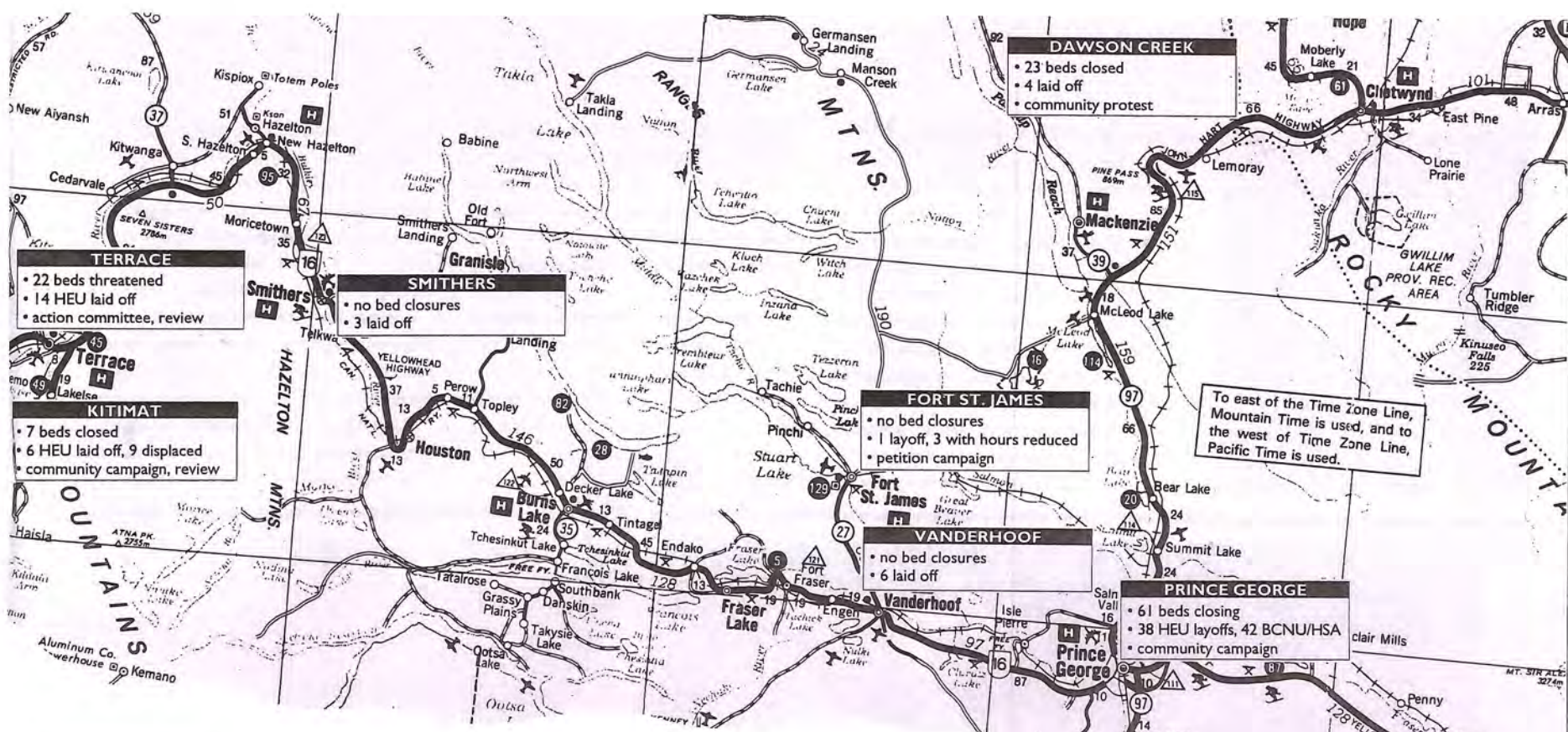
• **625 BEDS CLOSED** since October 1991 made up of 363 beds closed by government funding cuts since April 1, and 262 beds closed from restructuring recommended by Royal Commission on Health Care.

• **566 LAYOFFS** of HEU, HSA, and BCNU members, with 313 workers laid off since April 1 because of funding cuts, and 253 workers laid off due to restructuring.

Statistics compiled by HEU, HSA and BCNU

TAKING THE MESSAGE TO THE TOP: Quesnel health care activists Linda Layton (left) of HEU and BCNU's Laura Lalande (centre) made sure that premier Harcourt heard firsthand about the severe impact of NDP funding cuts on the North when Harcourt was in town to open a local festival in July.





Geoff Meggs photo



Geoff Meggs photo

FACING THE MUSIC: NDP Terrace-Kitimat MLA Helmut Giesbrecht.

They're worried the bed closures and service cuts will have a domino effect on care in their communities. They fear losing the specialized care services that allow them to be treated closer to home in their own communities. If these services also disappear, northern residents will have to travel to Vancouver at great personal expense and disruption to receive necessary medical care.

Other fightback campaigns are under way across the North. The Prince George action committee has created a wave of public anger and is mounting last minute pressure to force Cull to announce a special review for their hospital before the end of July.

In Vernon, the local Committee to Save Our Hospital held a public forum June 22, while the Quesnel campaign delivered a strong message to premier Harcourt when he was on hand to open the local Billy Barker Days festivities July 18.

Even small communities have been active. In Fort St. James, about a two-hour drive north of Prince George, more than 1,000 residents signed a petition demanding fair funding for their health care facility.

Cull was quick to single out bad administrators as the cause of the problems. Northern activists agreed that bad administrators are a problem in all facilities across the province. But they told Cull that government cuts, not bad bosses, are responsible for the crisis. Besides, they demanded to know, if bad administrators are to blame, then why hasn't Cull fired them?

The government tried to play up the increased funding to community-based services to deflect heat about the cuts. But this was shot down by local media, and even by an NDP MLA. In a

stinging editorial, a Terrace newspaper branded the money juggling as "voodoo at work," while MLA Helmut Giesbrecht (NDP-Skeena) called his government's action "a shell game."

WHAT ACTION ARE WE TAKING?

HEU's Provincial Executive has approved an action plan to fight bed closures and layoffs around the province and to make sure the public has a voice in the massive Royal Commission health care changes being considered by the government.

Here are the goals of the campaign:

- involve HEU members in the fight to maintain vital health care services and jobs for their communities;
- increase public awareness about the cuts and the massive changes in health care now being considered;
- form coalitions with community groups to fight the cutbacks and to ensure that community health care needs are met by a changing, "closer to home" health care system;
- lobby politicians about the impact of the cuts, the need for proper planning before any changes are made, and for commitment to retraining and job security for existing health care workers affected by the changes.

And here are some of the resources HEU is putting into action:

- special organizers to provide hands-on help for local campaigns;
- communications support for local advertising and media campaigns, and leaflets, petitions, and letters;
- taking local members off the job for local campaign work;
- stepped-up research on the cuts and Royal Commission recommendations;
- a province-wide public opinion poll and a provincial conference being organized with BCNU and HSA.

"Where do we go from here?"

AN EXCERPT FROM BOB WHITE'S
ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

THE power structure in our society, including many editors of major newspapers, will rant and rave that unless labour accepts the corporate Tory competitive free trade agenda that we are living in the past, that we want to protect the status quo. This is absolute nonsense. No

other movement has advocated so much progressive change.

No other movement has contributed so much to change, whether it be collective bargaining where we build a base for many of our social programs, or whether it be joining together in the political struggle to make this a better country.

It is not living in the past to advocate trade and economic relationships dealing with important sectors

of economy which would improve the living standards of workers in other countries while at the same time not result in hundreds of thousands of Canadian families going through the struggles of unemployment.

It is not living in the past to advocate that universal medicare is a fundamental right in our society and that we will fight like hell to make it better and against anyone political party who

advocates policies that start to dismantle it.

It is not living in the past to say that we want and need a well educated work force and the responsibility for a lot of those costs belong with the employers.

It is not living in the past to call for a full employment policy because it goes hand in hand with a modern, productive society.

It is not living in the past to advocate universal child care in order that children can grow and develop

10



BUILDING A BETTER MOVEMENT

WHO CAN save Canada's health care system from funding cuts, privatization and the impact of free trade?

Three thousand Canadian trade unionists gathered for the Canadian Labour Congress convention in Vancouver June 9 answered "we can do it. We can do that and more."

Among them were 40 HEU delegates from across B.C. who played their part in what became a turning point convention for Canada's labour movement. When the delegates adjourned June 13, they had transformed the Congress with fundamental changes which included:

- changes in the CLC constitution to ensure that all provinces and large unions are represented in an executive whose top officers are elected in the most democratic possible fashion;
- election of a new leadership – including one vice-president opposed by many of labour's establishment figures – committed to a new direction for the Congress; and
- adoption of an action plan that clearly links labour with broad community coalitions and the New Democratic Party in a campaign to save a united, prosperous Canada.

The economic and political chaos engulfing the country "is not happen-ing by accident," newly elected president Bob White, former president of the Canadian Autoworkers, told the convention.

"The vast majority of what has taken place is the direct result of a Tory/corporate agenda that uses trade and monetary policies to deliberately reshape our

country, economically, socially and politically." This corporate agenda, which includes free trade, is directed by multinational corporations determined to have more freedom for themselves.

They lecture governments about the danger of deficits and need to cut public services, White said. They are the "great financial wizards" like the leaders of General Motors, who lost over \$4 billion in 1991 at a cost of thousands of jobs.

During the 1980s, the international business community got what it wanted, White said, and "for large numbers of people, the effect has been disastrous."

He called for a national war on unemployment and poverty, linked with policies on employment equity, equality and child care.

"Our partners are the NDP, the anti-poverty groups, the native organizations, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the women's movement, social action groups in churches, the Action Canada Network and workers in other countries."

Those different elements of the new movement labour is helping to build were evident on the floor of the convention.

They were evident in the debate on the Congress' constitution when delegates agreed with delegates from the People of Colour Caucus that they should be allowed to elect two members to the executive council, not one as proposed.

They were evident in the long and emotional

SHOCK OF VICTORY was obvious on the face of Jean-Claude Parrot (right), president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, when his upset election as vice-president was announced. Above, left to right, newly-elected CLC president Bob White with vice-president Nancy Riche, secretary-treasurer Dick Martin and Parrot.



debate on women's issues, in which delegates voted to campaign inside and outside the labour movement for an end to violence against women.

They were evident above all in the nearly unanimous decision to demand an end to the Free Trade Agreement.

Opposition to free trade is just one aspect of a sweeping economic alternative program the Congress will undertake as part of a series of national political campaigns. The three main elements of the plan include:

- national action to force Ottawa to tear up the Free Trade Agreement and to implement an alternative economic program of full employment;
- a national campaign for the defense and improvement of medicare;
- more pressure to abolish the Goods and Services Tax in favour of a fair taxation program; and
- national action to defend public services.

"This plan is the culmination of all our work," CLC vice-president Nancy Riche told delegates.

by GEOFF MEGGS

properly and receive the proper care while their parents participate in the work force.

Do you know what is really living in the past? What is really turning the clock back?

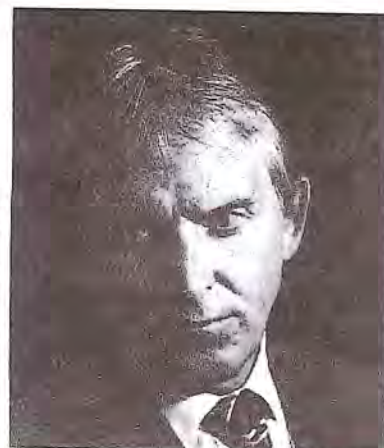
It is a corporate government agenda that takes us back to a dog-eat-dog survival of the fittest society, where individuals are encouraged to be only concerned about themselves, where political power is concentrated in fewer hands and where democratic institu-

tions like the labour movement, and important social programs, are constantly under attack.

Sisters and brothers, we should have no hesitation in articulating an agenda on behalf of a majority of people, against an agenda that ultimately benefits the selective few.

We don't want an economic agenda entrenched in our constitution that is similar to the economic agenda under Canada, U.S. free trade.

We will be facing many challenges ahead, both on the national and international scene, but with the structural changes approved by this convention, with the newly elected leadership, with the activists all across the country, and with our continuing commitment to solidarity, and to the cause of social and economic justice — we can meet those challenges and truly make this country, and with others, make this world a better place for working people and their families.



DAVID HARTMAN PHOTO



GEOFF MEGGS PHOTO

PEOPLE OF COLOUR will elect two to the CLC's top body.

"There can be no greater ambition for workers than to try to save our country. If it's not us working with our coalition partners and the NDP, then who will do it?"

Jean-Claude Parrot, president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, recalled the many conventions when delegates had demanded such an action program.

"Now the leadership is coming with an action plan, a program that demands a commitment to organize not only in the local unions, but also in the community.

"Campaigns like the one on medicare should not end on June 18. We should make a commitment to keep it an issue until the next election."

But the issue of who would be best to implement the new program divided the convention. Although White easily defeated his only opponent, three candidates fought it out for the two vacant vice-presidencies: incumbent Nancy Riche, Parrot and Guy Cousineau, of the Quebec Federation of Labour.

Cousineau, a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, was nominated by the QFL to fill a spot traditionally reserved for someone from Quebec.

But when the ballots were counted, it was clear the delegates had rejected tradition to elect Parrot with 1,460 votes to Cousineau's 1,260.

In an emotional address after the election, QFL president Fernand Daoust termed Cousineau's defeat the betrayal of a "sacred pact" between the Canadian and Quebec labour movements. "We are disappointed, we are humiliated, I cannot hide this," Daoust said.

Within days, the QFL formally withdrew from the Congress, leaving the new CLC leaders the task of negotiating a new relationship with the Quebec labour movement.

"We have understood the right of Quebec to self-determination," White told delegates, "and we did not let the corporations divide us. We must find ways to work with Fern Daoust and the QFL in 1992 and beyond."

What does the convention mean to health care workers in B.C.?

Above all, it means a much better chance to defend medicare — and the jobs that go with it — with the backing of a committed, action-oriented labour congress.

During the convention, HEU met

with health workers from Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario to discuss plans for joint action.

Everywhere the story is the same — a workload crisis compounded by funding cuts, bed closures and layoffs.

Unlike HEU, which is able to strike in support of bargaining demands, most provincial health unions must submit to endless rounds of binding arbitration to win even modest gains.

HEU will be working with the CUPE during the coming months to consolidate these links to step up the national fight to save the health care system.

A major target must be the Tory government, which has undercut provincial funding by slashing its transfer payments. The federal election may be the next battleground.

The election of White to replace outgoing president Shirley Carr has already sparked a vicious attack from Canada's top business leaders, who fear the impact of labour's new energy. The election of Parrot was proof of the new democracy in the labour movement and the determination of rank-and-file delegates to use it.

Perhaps most important, the convention settled the long-standing debate in the labour movement about the need to work with community coalitions.

HEU had answered that question long ago and HEU members are taking leading roles in community coalitions organized around the province to oppose bed closures and layoffs.

The CLC convention opens the door to coalition politics on a provincial and national scale to defend and expand our medicare system.

3,000 workers vote to reshape Canada's labour movement



QUEBEC CONTENDER Guy Cousineau (left) was invited to address HEU delegates as they assessed how they intended to vote in the convention's key election.

Tight money policy will stay – Cull

Health minister Elizabeth Cull faced some tough questioning from HEU members at summer school and responded with a warning that tough budgets will continue to be a fact of life.

"I understand your frustration, and this is felt in cabinet," Cull said in response to HEU Provincial Executive member Tom Knowles, who said budget cutbacks are undermining workers' pride.

"I don't see a bigger increase for health next year," she warned, but before the next budget, Cull promised to consult with HEU and

other affected groups before budget allocations are made, something that didn't happen before this year's budget.

In response to questions from members from the Holy Family, Vernon and northern B.C. locals who are dealing with layoffs and bed closures, Cull promised to visit and find out more about the reasons behind the cutbacks.

The minister said she wants to know how a five per cent budget shortfall can lead to closure of 30 per cent of beds. "I think some games are being played," she added.

When member Olga Castrucci of Vancouver General spoke about her frustration with high management salaries and with hospitals' refusals to deal with the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs' call to use licensed practical nurses, Cull called the salaries "obscene" and said, "There are times in the last few months when I would have liked to fire HLRA."

Before taking questions, Cull delivered a philosophical speech about the problems she and the NDP government face.

"Some have criticized me

for moving too fast, others have criticized me for being too slow. There's probably some truth in both criticisms," she said.

"We're going to make some mistakes. We probably have made some mistakes."

Although she won't be able to do everything she or HEU wants, Cull said she is sure her government can do much better than previous governments.

"I think we will be able to look back in pride at what the government has done to make progressive change in health care."



HEALTH MINISTER Elizabeth Cull took tough questions at HEU's summer school.



NO RACISM HERE, IS THERE?

An evening-long theatrical presentation at HEU's summer school drew students into an exploration of racism – and they found it everywhere. Actors (left to right, above) Sophie Merasty, Stephen Hill, Julie Salverson and Celeste Insell illustrate the pushes and pulls of racism and (right) the denial of those who can't see others' pain.



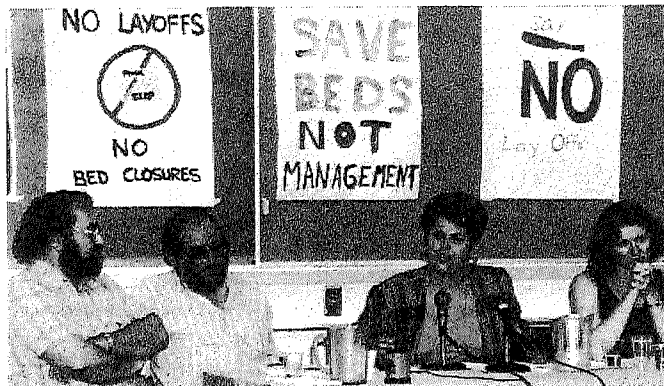
Finding our friends

Only coalitions can win labour's goals, says panel

Faced with governments and big business imposing a corporate agenda on Canada, labour must work with community groups to advance an alternate vision for Canada.

Unions and community groups are already working together through the Action Canada Network and on individual issues, panelists told an HEU summer school session on labour's agenda for change.

"We must now put forward the vision of the soci-



HOW CAN UNIONS DO IT? With coalition-building, answered four panelists at HEU's summer school forum June 19. From left to right, Wayne Bradley, Mike Lebowitz, CUPE president Judy Darcy, Ontario Daycare Coalition director Kerry McQuaig and HEU's Carmela Allevato.

ety we want," said Wayne Bradley of the Campbell River and District Labour Council, who warned that failure to do so will open the door to right-wingers like Preston Manning and

the Reform Party. Trade unionists and community groups can unite around single issues, he added.

Along with Canadian Union of Public Employees president Judy Darcy, Si-

mon Fraser University economics professor Michael Leibowitz and Ontario child care advocate Kerry McQuaig, Bradley told of his experiences fighting the corporate agenda.

Darcy spoke after helping New Brunswick CUPE members conclude an agreement with the Liberal provincial government that triggered strikes when it tried to tear up negotiated contracts with CUPE workers.

"This is an important signal to governments across Canada that if they focus on deficits and attack free collective bargaining, they will face a fight," Darcy said.

Leibowitz, who analyzed the first budget from B.C.'s NDP government, said the budget contained good measures such as child care spending, but it did not contain adequate increases

for many areas, including social programs.

"In order to satisfy capital, the needs of people were given a back seat to an arbitrary deficit figure," Leibowitz said, adding that this means the NDP government is submitting to the corporate agenda.

Corporations are looking for governments to suppress wages and environmental standards, Leibowitz said, resulting in a downward spiral that will benefit no one but the corporations and the rich.

McQuaig said two years of experience with the NDP government in Ontario shows that pressure and lobbying are necessary to get action. The government is moving ahead on child care programs because child care advocates are politically active.

Ending violence against women

Taking Action

CLAIRE KUJUNDZIC ILLUSTRATION

A new union guide sets out ways we can help end violence in the home.

Taking Action: A Union Guide to Ending Violence Against Women is a joint publication of the Women's Research Centre and the B.C. Federation of Labour, written by Debra Prieur and Mary Rowles. Copies are available from the federation.

Violence against women is pervasive in our society. A new booklet published by the Women's Research Centre and the B.C. Federation of Labour suggests union strategies for dealing with violence in the workplace, sexual assault, harassment and child abuse. Following is an excerpt:

MOST couples quarrel. Some may shout insults at each other or throw things. Wife assault is something different.

In wife assault, the central issue is power and control. In a battering relationship, the husband uses physical or sexual violence, or psychological abuse to control his wife's behaviour. And wife assault is a crime.

Each year, one in eight Canadian women is battered by her legal or common-law husband. While some kinds of abuse are more dangerous than others, any form of assault or abuse is serious and needs to be taken seriously.

We have to abandon the attitude that it's none of our business. Violence against women in relationships is not a private family matter – it concerns us all.

Abuse can take many forms. Physical abuse can be a shove or slap, a punch or a beating. Many women suffer bruises, black eyes, broken bones or other injuries. Many women are sexually abused – they may be forced to have sex either to avoid being assaulted or after they have been beaten.

Not all abusive relationships are physically or sexually violent. Many women are called names and put down, told they are fat, stupid, ugly or told they are terrible cooks, wives or mothers. Women are often harassed about imaginary affairs.

Threats are common – a husband may threaten to hurt himself or his wife and children if she tries to leave him.

All these forms of psychological abuse hurt and control women. But often women who are psychologically abused may not identify

themselves as battered women.

Abuse can start at any time. It may begin soon after a woman marries or moves in with a man. It may start during pregnancy or after the first child is born, and sometimes abuse begins after years of marriage.

Many batterers apologize to their wives, promising never to hit them again. Though they may feel remorseful, most batterers do not stop without outside intervention.

A husband may tell his wife that the violence is her own fault, that if she was a better wife and mother this wouldn't happen. Others blame work and money stress for their violence. Many blame alcohol, although men who use this excuse hit their wives when they are sober as well as when they have been drinking. Alcohol is an excuse for violence, not the cause.

Men can take responsibility by confronting other men they suspect or know are being abusive.

There are no acceptable excuses for violence. Batterers must take responsibility for their abusive behaviour.

Isolation is a common experience for women in abusive relationships. Some men who batter control all the family's money. Even if his wife works outside the home, the husband controls how much she has to spend. Or he may never be available to look after the kids so she can go out. He may phone constantly to keep track of her time. He may be so jealous and possessive it becomes too dangerous for her to go out with friends because when she returns, he beats her and accuses her of having an affair.

Some men belittle their wives in front of family and friends, or otherwise behave so badly that people gradually stop visiting.

All this isolates a woman from the support of friends and family, and makes her more vulnerable to her husband's negative criticism.

As friends and family, instead of withdrawing because we're uncomfortable, we can offer support by speaking out about what we see. Men especially can take responsibility by confronting other men who they suspect or know are being abusive.

Within an abusive relationship, women cope as best they can. Some try not to think about what is happening – to forget it. Others may use alcohol or prescription drugs to numb their feelings of fear and pain.

Many battered women say their bruises heal, but the psychological pain lasts a long, long time. When women are repeatedly criticized, put down, and insulted – they lose self esteem and confidence.

Many women describe feeling crazy because no matter what they do they are blamed for what happens to them.

After a woman leaves an abusive relationship, she may blame herself for getting involved in the first place. Many women fear that it will happen again. Women feel fear and anger towards their husbands, but many women also feel sorry for them.

Women do not like being battered, nor do they passively accept abuse and assault. In fact, women are continually trying to make it stop. Because most women love their husbands but hate the abuse, they try to get their husbands to seek help for their drinking or anger problems, or go for marriage counselling. Usually their husbands refuse or go for a few sessions and then drop out.

For one battered woman, work may be a safe place where she feels worthwhile and competent and where she can socialize with co-workers. It may be the only place she can be herself and not feel afraid.

Another woman may be tense or anxious at work. She may receive harassing calls from her partner and live in fear of losing her job because of his behaviour or her absences. She may not tell anyone what is happening because she's afraid they will judge her.

If a friend or co-worker tells you she is being battered, you may be surprised. She may never have told anyone because she was afraid no one would believe her. If her husband is well-liked and respected, it may be difficult for her friends and family to believe that this charming man also batters his wife.

You may know about or suspect battering long before a woman says anything, but not know how to approach her. It's important to take your cues from the woman herself. Telling her that you are concerned about her and would like to offer your support is often the best approach.

We can make our workplaces safe for women to talk about what is happening to them by offering friendship, support, and information about community resources. And we can use our concern and anger to support and work with other groups to stop wife assault.

Coffee Break



14

Don't read this item unless you are at home

Believe it or not, this is the text of a notice that appeared on a Canadian Aircraft Products bulletin board and was reproduced in the newsletter of Lodge 721 of the International Association of Machinists:

BULLETIN BOARD NOTICES ARE NOT TO BE READ DURING WORKING HOURS!

The human cost of the Tories' job loss policies

As Canada's 11 per cent unemployment rate rises, the Canadian Mental Health Association has watched the rates of infant mortality, suicide, homicide, spouse and child abuse, alcoholism, drug addiction, family breakdown and stress-related illnesses rise with it.

According to the CMHA's Norman Thackeray, "we tend to view these problems as self-inflicted." Instead of working to ease the burden of unemployment, governments are "cutting back on the availability and amount of support for unemployed people."

Those health care bosses love the big bucks

According to *Business Week* magazine, the average chief executive of a large corporation was paid 104 times as much as a factory worker last year.



"The biggest moneymakers tended to be leaders of companies that have staked out strong claims in the health care business."

French break new ground on harassment

A new French government law will make sexual harassment in the workplace a crime punishable by up to a year in prison. Cabinet approved the bill in April.

He drives a 32-window coupe with big tires

Sitting at an intersection, a Vancouver bus driver noticed a fancy car that had squeezed between the bus and the curb.

He opened the front door and yelled, "What is it?"

The car driver replied, "A 1992 Lamborghini, but what do you care? You couldn't afford to drive one on your salary! What do you drive?"

To which the bus driver answered, "A 32-window coupe made by Flyer, 1990 edition!"

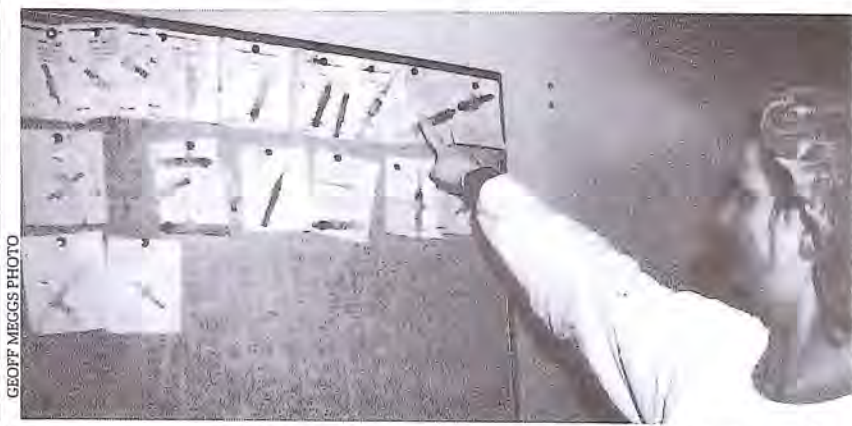
Even banks can't afford U.S. costs

Well-heeled holders of premium credit cards will no longer receive automatic out-of-country medical insurance, say Canada's banks. They just can't afford it.

Banks like the Royal and the Bank of Montreal were counting on Canadian health care plans to pay a large share of the costs, but Ontario's plan recently announced it will pay no more than \$400 of the \$1,500 average daily cost of a U.S. hospital stay.

Key targets of the cutbacks are retired "snowbirds" who holiday every winter in the U.S. and hold the premium cards because of the health insurance feature.

SOURCE: CALM



SHARP COLLECTION: Laundry worker Janet Horning displays a few weeks' collection of hazardous needles and sharps collected from dirty laundry by HEU members in Prince George Regional Hospital. New HEU contract language assures all such workers of Hepatitis B vaccination.

HEU protests exclusion from violence program

HEU has served notice to the Ministry of Health that its members must be included in any program dealing with patient violence.

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato issued a strong protest to health minister Elizabeth Cull in mid-May when the union learned that the ministry had provided \$257,000 to the B.C. Health Association, an employer group, to fund a "provider abuse program."

The program is designed to educate workers in dealing with hostile patients, including identification of potential problems, development of emergency response teams and staff debriefing.

Incredibly, however, the steering committee for the program did not include representatives from HEU or the Health Sciences Association.

"Once again, HEU members are invisible," Allevato said. "It is un-

acceptable that the ministry, hospitals and registered nurses are represented on the steering committee for this program and HEU is not.

"HEU members form the largest group of health care workers who have contact with patients, yet we are not included.

"Patient violence is a major issue for our members," Allevato said. "HEU must be an active participant in any program to deal with patient violence."

The program was established through the Provincial Nursing Advisory Committee. The previous Social Credit government had rejected HEU participation on the committee.

In a June 19 reply, Cull said the program is designed to focus on registered nurses. She also promised to review the composition of the Nursing Advisory Committee during the fall.

Public sector layoffs are second wave of recession

Economists and Tory politicians may be talking about a recovery. But they're contradicted every time new economic numbers are released by Statistics Canada.

The recession may have begun as manufacturers' laid off workers and closed plants. But the second wave is now hitting — the layoff of workers who are directly or indirectly employed by government.

As almost every province in the country restricts spending, public service layoffs are offsetting modest gains in manufacturing and retailing.

For instance, in April there was an increase of 34,000 manufactur-

ing jobs across the country. But this was more than offset by the loss of 34,000 jobs in government, and 37,000 in community, business and personal services.

"The governments are not priming the pump at all," said Ottawa economist Carl Sonnen. "They're cutting back on capital spending and they're cutting back on their own employment."

The result: the deficit-fixation of almost all governments in the country is creating a second wave of recession, just when the private sector seemed ready to bounce back. CALM

Tories, Liberals save FTA

Progressive Conservative and Liberal members of Parliament joined forces to defeat an NDP motion to cancel the Free Trade Agreement in mid-May.

Under a three-year-old deal negotiated by the Tories, Canada can give the U.S. six month's notice and cancel the agreement. "Since the Canada-U.S. free trade deal came

into effect, the destruction of manufacturing jobs has been dramatic and devastating," argued NDP trade critic Dave Barrett, who introduced the motion to cancel the deal.

The Liberals said they voted against Barrett's motion because they want to renegotiate the agreement rather than just walk away from it.



PUZZLE

A T T E N T I O N B N X B
R D E N R B L O O D A O M
M T M O N I L N E Y L P U
Y S P I O E E B E D P A N
A E E T N F W A D O U Y I
R T R A A I A T F B L C F
T R A C D I S H A R S H O
E A T A E S H T E E E E R
L S U V E D H U R T V Q M
E H R W S E S O A A I U M
A E E O R E S T C S T E O
S S U L U N I O N K A O O
T P K D N A T S S E L U R

• Thanks to Vivian Jenkins of HEU's Sherwood local in Clearbrook for sending in this month's puzzle.

All the letters are used at least once – and some more than once. Words run horizontally, vertically or diagonally, backward or forward, but always consecutively.

Word List

Administrator
Air
Arm
Ask
Attention
Bath
Bather
Bed
Bedpan
Blood

Body
Bold
Bone
Care Aide
Cart
Dish
Dues
East
Eat
Facts
Hurt
Ill
Least
Needs
New
Numb
Nurse
Old
Pay Cheque
Plan
Pox
Pulse

Rash
Report
Rest
Room
Rules
Serve
Shock
Sit
Sores
Soup
Stand
Task
Temperature
Test
Toil
Tray
Uniform
Union
Vacation
Vital
Wash
West

CALENDAR

The Guardian welcomes insertions for Calendar. Mail to 2006 West 10th Ave., Vancouver, V6J 4P5 or phone 734-3431. HEU notices will get priority in the space available.

AUGUST

10, 11

MONDAY and TUESDAY, HEU Provincial Executive meeting, Vancouver.

SEPTEMBER

9-11

WEDNESDAY to FRIDAY, HEU Provincial Executive meeting, Prince George.

OCTOBER

4-10

SUNDAY to SATURDAY, HEU Biennial Convention, Richmond Inn, Richmond.

Note: The incoming Provincial Executive will establish a meeting schedule for the remainder of 1992 and 1993.

NOV./DEC.

30-4

MONDAY to FRIDAY, B.C. Federation of Labour annual convention, Trade and Convention Centre, Vancouver.



HEU people

Lee Whyte leaves HEU to pursue legal career

One of HEU's longest-serving staff members has resigned her position to pursue a career in law.

During a union career that spanned more than 20 years, Lee Whyte performed virtually every servicing, bargaining and administrative task the union could offer.

She has been on educational leave from her job as assistant secretary-business manager since 1989. Her replacement, Chris Allnutt, has been appointed to the position on a permanent basis.

Whyte earned a law degree at the University of B.C. this spring. She resigned from HEU in July, and will begin articling with Stevenson, Norman in August.

Whyte's first university degree is in Commerce.

She went to work for the federal government in 1969 as one of the first two women trade commissioners-in-training.

She received a posting to Milan, Italy, but when she married the posting was cancelled.

"They never really said anything about my being married," Whyte says. "They just cancelled my posting. I was unemployed for six months before I was hired by HEU."

Whyte came on HEU staff Feb. 1, 1971, as a job analyst.

She worked on a pilot job evaluation project at Peace Arch Hospital until the fall when she began servicing a number of the locals in the Fraser Valley, plus Surrey and Squamish.

When Bill Rolfe left his position as director of technical services in 1973, Whyte took over from him and held the job until May, 1978, when she became assistant secretary-business manager.

"My husband was very supportive while I went to school. He's been virtually a single parent during the last three years," she said.

Whyte expects to be called to the bar next August, after she has completed one year as an articling lawyer.

The Provincial Executive accepted Whyte's



LAW CAREER: Lee Whyte has resigned as HEU's assistant secretary-business manager to pursue a career in law. She worked for the union for 20 years.

resignation with a note of appreciation for her long service to the union and best wishes in her legal career.

Helen Kendall retires in Princeton

HEU Princeton local activist Helen Kendall, a 20-year member of HEU who worked in her facility's laundry, dietary and housekeeping departments, retired in February.

A very active member of her local, Kendall served both as shop steward, vice-chairperson and secretary-treasurer.

She looks forward to some rest, a little travel, some time in

the garden and some snowmobiling.

Anderson, Kindel retire in Penticton

Two long-time members of HEU's Penticton local retired earlier this year and both look forward to some intensive relaxation.

Margaret Anderson worked as a housekeeping aide and served as the local's secretary-treasurer. She started work in 1973.

Olga Kindel started at Penticton Regional Hospital in 1972. She worked in the laundry and retired July 1. She reports it's "just like vacation!"

Albert Tetz was key organizer in Okanagan

Hospital Employees' Union pioneer, organizer and long time Provincial Executive member Albert Tetz died Dec. 30, 1991, after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Born in February 1914, Tetz worked at Vernon Jubilee Hospital from 1948 until his retirement in March 1976. He was active in the certification drive at Vernon Jubilee where hospital workers joined the union in 1951.

Tetz also worked to



ALBERT TETZ

organize other hospitals in the Okanagan Valley, particularly St. Martin's in Oliver.

He is survived by his wife, Olga, their children Larry and Judith, and grandchildren Joanna and David.

Guardian



VOL. 10 NO. 3 THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION JULY/AUGUST 1992

Long-term care contracts

HEU members working in long-term care facilities have ratified new collective agreements.

PAGE 3

Closing beds

HEU members in communities around the province are in the thick of community campaigns to save their hospitals from bed closures and layoffs.

PAGE 8



Building a movement

Canada's trade unions elected new leadership and changed their constitution to prepare the Canadian Labour Congress for the challenges to come.

PAGE 10



Confronting violence

A new union-oriented booklet called *Taking Action* suggests strategies for dealing with domestic violence.

PAGE 13



TAKING BACK THE NIGHT

A woman, alone at a window
shudders as she watches
the dark outside.

House after house it's the same.
Separately framed, hands
clench sills.

The hour has reverted
to an early dark -
each of us, last Sunday morning
got up, obedient, fingered
our own clocks back
to standard time.

No time now for that
after dinner stroll
when we could breathe in the
hush
of early evening air. Already
it's night, and so far
only our slogan
has retrieved it from fear.

So far, instead of walking
we rage inside
and stare.

Reprinted with permission from *Taking Action: A Union Guide to Ending Violence Against Women*. Published by the B.C. Federation of Labour and Women's Research Centre. Illustration by Claire Kujundzic. Poem reprinted from *The Speed of the Wheel is Up* to the Potter by Sandy Shreve. Quarry Press,



claire kujundzic

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