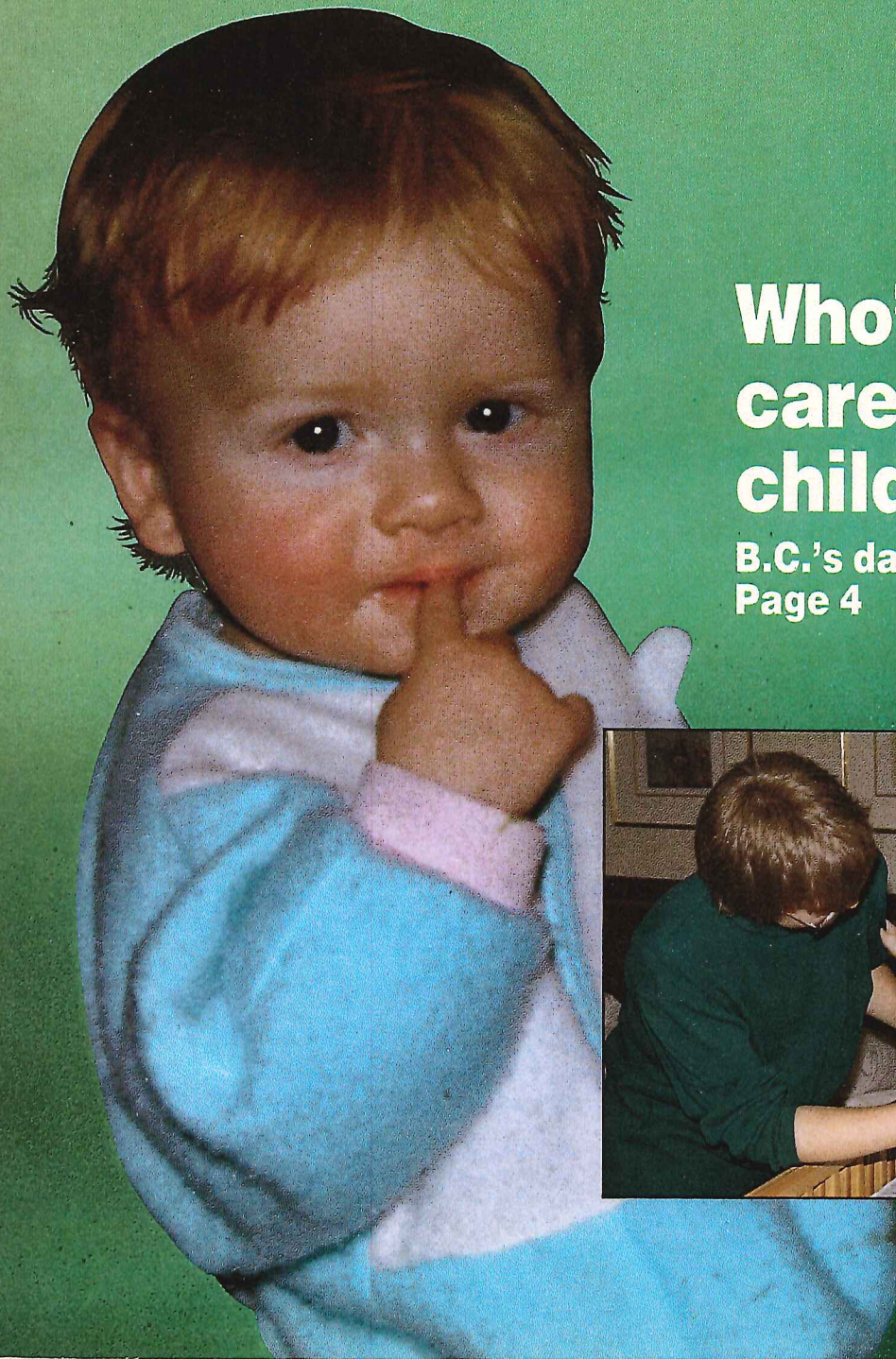


THE HOSPITAL **Guardian**

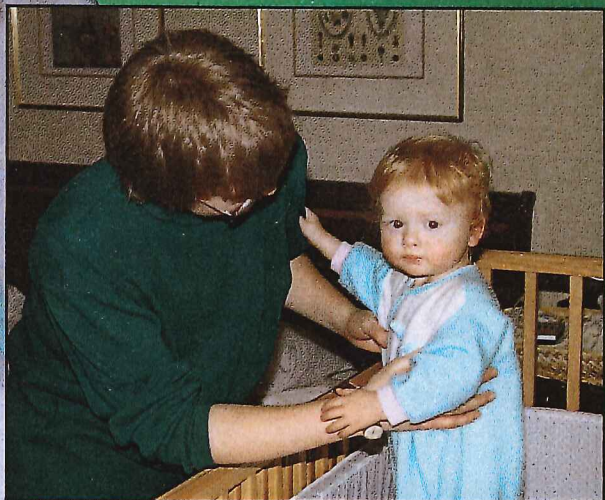
Volume 8, Number 2

Winter 1989



Who's taking care of the children?

**B.C.'s daycare blues!
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THE HOSPITAL Guardian

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

Editor: **Lecia Stewart**

The Hospital Guardian is published by the Provincial Executive of the Hospital Employees' Union, under the direction of an Editorial Committee whose members are: **BILL MACDONALD**, **MARY LaPLANTE**, **ALBERTA DORVAL**, **FRED MUZIN**, **DENNIS JEFFERY**, **CLARKE GARDNER**.

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Regional Vice-President Okanagan

MELANIE IVERSON

Regional Vice-President Vancouver Island

JUDITH ATTFIELD *1st Provincial Executive Alternate*

The Union maintains offices at:

Provincial Office:

2006 West 10th Ave., Vancouver V6J 4P5
Telephone 734-3431

Okanagan Office:

2496 Enterprise Way, Kelowna V1X 6X6
Telephone 860-5115

Kootenay Office:

745 Baker St., Nelson V1L 4J5
Telephone 354-4466

Vancouver Island Office:

1402 Stadacona Ave., Victoria V8S 3T1
Telephone 595-4433

Northern Office:

829 Victoria St., Prince George V2L 2K7
Telephone 564-2102

Cover: One year old Alexander
Ritson from Saltspring Island.



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EMPLOYEES'
UNION**

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1990: A decade for change

Looking back over the past decade, it is plain to see that trade unions in Canada were pushed onto the defensive. We struggled to fight off attack after attack from employers and governments. We fought hard to hang on to what we had won in the past. But we did not manage to go on the attack ourselves — to put **our** agenda forward, instead of responding to **theirs**.

The past few years have seen a series of government efforts to take money out of our pockets, and put it into the pockets of their big corporate friends.

The first major assault came with Bill Bennett's Compensation Stabilization Program. That program robbed HEU members of the 35 hour week and wage-increases and attacked comparability for members in long-term care. Then came "Restraint", and the 1983 attack against the basic rights of working British Columbians. Finally, they have come at us with Bill 19, Privatization, Free Trade, the Unemployment Insurance cuts and now the federal sales tax.

But at every turn, working people fought back — through their unions, through Solidarity, and through the political process. And the HEU grew bigger and stronger in those struggles — bigger and stronger, in the face of a government that wanted to cripple our movement. We grew from 151 locals to 223 and while union membership in the public sector decreased overall, our membership grew by 7,000.

We made significant gains at the bargaining table and in the battle for public support for health care. We returned to the Canadian Labour Congress and resumed our



By CARMELA ALLEVATO
**HEU Assistant Secretary-
Business Manager**

key role within the house of labor.

The slogan of the 1986 HEU convention captured the essence of our fighting spirit through the 1990s. "Standing our Ground — No Concessions."

But as we enter the last decade of the 20th Century, working people and health care workers in particular are not satisfied to hang on to what we have. It's time to put forward a vision of a better quality of life. Our needs and our demands include decent wages, but they go much farther than that.

We must step up the fight for the HEU's vision of quality health care. We must continue our fight for quality nursing by pressing health care administrators and the Provincial Government to recognize that practical nurses, orderlies and patient care aides are vital links in the nursing team.

HEU members get personal satisfaction from knowing we provide high-quality services to the many thousands of people who rely on us every day.

We also have to put forward our vision of a better British Columbia and a better Canada. A place where there is social justice and equality of opportunity for all. Where basic rights are guaranteed — decent jobs, pay equity, affordable housing, and the very best in health care. For our children, better education. For seniors, good pensions and income security. For everyone, a world of peace and environmental harmony.

It is time for us to go on the offensive — to put forward our agenda, the agenda of working people. We must develop strategies to bring those agendas from dreams into reality.

In these strategies, we need to apply the hard-learned lessons of the past few years. There is a need for **real** coordinated bargaining, with all health-care unions working together for shared objectives. We must involve the entire membership in setting our goals, and winning them. This involves placing real confidence in the ability of working people to shape our own destiny.

We have lots on our plate right now, to move this process ahead. There's the Joint Study on Nursing Services. We have a political action campaign to get HEU members registered and geared up for the next provincial election. We also have our Equal Opportunities program to win pay equity for HEU members. Next year we have a major summer school, the Wage and Policy Conference, and our 17th Biennial Convention.

Through all of these activities, we must work to lay the groundwork for a decade that will see real gains as we bring the HEU agenda onto centre stage.



HEU member Jennifer Ritson and son Alexander: Caught in the day care squeeze.

who's taking care of THE CHILDREN?

On June 13, the British Columbia Ministry of Social Services and Housing announced that \$12 million would be made available "to make day care more affordable, more available and improve the quality of service in British Columbia".

When examined carefully, this fit of generosity was found to be little more than a token gesture compared to the needs of parents and children of this province.

The state of child care in British Columbia, and indeed in all Canadian provinces, has long been considered to be in a state of crisis. Not only have the Federal and Provincial governments shown an unwillingness to adequately address the financial needs of parents caught up in the child care crunch, but the abysmal lack of places in licensed child care facili-

ties is an issue that child care advocates have long been concerned about.

HEU member Jennifer Ritson has come face to face with the shortcomings of the day care system in B.C. in the past year. Originally employed as a Nurses Aide at the Lady Minto Hospital on Saltspring Island, she returned to that position after the birth of her son, Alexander. But when her workday was cut from 7½ to 5 hours, she transferred to a job as a cleaner in the same hospital. "As a Nurses Aide, I was expected to do the same job in fewer hours", she explains, "and I soon discovered that I couldn't do the kind of caring work I wanted to do under those conditions". However, as a cleaner, Jennifer encountered problems in finding appropriate child care for her son given the shifts that she

was required to work, often at short notice. "As a Nurses Aide I worked permanent afternoons, and my husband was able to care for our son while I was at work." But as a cleaner working day shifts, Jennifer had problems finding child care in the early mornings. Now, working again as a Nurses Aide, Jennifer's child care problems have eased for the moment, although the limitations of her job continue to frustrate her.

Living in a small community, Jennifer has fewer child care options than she might living in a larger centre. On Saltspring there are only family run child care facilities, and they won't take children before 9 a.m. Often even that can be hard to find in small communities. Few families want to accept children of parents working early

mornings, evenings and weekends and whose shifts can often change on very short notice.

Family day care settings have long been the weakest link in child care in this province. Most of them provide unlicensed and uncontrolled care, and for the number which provide warm, nurturing and stimulating environments, there are twice as many which offer little more than basic "care-taking". Television becomes the primary babysitter and there is little intellectual stimulation. It has also been pointed out by the Canadian Day Care Advocacy group that as more and more women enter the workforce, the number of them who are available to take care of children in their homes for "extra" income diminishes.

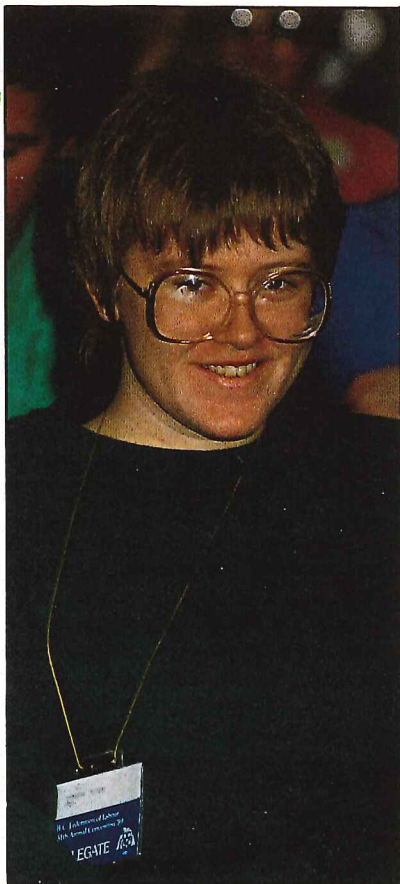
At the B.C. Federation of Labor Convention in November HEU Delta Local member Kathy Robie spoke on the child care resolution and gave the delegates a first hand account of the problems faced by working parents.

"It is very hard to find good quality child care when you work shift work", she told the delegates, "and getting into a licensed facility is all but impossible. What can I do when my shift starts at 7 a.m. and the licensed day care doesn't open until 8 a.m.? Or what do I do if I have to work an afternoon shift and the licensed day care closes at 6 p.m.?"

Robie's 3 year old daughter Alisha has two sitters at the present time and sometimes as many as three. It is the only way Robie can guarantee her child will be looked after properly while she is working shifts.

"My union activity has also suffered", says Robie. "While I still serve on the executive of the local as a trustee I can't be as active as I was before Alisha was born."

The Provincial Government's February announcement does not go very far in addressing the situation. While \$1 million is earmarked for non-profit groups to



As a union activist, HEU's Jennifer Ritson was able to attend the recent B.C. Fed convention only because the Fed provided day care.

"recruit, train and support informal day care providers and to assist parents in selecting informal day care arrangements", just how this is to be achieved has not been determined.

Family day care is often a compromise choice for parents who would prefer to place their children in licensed day care centres. While the bulk of the monies announced by the Ministry is intended for capital grants to help build, renovate and expand day care centres, the most pressing problem is not addressed. Most centres suffer from limited funds to cover operating costs, including inadequate staff training and remuneration. Even when capital grants are available for start-up costs of new operations, the facilities are required to raise matching amounts. This makes additional demands on the communities which need the service and puts additional stress on staff resources

which are already severely stretched. Staff in day cares and nursery schools are among the lowest paid workers in the province, and recruiting high quality staff to such low-paying positions is another problem.

With a membership comprised of 85 per cent women, the Hospital Employees' Union acknowledges that the provision of adequate child care is a priority for its members. Efforts to address the shortcomings in the system have led to the adoption of a three-pronged approach to the issue: Union policy calls for universal, accessible and affordable child care for B.C. workers; during the 1989 bargaining process the Union brought forward child care as a demand and realizing the value of enabling all members to participate fully in the activities of the union, the HEU offers a childcare subsidy of up to \$25 a day.

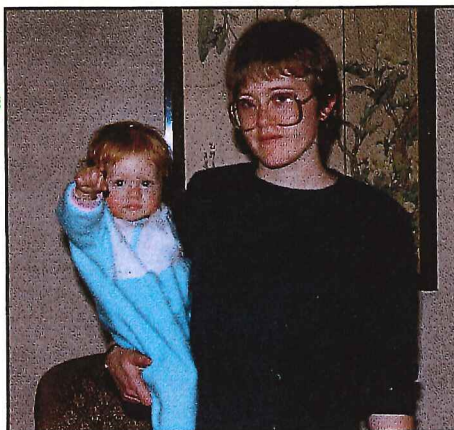
President Bill Macdonald says "adequate child care is a major problem facing many of our members, the majority of whom are women. It is incumbent on us to do all we can to address this issue, and for the Federal and Provincial Governments to live up to its promises in this area."

The Hospital Employees' Union participates in local joint Union/Management Committees whose mandate is to explore options in providing worksite childcare for the children of HEU members. This might seem the ideal solution for parents such as Jennifer Ritson and Kathy Robie, but it is an option that has to be developed cautiously and takes time and research. The child care centre at the Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster is an example of how one of the needs of union members can be successfully met through cooperation and commitment of both parties. At Vancouver General Hospital HEU member Laura Fleming is working on a joint committee trying to establish a 50 space child care facility that

would include infant care. Other members of the committee include representatives of the Health Sciences Association, the B.C. Nurses Union and hospital management. They have applied for funding through the available Federal Day Care Research grants. Fleming acknowledges that the proposed centre would not meet the needs of all of the hospital's approximately 6,000 employees, many of whom require child care for their families. The assignment of child care spaces may have to be by lottery. However, if the undertaking is successful, the committee would anticipate expansion so that more children could be accommodated in the future.

As service industries continue to expand their hours of business to include weekends and late evenings, the possibility of finding good, flexible child care becomes more difficult for an increasing number of working parents. Child care advocates have been calling for 24-hour regulated child care which could meet the needs of families whose work hours are spread beyond the conventional 9-5 "business day". The latest Government announcement does not go very far in addressing this demand.

Statistics released in February, 1988, revealed that for the 255,000



Some facts & figures . . .

Percentage of B.C. Mothers in the Workforce (1987)

With children

Under 3: 57%

3-5: 59%

6-15: 71.6%

Child Care Spaces in B.C. as of Feb. 1988

18,692 licensed child care spaces in group and family day care homes for approximately 225,000 requiring care.

Less than 10% of B.C. children are presently being cared for by someone other than family members.

Staff wages in Day Care Centres \$15,000 per annum (\$1,250 per month)

Starting wage in some centres is as low as \$4 an hour.

The high cost of child care — Jan. 1989

Average cost of group day care in the Vancouver metropolitan area:

3-5 years: \$346 a month

18 months-3 years: \$346 a month

6 weeks-18 months: \$612 a month (as of Jan. 1989 there were only four centres providing care to this age group)

Ministry of Social Services and Housing Child Care subsidy — Jan. 1989

For children 18 months-3 years: \$400 p.m. maximum

For children aged 3-5 years: \$262 p.m. maximum

B.C. children whose parents worked or were in school, there were only 33,851 places in settings which included nursery schools, day care centres, and family care and special needs facilities. Many workers depend on relatives to take up the slack in caring for their children while they work.

The Provincial Government believes that much of the onus of providing good day care for our children should be transferred to the community and to working parent's employers.

HEU's Bill Macdonald believes that "even though the provision of adequate quality child care is a government responsibility, we can help meet the needs of our members by making concerted efforts to explore all of the options thoroughly. Employers must recognize that the availability of adequate, quality child care is a concern of our members," says Macdonald. "By caring for the children of their employees they contribute to the well-being of the workforce."

If the community is to be able to respond to the need for 24-hour child care for children from birth to 12 years of age, there has to be a continuing effort on the part of union members and employers, and a stronger demonstration of political will by the legislators.

Job action brings victory at Kitimat

In early summer the HEU Kitimat Local advised the Workers Compensation Board that there was concern among the hospital's employees that an asbestos hazard might exist in the facility. This call started a chain of events which would eventually lead to a work stoppage in the hospital and demonstrate to workers everywhere that if they want to protect their health in the workplace often they have to stand up and fight.

It was not until mid-October that a WCB official inspected the hospital and found asbestos throughout the facility. An order was issued instructing the employer to immediately rectify the problem in two specific areas of the hospital, including the laundry room.

The employer ignored the order to remove the asbestos, but also did not post the order so that the



employees would know that they were working in a contaminated area. It was not until two weeks later that word of the health hazard filtered down to the workers in the laundry room.

Concerned about their health the workers advised the employer that under the WCB regulations they were not required to work in an area where they felt their health or safety was threatened and they would not work in the laundry room until the asbestos problem had been corrected.

The employer's response stunned the union members. Not only did the employer refuse to correct the health hazard, but threatened the workers with discipline if they refused to return to work.

The WCB was called back in after the walkout and changed its position and wrote a back-to-work order, declaring the worksite safe. HEU members decided not to return until the asbestos was encapsulated and as a result the employer was forced to bring in a contractor and an outside independent person to supervise the work.

"Perhaps in the general scheme of things this work stoppage might not appear to be all that important," said President Bill MacDonald, "but nothing could be further from the truth. This was a major victory for the workers in the Kitimat hospital, but more than that it was a demonstration to all workers in this province that often the only way they can protect their health from the indifference of employers is to take a stand. That is what our members at Kitimat did and it worked."

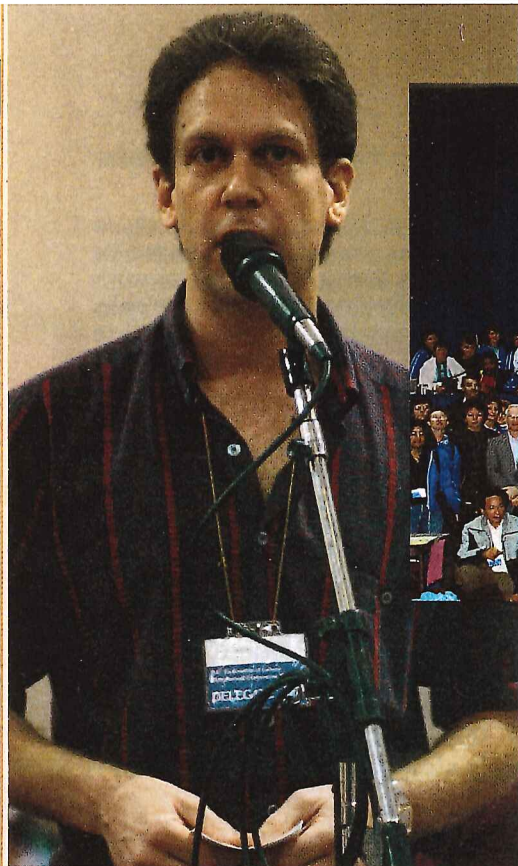
"Not only did our members at Kitimat protect their own health, but the health of workers who come after them. Their courage and determination must be recognized and applauded."



Workers from Crest Installation were taking no chances with their health and safety when they were called in to remove asbestos.



From left to right, HEU members from Kitimat took on management and the WCB and won! From left to right, Louiss, Tina, Louisa, Rosa, Rosa and Maria.



Provincial Executive member Mike Barker



B.C. Federation pledges

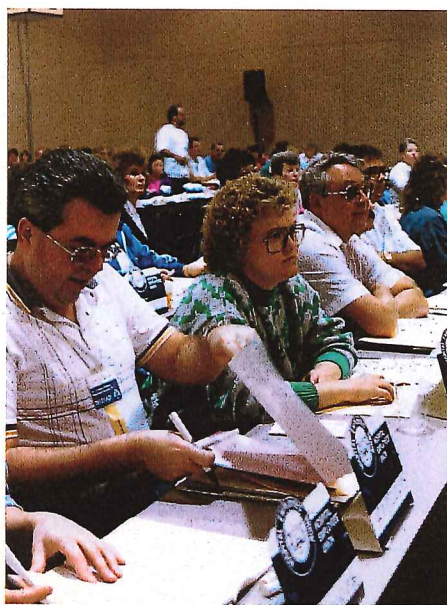
FIGHT BACK...

Trade unionists from around British Columbia have pledged to fight back against employers seeking wage and benefit concessions.

That was the predominant message from the more than 1,000 union members who met in Vancouver November 20 to 24, 1989 for the 34th Annual B.C. Federation of Labor (BCFL) Convention.

The convention, attended by 170 HEU members, resolved to commit the labor movement to a major campaign against any employer that attempts to use the Paccar decision to destroy collective agreements.

The now infamous Paccar decision involves a 1984 B.C. Labor Relations Board ruling that allowed employers to unilaterally



change the conditions of employment when a union contract expired. That decision was recently upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada.

HEU delegate Roy Gerrath from the Victoria General Local told the Federation convention that in his view there is no doubt that health care employers will attempt to use the Paccar decision against their employees.

Cliff Andstein, former secretary-treasurer of the BCFL, called the Paccar decision "one of those insidious decisions made by labor boards to stack the rules against unions."

The Emergency Resolution on the Paccar decision was submitted by HEU's delegation and called on



Doreen Adamson (left), Malaspina Lodge, and Jean Milne, Vancouver General Hospital.

the Federation to mount a program of job action if necessary to protect any affiliate threatened by an employer using the Paccar decision.

Another major issue for HEU was the contentious B.C. Fed Essential Services Policy. HEU locals submitted numerous resolutions calling for changes to the policy. The demand for amendments resulted largely from some of the bitter experiences of the 1989 strike in health care. A new policy was adopted by the convention to resolve problems such as the over-designation of essential service workers.

In speaking to the resolution HEU President Bill Macdonald, told the convention that in spite of the problems in the health care strike, "we should not blame sister and brother members for inexperience. We, as a movement, must strive to put resources into the labor movement in B.C. so that all unions are strong and supportive of each other and that they are all within the house of labor."

Health care policy was also widely debated by Federation delegates. Team nursing, government underfunding, privatization, and contracting out were all discussed during the convention. One after another, HEU delegates told the convention how the health care system in the province is declining and, more importantly, what needs to be done to ensure a good health care system for the people of B.C.

HEU delegate Loreen Lamberton of Surrey got a standing ovation for her speech that said the shortage of nurses in B.C. trained to do bedside and hands-on care is a myth created by the Social Credit government. "I am a Licensed Practical Nurse, employed as a Food Service Worker," Lamberton told the convention, "I am unable to secure employment as an LPN because of the introduction of primary care nursing."

The proposed Goods and Services Tax came under heavy fire from the convention delegates. A resolution based on proposals submitted by HEU called on the Federal Government to scrap the GST, but not at the expense of social services and programs. In its place the Federation and its affiliates will press for what many speakers referred to as "progressive and fair" tax reform which would see corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share of the tax bill. In addition to working for a fairer tax system, the Federation will also join with the Canadian Labor Congress in developing a program to protest the introduction of the GST including plans for a tax revolt and, if necessary, job action. HEU delegate Mike Barker a Provincial Executive member from Vancouver General Hospital summed up the mood of the delegates when he told the convention: "The labor movement must be front and center in the fight against the GST. We can't wait until the next elec-



Surrey Local delegate Loreen Lamberton

tion. We have to move on this one now!"

Most veteran convention watchers agreed that HEU played a significant role at this year's Federation convention. Macdonald says part of the reason for that was all of the advance work that went into preparing for the convention. The union prepared background material on the issues and this helped enable delegates to actively participate in convention debate. As well, a Provincial Executive subcommittee worked before and throughout the convention to keep things running smoothly. Its members were Mike Barker, Ruby Hardwick, and Clarke Gardner and, together with some of the HEU staff, they assisted HEU delegates with any questions or problems.

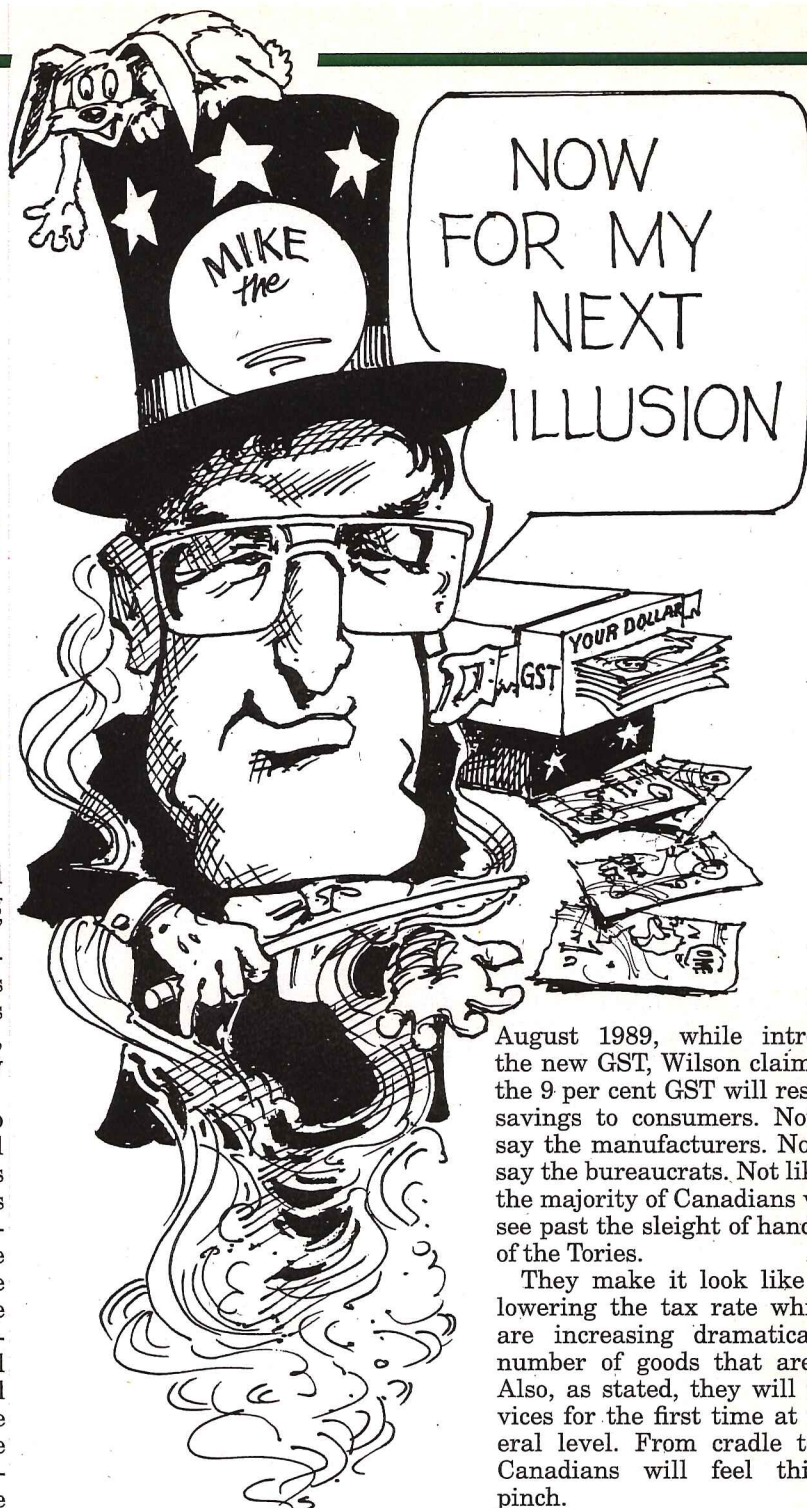
"Everything of major importance to HEU was dealt with in a favorable way," Macdonald said in his review of the convention.

Smoke and mirrors from the Tory Tax Man

It has been called the grab and snatch tax, the grief and suffering tax and people say we'll be "GaST" when it goes into effect. The federal government's proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST), if it is implemented in its present form, will undoubtedly be called many more mostly unprintable things.

The GST is scheduled to go into effect January 1, 1991. It will replace the current Manufacturers Sales Tax (MST). The MST applies to a limited number of manufactured goods and is added to the manufacturers' selling price before wholesale and retail mark ups are included. The new Goods and Services Tax will apply to almost all goods and will be added to the full retail price. Also, for the first time at the federal level, services will be taxed. Even business and the provincial governments agree that the GST as presented is not the answer.

An examination of the Tories' actions and statements before the GST announcement, and their defense of it since, leads one to two conclusions. The Tories are either very naive — or blatantly deceitful.



Given the record of the Mulroney government in the past five years and thinking of the free trade agreement in particular, deceit seems more likely.

In April 1989 Finance Minister Michael Wilson raised the MST from 9 per cent to 13.5 per cent. In

August 1989, while introducing the new GST, Wilson claimed that the 9 per cent GST will result in a savings to consumers. Not likely say the manufacturers. Not likely say the bureaucrats. Not likely say the majority of Canadians who can see past the sleight of hand tactics of the Tories.

They make it look like they're lowering the tax rate while they are increasing dramatically the number of goods that are taxed. Also, as stated, they will tax services for the first time at the federal level. From cradle to grave Canadians will feel this tax's pinch.

There are some exemptions to the GST but not many that affect the average worker. All Canadians will feel its effects but lower income earners will be particularly hard hit.

HEU President Bill Macdonald experienced the introduction of a similar tax in Britain called the

Value Added Tax or VAT. He saw how the VAT drove inflation up while pushing down the standard of living of the average worker. Describing the GST as "unconscionable" Macdonald said "it is to be expected of Tories and Socreds to introduce such measures as part of their plan to keep workers in line." Macdonald explained that "determining that 8% unemployment is an acceptable level keeps the crowd waiting at the gate for your job and thus is supposed to mute demands and reduce conflict."

The Conference Board of Canada estimates that the GST will cause the loss of 72,000 jobs in the first year. The economic brain trust in Ottawa must be thrilled, raising all that new revenue and creating even more "acceptable" unemployment.

Raising revenue is what this tax is all about. It will raise \$24 billion in 1991. That's \$5.5 billion more than the MST would have raised. Here the government comes up with more of its double talk to sell the tax. On the one hand Michael Wilson says that the government's "net" revenues will be "essentially unaffected" but on the other hand, the GST is necessary to reduce the deficit.

It is in fact a tax grab of unprecedented proportions for unwarranted purposes. The contradictory web of rationales in the government's economic policy is both mind boggling and infuriating.

The Mulroney government has steadfastly pursued a high interest rate policy in the name of keeping a lid on inflation. High interest rates help those who can afford to invest their money. For the vast majority of Canadians they have very destructive effects. We are told we must accept this as the consequence of our irresponsible spending in previous years which created the deficit. In the Tories view this irresponsible spending was on social programs like medicare, unemployment insurance and family allowances. Thus, while the high interest rates themselves increase the deficit, we are told it is necessary to cut spending on social programs to reduce the deficit.

Then in an all out assault on the deficit, but in the name of tax reform, the government introduces the GST which they admit will have an inflationary impact. Michael Wilson admits that the new sales tax will add between two to two and a half per cent to inflation. Various other analysts predict the effect will be closer to four or five per cent. Thus inflation, currently at about five per cent, could double as a result of the GST.

In the context of admitting the inflationary aspect of the sales tax, Michael Wilson contends that it is a "one time blip" and asks workers and their unions not to try to recoup the "blip" or THEY will cause inflation to spin out of control. Clever aren't they?

There are two types of taxation, progressive and regressive. Progressive taxation is based on income and in theory it rises as income increases. Regressive taxes such as sales or consumption taxes affect everyone regardless of income. In their five years of government the Tories have "reformed" the income tax system to shift the burden away from the corporations and the rich onto the shoulders of lower and particularly middle income Canadians. Corporate taxes as a percentage of government revenues have dropped from 13 per cent to 12 per cent and marginal tax rates for upper income earners have been reduced from 34 per cent to 29 per cent. In contrast the typical Canadian family at a \$35,000 income is paying about \$1000 more in taxes than they were in 1984. Personal income taxes as a percentage of government revenue has increased from 44.2 per cent to 46.3 per cent in the past three years.

On the regressive tax side, in 1984, the government raised 19 per cent of its revenue through consumption taxes. This rate is now at 25 per cent and under the GST it will rise to almost 30 per cent.

In British Columbia workers have seen their provincial income taxes increase 28 per cent from 1984-88 and sales and excise taxes increase 10 per cent resulting in a

steady decline in their disposable income.

It is not surprising then that the reaction of the labor movement has been an emphatic rejection of the GST. President Bill Macdonald said "HEU will support the B.C. Federation of Labour and the CLC efforts to stop the tax. We're committed to doing it and we will put the necessary resources into the fight."

HEU will be asking CUPE to keep up the pressure at the national level and will support a tax revolt if that's what it takes.

"This is not a tax on luxuries, it will affect every worker. No one will be able to opt out of paying it no matter what their wage level" said Macdonald. "Of particular concern to us is the effect on hospital workers in the lower paid categories. They are already at or below the poverty level and the GST would force them to shoulder a proportionately higher share of the burden."

Also of concern to HEU is the government's attempt to tax social services. Only those health care services funded in whole or in part by health insurance plans will be exempted from the GST. This means that all sorts of counselling services, psychological to legal, needed to cope with our increasingly complex society may become too expensive for those who need them most. Bill Macdonald explains: "Social services are sacrosanct. They are what sets us apart as a country. We have to let the government know that it is time to end the tax holiday for the corporations and the multinationals. We have to very clearly articulate that we will not accept further attacks on workers or on social programs."

All HEU members and their families can help the campaign against the GST. Let your M.P., M.L.A. and the B.C. Senators know that you are opposed to the tax. Tell them that Michael Wilson must go back to the drawing board and produce a fairer system.

Let the Tories know that their campaign of smoke and mirrors isn't fooling anyone.

HEU Members Graduate



Bella Maud and Roger Fitzpatrick

Two Hospital Employees Union members graduated from the Labour College of Canada in 1989.

Bella Maud and Roger Fitzpatrick graduated last summer from the college after completing the eight week intensive curriculum in Ottawa.

The Labour College of Canada provides educational opportunities to trade unionists from all across the country. The courses are designed to provide those attending with the skills they will require to take leadership positions in their unions.

Equal Opportunities a priority for union

According to the Canadian Medical Association, more deaths in this country can be attributed to poverty than to cancer.

For the women of Canada such statements hold no comfort for it is women who make up the largest portion of those living in poverty. Gross wage differences between women and men, the child care crisis, inequities in employment opportunities for women, and a system that is not designed to take into consideration the special needs of many women all conspire to doom many women to a life of poverty.

The Hospital Employees' Union wants to be on the leading edge of pressing government and employers to respond in an effective way to end these and other inequities. As a result, an Equal Opportunities Sub-Committee of the Provincial Executive has been formed. Its mandate is to try to achieve equality for all HEU members, design programs to encourage and enhance participation

within the union, and to develop resources and strategies towards the elimination of inequalities within the union.

Currently, the committee is preparing a study on racism and discrimination.

Members of the committee are Bill Macdonald, Mary LaPlante, Nancy Macdonald, Cindy Russell, Ruby Hardwick, and Chairperson Melanie Iversen.

Since its formation, the committee members have participated in a number of conferences within the labor movement including the Affirmative Action and Pay Equity Conferences sponsored by the B.C. Federation of Labor, and the National Women's Conference: Breaking Through The Barriers sponsored by CUPE. All of these conferences allow the committee members to develop an HEU approach in tune with the rest of the labor movement and also ensure there is HEU input into the development of policy and programs adopted by other organizations.

GOT YOUR CARD?

Did you know that the Socreds have amended the Election Act and eliminated the section which allowed you to register to vote on election day? You must be registered with the Elections British Columbia Office in your area 20 days before election day or you will not be able to vote.

At the October HEU Provincial Executive meeting a political action committee was formed. The first order of business for the committee will be to inform HEU members about the new voter registration requirements. The HEU campaign will work in conjunction with the CLC/BC Fed campaign which will make union members aware of the new system.

Approximately 400,000 B.C. voters are estimated to not be registered to vote at the present time. As many as 40 per cent of HEU members may not have their voter identification cards.

The timetable for the HEU campaign will be set at the committee's December meeting. The campaign will include the central campaign literature as well as leaflets and posters produced by HEU. Each local will be asked to form its own political action committee to assist in the campaign which will be implemented through an on the job canvass.

Watch for the campaign in your local. Don't be left out in the cold on election day. Get your voter identification card or update it if you have moved recently.

Bursary award winners

The Hospital Employees' Union is pleased to announce the winners of the bursary awards for the 1989-90 academic year.

Shelly Anne Drdul, Surrey Local, Vancouver General Local Bursary, \$350. Steve Gilmour, Trillium Lodge Local, Provincial Executive Bursary, \$500. Christina Green, Willowhaven Local, Victoria Local Bursary, \$350. Leslie Gregson, Delta Local, Mission Local Bursary, \$350. Patricia Pierce, Noric House Local, Edward Ashmore Memorial Bursary, \$1000. (Jointly sponsored by the Surrey Local and Provincial Executive.) Tania Van Den Heuvel, Royal Columbian Local, Lions Gate Bursary, \$500. Richard Wainwright, Vancouver General Local, Royal Jubilee Bursary, \$500. Dawn Young, Surrey Local, Prince George Bursary, \$500. Julie Zorisky, Cowichan Local, Vancouver General Bursary, \$350.

On August 15 and 16, 1989 a hearing commenced at the B.C. Human Rights Council regarding a matter involving the Hospital Employees' Union. The following is reproduced in accordance with the settlement.

Terms of Settlement

1. The Hospital Employees' Union undertakes that none of the named complainants will be charged or tried for any alleged offence(s) pursuant to the Constitution and Bylaws for their roles in matters pertaining to Gina McCloy's grievances and complaints against the Hospital Employees' Union, Hospital Employees' Staff Union and Vancouver General Hospital

and/or for filing their complaints with the Human Rights Council and/or for testifying at this Human Rights hearing.

2. While the Hospital Employees' Union did not set out to sanction those who supported Gina McCloy, Susan Alexiou, Al Brownlee, Ron Campbell, Alexander Tough and Joan Ready, the Hospital Employees' Union apologizes to the named complainants for any action or conduct by any of its employees or agents which reasonably could be construed as acts of harassment and intimidation in relation to Gina McCloy's pursuit of her complaints and grievances.

3. In recognition that as Employer, the Hospital Employees' Union is legally responsible for the conduct of its employees, the Hospital Employees' Union further apologizes to Gina McCloy for any actions or conduct that may have been committed by Steve Polak which could reasonably be construed by Gina McCloy as sexual harassment.

4. The Hospital Employees' Union will pay to Gina McCloy the sum of \$4,300.00 to reimburse her for the difference between the wages which she earned at Vancouver General Hospital during the calendar year 1989 and the wages which she would have earned as an employee at the Hospital Employees' Union during that period.

5. The Hospital Employees' Union will reimburse Gina McCloy the additional sum of \$826.22 for fees and disbursements which she paid to Russell & DuMoulin for legal services provided by Mr. Henri Alvarez and others.

6. After being provided with new and more accurate information, the Hospital Employees' Union now recognizes that Gina McCloy did not file her Section 7 complaint at the Industrial Relations Council until after she first

sought the intervention of the officials of the B.C. Federation of Labour to mediate and until after the B.C. Federation of Labour's offer to intervene was rejected by the Hospital Employees' Union. The Hospital Employees' Union also takes note that while no other officer or member of the Provincial Executive of the Hospital Employees' Union was summoned, it is understood that Susan Alexiou attended the Industrial Relations Council hearing after being served with the summons.

7. The Hospital Employees' Union will pay the reasonable account rendered by Owen, Bird for services provided to the complainants by Ms. Kitty Heller and others related to preparation of the complainants' case pursuant to Section 20 of the Human Rights Act of British Columbia and to the settlement of these complaints.

8. Separate and apart from the payments outlined above, the Hospital Employees' Union will also make a payment of \$2,000.00 each to Mr. Al Brownlee, Mr. Alexander Tough, Mr. Ron Campbell, Ms. Susan Alexiou, Ms. Joan Ready, and a payment of \$4,000.00 to Ms. Gina McCloy, as damages.

9. All payments outlined here-in are to be delivered to the recipients within 15 working days of the date of ratification of this settlement.

10. This settlement will be reproduced in the next issue of "The Guardian" published by the Hospital Employees' Union.

11. Copies of this settlement will be placed in the Provincial Office files pertaining to each of the six complainants and Steve Polak.

12. This settlement is without prejudice and is reached for the purpose of; and is, a complete settlement of the Human Rights Complaints filed by the above named complainants against the Hospital Employees' Union.

Classification victories for Patient Care Technical

The HEU has recently achieved a number of successes under its Classification Maintenance Plan. Action on behalf of Pharmacy Assistants at St. Paul's, Dental Technicians at Cancer Control and Perfusionists at Vancouver General have resulted in recent negotiations or awards." The union has aggressively pursued Job Review Requests on behalf of our paramedical and other members, and the results have been positive", said Carmela Allevato, the union's Assistant Secretary-Business Manager.

Recent successes before Arbitrator John Kinzie to upgrade Pharmacy Assistants at St. Paul's from PC11 to PC15 are the result of a long hard battle dating back to 1987.

Following the success of the Job Review Request at St. Paul's the union had a hearing

before Kinzie in July to address the job of the Dental Technicians at Cancer Control. Kinzie's award indicated that the job was not properly matched to the only benchmark in the plan at a PC5 rate. As a result, the union and the HLRA are negotiating a new benchmark and the union's position is that the pay level should be adjusted from PC5 to PC15 for Dental Technicians who perform at the technical level.

The most recent success came November 3 when the HLRA, just prior to a classification hearing, indicated that they were prepared to agree that Perfusionists working in the Open Heart Surgery Program at VGH were not properly matched to their benchmark at the PC24 level. As in previous cases the union's position is to seek reclassification above the PC24 level.

The union has also been aggressively pursuing Job Review Requests on behalf of many of its Lab Assistants. The union understands that the HLRA is prepared to make adjustments in the pay scales of some of these people. These

changes would affect members who work in many of the acute care hospitals employing HEU members.

PAYING LESS ... BUT GETTING MORE...

The Canadian corporate community is doing very well according to a recent study by the Library of Parliament.

Assistance payments from the federal purse to business over the past two decades have grown faster than the share devoted to social spending.

Last year corporate Canada received \$9.3 billion in government handouts, an increase of \$4 million over the previous year.

At the same time the amount allotted by the Federal Government to social programs declined significantly from seven per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to about six per cent last year.

On the tax side the corporations have also done very well. In the mid '70s corporations paid 26.2 percent of the total tax revenue. As of March 1989 their share had steadily declined to a low of 11.4 per cent.

PEOPLE IN FOCUS

Cynthia Ammann joined the HEU Provincial Office on February 13, 1989 as a Rep/Organizer.

Another new addition to the Provincial Office is Connie Kilfoil who started on April 3, 1989 as a Representative II.

In the Research Department of the Provincial Office there are three new staff members: Mike Adam started on April 24, 1989 as a Research Analyst, Ana Ramsay started on May 9, 1989 as a Research Assistant and Chris Allnutt started on July 4, 1989 as Senior Research Analyst.

Clayton Randle who started working in the HEU Provincial Office on May 2, 1989 in Build-

ing Maintenance is now a Representative/Organizer.

From the Shaughnessy Local, Bella Maud joined the HEU Provincial Office on December 4, 1989 as a Representative/Organizer.

In the HEU Northern Office, Judy Verbruggen from the Dawson Creek Local started on July 17, 1989 as a Representative/Organizer.

Lee Whyte, Assistant Secretary-Business Manager, is on leave of absence to attend law school at UBC.

Carmela Allevato, in-house counsel in the Provincial Office is now acting as Assistant Secretary-Business Manager while Sister Whyte is on leave.

Bill Rolfe, a Director in the

HEU Provincial Office, is on leave of absence for six months to go to the Boards of Review at the Workers' Compensation Board.

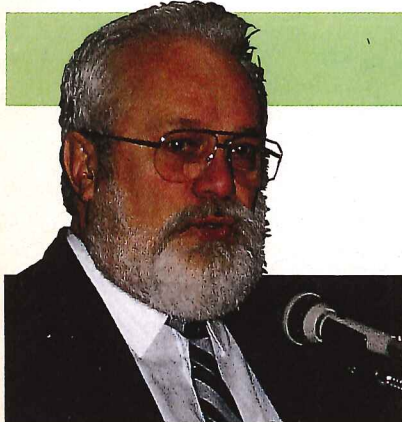
By a unanimous vote of the HEU Provincial Executive, the union ended its employment relationship with Sean O'Flynn. O'Flynn had acted as HEU Secretary-Business Manager from March '89 to October '89.

Milestones

After twenty years of service, Oscar Dimler, former Shop Steward and Vice Chairperson of Penticton Regional Hospital, retired July 18, 1989.

Brother Dimler looks forward to gardening, community work and has planned a trip to California this Winter.

A Practical solution to B.C.'s nursing crisis



HEU President Bill Macdonald

More than 80 Licensed Practical Nurses gathered in Vancouver for a one-day conference November 27 to discuss new strategies to save the nursing team in B.C. hospitals.

The conference, sponsored by the Hospital Employees' Union, brought together representatives from 80 HEU Licensed Practical Nurse committees from around the province. The Local LPN committees are part of the union's campaign to press each hospital and the Provincial Government to effectively use all members of the nursing team — RNs, LPNs, orderlies and nursing aides.

HEU President Bill Macdonald opened the conference with a pledge that HEU is committed to improving the job security for LPNs.

"If we work together, we can get all the members of the nursing team working efficiently together," Macdonald told the group.

HEU's Assistant Secretary-Business Manager Carmela Allevato also addressed the conference and provided an overview of HEU's efforts to help save the jobs of LPNs.



LPN Lulu Sondermann

A special sub-committee of the HEU Provincial Executive was established in late 1986 to develop and monitor a union campaign to try to improve job security for LPNs, orderlies and nursing aides. One of the primary objectives of the campaign has been to raise the level of awareness among all HEU members and the general public about the vital role played by the nursing team in the delivery of quality health care services.

In spite of the union's efforts however, Allevato reported that today there are 1300 fewer LPNs working in B.C. hospitals than at the beginning of the decade.

"The fight for the nursing team will be a difficult struggle. But this union has a history of taking on difficult struggles and winning," Allevato told the LPNs.



Practical Nurses from around the province met for a one day HEU conference.

Lawyer Linda Dennis reviewed the new licensing requirements legislated by the Provincial Government earlier this year. Her presentation pointed out that the new legislation might expose LPNs to two sets of disciplinary procedures — one from the employer and one from the licensing body. HEU has met with the employer on these concerns and the matter is before an arbitrator.

Conference delegates spent part of the day in workshops studying tactics that local committees can use to demonstrate the valuable role that LPNs can play.

As a result of the conference, procedures for documenting the importance of the nursing team have been finalized and will be available to HEU locals in January.



by Marjorie Cohen
Woodward Professor
Simon Fraser University

The prospect of the new Goods and Services Tax has brought increasing threats of a tax revolt from both businesses and popular groups. The criticism of the tax which is receiving the most attention now is that more taxes are not the solution to the government's debt problem. Rather, government should be cutting spending.

We are going to hear a great deal more of this and, I fear, it will gain public sympathy as people are increasingly burdened with heavy taxes.

Every year the Fraser Institute gleefully publicizes Tax Freedom Day. This is their way of showing people that they are paying too much in taxes. People, on average, now pay their entire income up until July 3 in taxes. It is an outrageous thought that more than half our entire earnings go to pay one tax or another. This is probably the kind of thing that can bring about a tax revolt.

But tax revolts can take different forms. Historically unfair taxes have been the impetus for revolutions against governments. There

was the salt tax in India which initiated the ousting of the British government, and it was taxation without representation which inspired a revolution in the American colonies.

These are good examples of tax revolts taking a progressive turn. But they can work another way. If government and business can convince people that the source of the problem is excess government spending, there will be real support for getting government out of programs it should rightfully be maintaining.

The natural target in a tax revolt will be social programs which now account for over 45 per cent of total government expenditures. I can imagine the ads the government would run on TV, showing what portion of the Loonie goes towards maintaining expensive programs which, they will say, most people don't really need.

The proposed Goods and Services Tax is a highly regressive tax and should certainly be opposed. But the focus of opposition should be its unfairness, not government spending. Government spending is not out of control, as many would have us believe. In fact, the difference between government income and expenditures, not counting the cost of borrowing money, has produced a surplus since 1986. This year the government will take in \$12 billion more than it will spend on all of its programs and administration. The government's debt problems are not as a result of overspending, but are a result of the huge amount of interest it must pay out on the

existing debt. Since it is the government which is keeping interest rates high, it is the government which is itself responsible for the growing debt problem.

Opposition to the GST must focus on how the government is raising money. The reductions in personal income taxes and corporate taxes and the shift to raising revenues through taxes on consumption hurt lower and middle-income groups most. If a tax revolt focuses on government spending on social programs, it is precisely the lower and middle-income groups who will feel the effects of cutbacks in government spending.

I am all for a tax revolt against this sales tax. But we must be sure to get it right and focus on how unfair it is.

MARJORIE COHEN presently holds the Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Professorship in Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University. She is an economist and feminist activist who writes academic and popular pieces on women and economic issues. She is the author of *Free Trade and the Future of Women's Work* (Garamond, 1987) and *Women's Work, Markets and Economic Development in Nineteenth Century Ontario* (University of Toronto Press 1988). Marjorie Cohen has served as Vice-President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Chair of the Coalition Against Free Trade in Toronto and has been spokesperson for the Pro-Canada Network.