

THE HOSPITAL **Guardian**

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HEU
Celebrates
Forty Years



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

THE HOSPITAL Guardian

Editor: Lecia Stewart

The Hospital Guardian is published by the Provincial Executive of the Hospital Employees' Union, Local 180, under the direction of an Editorial Committee whose members are: **GORDON MacPHERSON**, **JACK GEROW**, **MAURICE SMITH**, **BILL MACDONALD**, **CLARKE GARDNER**.

The Members of the Provincial Executive are:

GORDON MacPHERSON President
J.D. GEROW Secretary-Business Manager
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BILL MACDONALD 1st Vice-President
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MARY LaPLANTE Regional Vice-President North
BOB SHORTLAND Regional Vice-President Okanagan
CAROLE CAMPBELL Regional Vice-President Vancouver Island
ERNIE ELLIS 1st Provincial Executive Alternate

The Union maintains offices at:

Provincial Office:
2286 W. 12th Ave., Vancouver V6K 2N5
Telephone 734-3431

Okanagan Office:
No. 103, 2359 Hwy. 97 North, Kelowna V1X 4H9
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

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HOSPITAL
EMPLOYEES'
UNION LOCAL
180

A time to get even

By Jack Gerow

Excessive workloads.

Wages of \$52 per month.

And little or no recognition.

That's what it was like in 1944 when some 300 hospital workers at the Vancouver General Hospital organized a new union that was to become the 25,000 member Hospital Employees' Union.

Forty years later and things have changed — right?

Wrong.

Health care workers are still over-worked, under-paid and taken for granted.

In fact, some will say that health care workers have come full circle under the current Social Credit economic and social policies and are back at square one. Others will say that with the union-bashing, concession-mad attitude of the provincial government things are even worse.

So, where do we go from here?

That's the question that will be facing the some 400 delegates attending HEU's 14th biennial convention scheduled for later this month.

Contrary to what some employers, politicians and their friends in the news media would like to think



and speak, HEU's delegates will be concerned with more than the amount of the next wage increase.

For example, over the years, and especially in the past few years, HEU members have considered their role in health care a sacred trust. The result — HEU members have fought with selfless commitment and determination every attempt of both the federal and provincial governments to take away the right to quality health care without user-fees, double-billing and privatization.

Will the fight continue? I think it will. HEU members will always be in the forefront of the struggle to not only preserve medicare, but to improve and extend it.

And HEU's social conscience does not stop there. There's much room for concerns on the quality of

education, protection of human rights and all social services.

And what about the biggest concern of all — world peace. HEU members have been among the first to argue that scarce tax dollars spent on nuclear bombs will mean fewer dollars for hospital beds.

Now, what about that next wage increase.

I expect HEU members will begin a measured and determined program of preparation for the next round of collective bargaining. This program will include an emphasis on unit building to make ready the membership of every unit. Any confrontation from the hospitals or provincial government will be challenged by a membership already toughened by the brutality of wage controls. These controls have made them the scapegoats for provincial government restraint priorities that have gone wrong. While corporate profits have been preserved, the promised recovery for working people has failed to appear.

For HEU members, the coming months will be a time not to get mad, but a time to get even.



HEU convention to mark 40th anniversary



HEU heads into its 14th biennial convention against a backdrop of protests and pickets that have rocked the province over the past two years.



The 14th biennial convention of the Hospital Employees' Union gets underway September 30 at the Richmond Inn in Vancouver.

More than 400 delegates from around the province are entitled to attend the five-day convention which will set union policy and objectives for the next two years.

One hundred and sixty-eight general resolutions and constitutional amendments have been submitted by HEU units and these proposals will form the basis for the debate and discussion at the convention.

Several of the resolutions submitted call on the union to pressure the provincial government to put a total ban on all overtime in all work places during times of high unemployment and to halt the process of privatizing health care, education and other social services. Another resolution proposes that HEU challenge the new provincial Human Rights Act in court.

In addition to taking aim at provincial Social Credit policies, many HEU units have directed resolutions towards reforming federal government programs.

The Prince George Unit wants HEU to petition and lobby the feds to reduce the age of entitlement for Canada pension benefits from age 65 to age 60. In addition, the northern unit wants the Canadian government to stop the testing of the cruise missile and concentrate instead on bringing about world peace.

With so many HEU members facing chronically high interest rates, it's not surprising to find a resolution calling on the union to demand that the federal government put a ceiling of 8 per cent on all home mortgages.

Other general resolutions cover such topics as servicing, health and safety, education and the fight to save practical nurse jobs in B.C. hospitals.

The 87 constitutional amendment proposals from HEU units include redefining the duties of the union's chief elected officers,



increasing the Political Education Fund to \$150,000 and strike pay to \$60 per week and decreasing membership dues to 1.1 per cent of gross salary from 1.25.

Copies of the proposed constitutional amendments have been forwarded to all units for their consideration and instruction to

convention delegates.

A list of proposed general resolutions will be forwarded to convention delegates 10 days prior to the convention.

A full report on the proceedings will be published following the convention in a special edition of the Guardian.

Canadian labor meets

Pressure mounts to admit HEU to labor congress



The 15th biennial convention of the Canadian Labor Congress.

More than 2,300 trade unionists from across Canada gathered in Montreal in early June for the 15th convention of the Canadian Labor Congress.

The biennial convention, which sets policies and programs for Canada's largest house of labor,

reaffirmed the labor movement's determination to battle concessions and make up for losses caused by the recession.

But while labor solidarity was evident for much of the convention, the five day meeting was not without fractious debate on the future

directions for Canadian workers.

Day one of the convention brought an overwhelming rejection of the leadership's economic policy. A rank and file upsurge from the convention floor rejected the policy proposed by the CLC executive and had it replaced with a tough action program built around the fight for a shorter workweek.

And throughout the five day meeting, the thorny issue of bringing non-affiliates such as the Hospital Employees' Union into the CLC continued to surface.

In the debate on the officers' report the delegates urgently appealed to the CLC leadership to find ways to open its doors to non-affiliated unions. (The CLC represents some two-million unionized Canadian workers. Roughly 45 per cent of the country's unionized work force does not belong to the CLC.)

The greatest pressure to bring in the non-affiliates came from B.C. delegates. Fishermen's union president Jack Nichol pointed out there are as many union members outside the B.C. Fed as in.

Delegates were demanding a convention debate on the report of a CLC committee that spent the past two years looking into the requests for affiliation. HEU has had an outstanding application for affiliation before the CLC for almost 14 years.

Cliff Andstein of the BCGEU called on the executive council to declare what steps were being taken to open CLC doors to interested non-affiliates.

"We've been told the issues are too sensitive to discuss," Andstein said. "The executive council should tell us why we have to wait. What are they going to give us in two

the challenge at the CLC

years that they haven't been able to during the last two years."

The executive, however, led by president Dennis McDermott, was adamant that the matter would be handled in a forthcoming executive committee meeting exclusively devoted to the issue.

Representatives from the HEU provincial executive attending the convention as observers watched the debate closely and spent a considerable amount of time discussing the issue with delegates.

Jack Gerow, HEU secretary-business manager, said there was an enormous amount of support evident for the reaffiliation of HEU. Gerow said he is hopeful

that the CLC executive will indeed find a way to allow non-affiliates such as HEU into the congress. As an affiliate of the CLC, Gerow said the members of HEU will benefit from the strength of millions of workers who make the CLC the strongest voice for workers' rights in Canada.

Affiliation was not the only thorny issue for the CLC executive though. The election of the executive council was a hotly contested race. (The CLC is led by an executive of four — president, secretary treasurer and two executive vice-presidents. Next come the eight general vice-presidents of the executive committee. Then come 14 vice-presidents at large, including six women. All these officers, plus

the presidents of the provincial federations, make up the executive council.

Joy Thorkelson, the feisty vice-president of the Fishermen's Union and president of the Prince Rupert and District Labor Council, polled some 45 per cent of the vote in her campaign to unseat IWA head Jack Munro as a general vice-president.

Although she fell short of the votes required to unseat Munro, she did succeed in dropping his vote to last place on the general vice-president ballot.

Thorkelson, attending her first CLC convention, campaigned on a platform which called for a "CLC commitment to action ... for an economic and social program that meets the needs of working people."

Several members of the HEU provincial executive attended the CLC convention as observers. In the foreground, from left to right, are Bill Macdonald, HEU 1st vice-president, Jack Gerow, HEU secretary-business manager, Nancy Macdonald, trustee, and Alberta Dorval, 3rd vice-president.



Entering the

Under the old code that would have meant an automatic certification but under the new revised code it meant the HEU's organizing drive was only half over. A certification vote was ordered and Trinity employees voted to join the HEU by a one vote margin — a dramatic change from the high initial sign-up.

HEU secretary-business manager Jack Gerow blamed this year's labor code amendments for the narrow 18-17 vote.

"There is just no question about it. The mandatory vote gave the employer an opportunity to influence the vote. And the change between the Trinity sign-up and the vote was the first of many organizing drives where the vote will be lower than the sign-up."

What's wrong with having a vote? Basically it gives an employer one more opportunity to attempt to dissuade employees from joining a union. Fear of the employer and what he or she might do was always the largest obstacle when just a sign-up was required for certification.

While Premier Bill Bennett views the new labor code as the symbol of his "New Reality," B.C.'s labor movement sees it as the signpost for a new industrial relations Twilight Zone.

A spooky kind of place where trade unionists are forever looking over their shoulders.

A group of health care workers in Penticton entered this new Twilight Zone in July. The Hospital Employees' Union signed up about 70 per cent of employees at Trinity Rest Home, a long-term care facility in the Okanagan community.

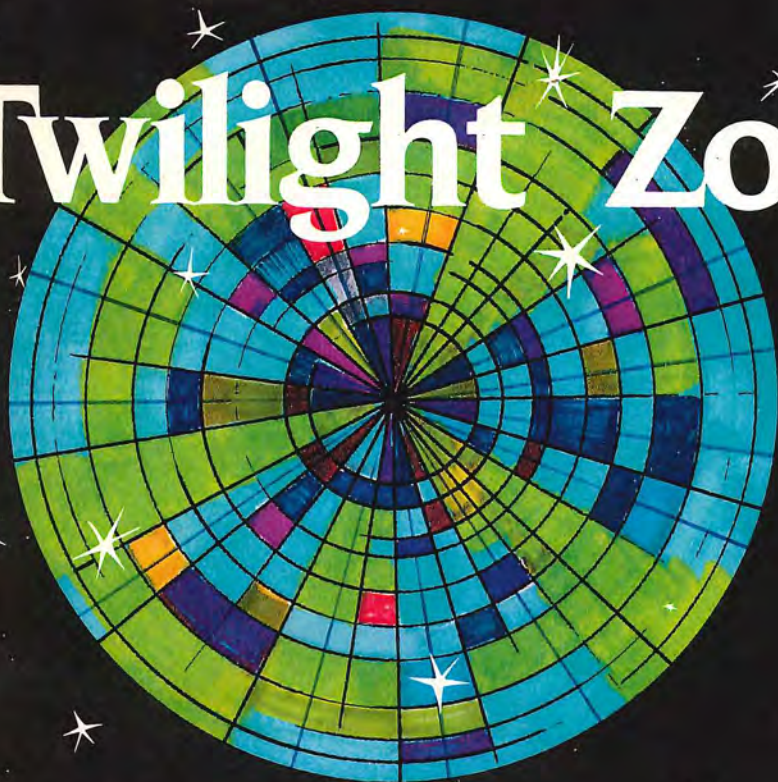
Now that the employer has two kicks at the can that fear will be an even larger factor. The boss will have more time to cash in on the bad economic times and to tell employees they're lucky to have a job.

This view is shared by Paul Weiler, the first chairman of the B.C. Labor Relations Board. In the days following announcement of the amendments, Weiler said: "It's obvious the intent of the amendments is to make B.C. as union-free an environment as possible."

"The government has also wiped out its own ability to play a constructive role in resolving labor disputes, because it is no longer acting in a non-partisan way in labor relations."

Weiler was particularly outraged over the absence of any time

Twilight Zone



requirement for when certification votes must be held. These fears were addressed soon afterwards when Labor Minister Bob McClelland ruled that the votes must be held within 10 days of the application.

However, employers can wield influence even within ten days to undermine a lengthy organizing campaign.

The vote at Trinity was held within 10 days and for HEU organizers that was 10 days too long.

Unquestionably, the Socreds have adopted a new approach. While they set the stage of an all-

out confrontation in 1983 with their far-reaching public sector restraint legislation, they have since adopted a strategy designed to "nickel and dime" unions and sap the strength of labor over the long haul. The labor code amendments, it could be argued, aren't as sweeping as last year's Bill 3, but they are just as effective.

Besides requiring a certification vote, the amendments also make decertifications easier, virtually prohibit secondary picketing, and outlaw strikes as a method of political protest. And one unproclaimed amendment would stop unionized construction workers from refusing to work alongside non-union

tradesmen.

Veteran labor lawyer Leo McGrady said the certification changes were the opposite to what was needed: streamlined procedures for certification which would limit the potential for employer interference.

McGrady adds that the changes will speed a long-term decline in union membership in B.C. since the mid-1970s. Layoffs, especially in recent years, eroded union membership rolls while unions were too busy fending off the Socreds to expand organizing drives.

Citing a 50 per cent reduction in the number of applications for certification last year, McGrady says: "Even under the status quo legislation there has been a drop in the number of applications."

McGrady blamed B.C.'s high unemployment rate for dampening the desire of workers — especially in small units — to join a union. He also said that unions have been occupied in the past two years with fighting off attacks from the provincial government and unable to spend vast amounts of time and money organizing new workplaces.

McGrady says the code changes are especially designed to protect the interests of the Socreds' strongest support base — small business. "About 90 per cent of business in this province is small business and that's the heart of the Socred support. And I would bet that the great majority of unfair labor practices considered at the LRB are filed against small businesses. You don't see Alcan or MacMillan Bloedel at too many of these hearings."

Taken together, the code changes decisively tip the balance of B.C.'s labor laws in favor of aggressive employers and make labor's fight that much harder.

Here are the key amendments:

- The definition of "strike" is revised to prohibit political job action unless a union is in a legal position to strike.

- Secondary picketing is virtually wiped out by a provision limiting such pickets to places where the employer is carrying on the business of the primary site. And the consent of the LRB is needed prior to any secondary picketing.

- Compulsory votes are required in all organizing drives.

- Decertification votes are mandatory if requested by at least 45 per cent of the employees in a bargaining unit.

McGrady feels the Socreds have adopted a more subtle approach than the blitzkrieg tactic they used last year.

"The government has put aside the bludgeon it used last summer and has adopted more sophisticated but just as lethal techniques in its attacks on the labor movement," he says.

"They are still trying to intimidate unions but they are doing it to different groups and at different times with instruments like the Compensation Stabilization Program, the code changes, and the threat to pass the special provision allowing union and non-union tradesmen to work on the same project."

Political pundits have talked about the Socreds' new "hands-off" approach to labor relations but many observers believe the cabinet is setting the agenda for many of this year's major labor disputes.

The LRB, for instance, recently adhered to the new picketing restrictions and prohibited locked-out employees at Slade and Stewart Ltd., a wholesale produce company, from picketing locations where the company's trucks stop to unload goods.

And if the code changes are not directly limiting a labor union's ability to defend its membership, they do it indirectly by creating a general climate or psychology that can be equally dangerous.

Carpenters' Union spokesman Marty Smith said: "We noticed on the jobsite that employers feel they've been given a green light to sidestep contracts while general contractors feel they can cancel union contracts and hire non-union sub-contractors."

The unproclaimed code amendment designating construction projects as special economic development projects and "open sites" for both union and non-union workers is being used as a "cudgel" by the provincial government at Expo 86, said Smith.

The threat of this proposed amendment has weakened worker militancy while emboldening

Expo's directors and the coalition of non-union contractors who have emerged to bid against union contractors for Expo work, said Smith.

"Without the proposed amendment doing away with our right to refuse to work with non-union workers, Expo would not have continually rejected settlements that would have given non-union workers a union wage."

Smith said that they can only maintain the kind of union security that other public sector and industrial unions enjoy if they can refuse to work alongside non-union workers.

McGrady says Victoria won't hesitate to pass the proposed amendment in order to stop job action at Expo. And there could be more restrictive legislation, he feels, before the next election if the Socreds feel they have enough public support.

"Some people say the Socreds' appetite for labor reform is spent. Well, I think what we're seeing is really only part of it. They're moving against different groups at different times and using different front groups like the non-union construction contractors.

"If you look at their record you have to conclude there is a lot more to come. There have been 13 substantial amendments in the past eight years the Socreds have been in power and so we can't relax and say the worst is over."

McGrady said the labor code has gone from being the best provincial labor code in Canada to being among the most anti-union. "We used to look down our noses at Ontario's legislation when we had what many regarded as the most progressive code in any North American legislation. But Ontario's labor laws sure seem like a sweet system now."

McGrady said the code changes could only exacerbate B.C.'s protracted recession. "Here we have some of the most anti-union legislation in Canada and yet we have an economic growth rate and unemployment rate that you find in West Virginia or Newfoundland." The new code's effect on the LRB's credibility is also ominous.

Labor observers as diverse as B.C. Federation of Labor secretary-treasurer Mike Kramer and labor lawyers Gabriel Somjen and Stuart Rush fear the code changes could undermine the board's traditional ability to act as a third party in industrial disputes.

"It could very well become like the old mediation services commission," said Kramer. The commis-

sion was boycotted by unions because it was seen as too pro-employer.

Somjen said a rise in amount of employer interference in organizing drives could prompt a return to the "recognition strikes" of the 1930s and 1940s when workers struck to force employers to recognize their union status.

Similarly, restrictions on picketing are going to force unions to "find creative ways of conducting strikes and dodging restrictive measures in the labor code," says Rush.

So in the new Twilight Zone the relative balance in labor laws is gone. The question is whether labor will respond so that the Socred politicians and their friends start looking over their shoulders instead. Then, and only then, will they see that the labor code must become more even-handed.

LETTERS

Peace is everybody's business ... even HEU's



Let's face it: peace is everybody's business, union business included. If J.B. Latham in the last issue of the *Guardian* thinks that the peace movement is a communist plot, then why do prominent right wingers like John Fraser of the Conservative Party and Socred Premier Bennett support it? Why did the vast majority of citizens in cities across this country vote for a halt to the arms race? And why did 100,000 people from all walks of life and from all political view points march for peace in April this year in Vancouver?

Everyone wants a

future for themselves, for their children and for their children's children. Nobody wins in a nuclear war. Even if one side were to wipe out the other, the radiation would come back to haunt the "winner" and the devastation would not be worth conquering.

To up the ante, as the U.S. government is doing, means to bring us closer to the brink. It takes ten minutes for a missile in Europe to hit its target. Forget intent. The greater danger lies in the possibility of an accident. And ten minutes is hardly enough time to stop it.

Anti-communism al-

ways seems to me to be an excuse to increase world tensions and to fill the pockets of the arms producers. Instead, the N.A.T.O. alliance, including the United States, should pull out their new missiles from Europe and start negotiating from a position of equality, not from a position of strength and thereby reduce tensions.

The people of the West know little of the Soviet system. I am sure that even J.B. Latham's knowledge is quite skimpy. Cultural, union and other kinds of peaceful exchanges are better than nuclear exchanges.

What has peace to do with our union? Nuclear war will affect everybody, including trade unionists — and that's an understatement. The billions now spent to keep up our military commitments could be channelled into such things as health care and could provide more jobs in peaceful industry. We know that a nuclear exchange will destroy health facilities, will kill and maim health care personnel and will contaminate food, drugs and other remaining essential items required for proper care of the survivors. Furthermore, I see the remnants of war at Shaughnessy Hospital every day and I can assure HEU members that there is no glory in war.

No, I am not talking unilateral disarmament. That is a pacifist fantasyland. Disarmament has to take place by mutual agreements. There are technical means available to monitor compliance with such agreements. But the steps have got to be taken and our union in convention, supported by the vast majority of our membership, endorses whatever steps are necessary and possible to stop and roll back the arms race. The other choice is unthinkable. I wholeheartedly endorse our union's stand on peace and its participation in the annual peace march.
Peter Marcus
Shaughnessy Unit

LETTERS

A helping hand

Please convey my thanks to the Shop Steward, Bob Davies, John Frew and others who acted on my behalf during my difficult period of employment at Banfield.

Because of ill health, I was forced into early retirement on a disability benefit. I am truly grateful to the union for securing this benefit and many others. If it were not for the union, we would be still fighting for these rights and getting nothing but feedback.

These are difficult times for the union and employees. I will never

lose sight of what the union has done for me. I am proud to say my son, Edward Wright, employed at Victoria General, has been chosen to take a Shop Steward Course. He is conscientious and ambitious and I know he will do a good job in representing his fellow workers.

I also wish to thank Henry Perkin for the advice and helping hand he extended during my troubled times in Banfield.

L. Czop
VGH Unit

Giving better service

In your June issue of The Hospital Guardian I read with interest of four fellow members at Victoria General Hospital becoming CSR Technicians.

Just to set the record straight, I completed the Purdue Course last May, 1983, wrote the diploma exam (97%) and wrote the technician exam in September 1983 (in which I scored 95%). Therefore, I feel proud to state that Royal Jubilee Hospital may claim the distinction of training the first registered Central Supply Technician in B.C.

However, since it is a specialized area, in which the more know-

ledge we have, the better service we may give, I would encourage everyone who wishes to make CSR work their career to take such training. The literature which the associated headquarters in Chicago, Illinois sends is most helpful in broadening one's knowledge.

I have requalified for the current year by taking further courses. This Spring, I started the BCIT Health Care Management Certificate course and have completed courses on Information Systems, Labor Relations and Budgeting for Health Care.

(Mrs.) Shirley A. McLeod
Royal Jubilee Unit



What's new?

Call the HEU hotline — a 24-hour information service for HEU members with news and views from your union.

Vancouver & area call 734 - 5311

Toll Free long distance — Zenith 2682

FRONTLINES

BOYCOTTS BOYCOTTS



Union members around the province are being asked by the B.C. Federation of Labor to boycott the following products and companies until labor disputes at these locations are settled. In all of the cases, the Federation has called for a boycott at the request of the unions who represent workers at these companies in the hopes of pressuring management to settle long outstanding contract disputes.

- Canadian Tire (all locations)
- Kern Chevrolet Oldsmobile,

Jiffy Markets (all facilities and locations)

- Michelin Tire
- Husky Oil stations and products
- Procter & Gamble soap products (Ivory, Joy and Dawn liquid detergents; Tide, Cheer, Oxydol and Bold powder detergents; Zest, Camay and Ivory bar soap)
- Louisiana Pacific Corporation, Forest Products (Construction material, Waferwood Construction Panels, Pabco Xonolite Insulation, Weatherseal windows and doors)

HOT EDICTS: The Federation is asking that no supplies and services of any kind be delivered or extended to these firms until the disputes are settled.

- Stevenson Construction — Pennyfarthing site
- Canadian Tire — Prince George location
- Purolator Courier
- Okanagan H.R.I. Supply Ltd. (all products and services)
- Slade & Stewart Ltd.
- Kern Chevrolet Oldsmobile

CLC opens doors to Carpenters' Union

The Carpenters' union in B.C. has won direct reaffiliation to the Canadian Labor Congress.

The reaffiliations will end three years of frustration during which a dispute between the international building trades unions and the CLC kept Canadian carpenters' locals outside the CLC.

The door was opened for return when the CLC ruled that it would accept the application of the B.C. Provincial Council of Carpenters for direct

affiliation. This decision allowed the Carpenters to bypass the CLC Building Trades Department and ensured the affiliation of industrial locals.

The Carpenters, along with all of Canada's Building Trade unions, were expelled from the CLC, provincial federations of labor and local councils when its international stopped paying per capita dues to the CLC.

"We always maintained that the international was high handed and wrong

in refusing to pay our per capita to the CLC thereby causing us to be suspended," said Bill Zander, B.C. Carpenters' president.

"It is unfortunate that the CLC initially insisted that we would have to affiliate through a CLC Building Trades Department since this would have meant that our industrial locals (about 25 per cent of the union's members in B.C.) would have had to have been abandoned. Joining a

CLC Building Trades Department would have opened us to charges of promoting a dual organization to the one that the International belongs to (AFL-CIO Building Trades Department)," Zander said.

Zander said the ruling allowing direct affiliation will let the Carpenters re-establish their place in the trade union movement at all levels and get on with the important tasks of defending workers' rights.

FRONTLINES

Classification hearings to resume in Sept.

A second set of formal hearings are scheduled to begin September 17 to help break the deadlock on the classification of HEU members.

Although most HEU members in the clerical and dietary departments have been through the classification process, there are many others who remain unclassified as a result of a dispute between the union and the Health Labor Relations Association.

This dispute centers on the method or approach that will be used to settle outstanding classifications.

HLRA is taking the approach that classifications can be decided strictly on the basis of information received from the employer. In other words, unclassified members may be prevented

from having any say in how their jobs are classified.

HEU will not agree to this.

In fact, HEU maintains that HLRA's position is totally contrary to the method used to complete clerical classification. For those classifications, employee input was sought in order to correctly determine the wage rate and job duties.

HEU believes it is impossible to fairly classify anyone without their participation.

The September meetings have been scheduled by Ed Peck, chairman of the arbitration, to hear both sides present arguments on this issue. Once the method of classification is established, the job of classifying all unclassified HEU members can resume.

Injury bill climbing

Preliminary data from Labor Canada reveals that more than 850 Canadian workers died from work-related injuries and illnesses in 1982.

In total, more than 15 million working days were lost due to injuries, almost double the number of days lost as a result of industrial disputes.

Injury-related absen-

ces cost the Canadian economy an estimated \$10 billion in 1982 alone.

In releasing the report, federal labor minister Andre Ouellet said there was obviously a disproportionate amount of attention paid to Canada's industrial dispute record compared to the country's work safety record.

Unemployment shouldn't be a way of life



The Unemployment Committee of the B.C. Federation of Labor has released an action program designed to increase employment in B.C. The Committee's announcement follows a major conference involving the Unemployment Action Centres, Labor Councils and local unions.

Federation president Art Kube said the Conference Board of Canada prediction of a stagnated B.C. economy means unemployment will rise even more in the coming year.

"The so-called restraint program of the government has failed. We have seen unemployment rise from 12.8 per cent in September 1983 to over 15 per cent today."

Kube said the federation wants to give the needs of the unemployed a high profile in order to get the solution required — more jobs.

The focus of the employment campaign will include:

- increased priority on bargaining for reduced work time (shorter work day, week, year)

- a campaign to reduce overtime hours worked to increase staffing

- priority for the fair distribution of the wealth and work associated with technological change

- an increase in unemployment and social assistance to raise incomes above the poverty line

- industrial expansion and restructuring in forestry, fisheries, shipbuilding, and the full restoration of public services such as education and health care

- using the Labor Councils' unemployment committees to reach the unemployed in order to offer more support and a higher political profile of the issue.

FRONTLINES

Union membership increasing

The total number of union members in Canada increased to 3,651,000 as of January 1984, compared with 3,563,000 a year earlier, according to figures released by Labor Canada.

With the exception of 1983, union membership in Canada has been increasing steadily since

1962.

The 3.7 million union members registered in 1984 represented about

40 per cent of paid workers in Canada (not including agricultural workers).



CU&C elects new president



Bill Kessel

Bill Kessel, business agent and financial secretary for Carpenters' Union Local 1541, has been named president of the CU&C Health Services Society.

The directors of the society also named HEU secretary-business manager Jack Gerow to the position of CU&C vice-president.

CU&C is the largest health insurer in British Columbia and is co-operatively owned.

Bank organizing continues

The five-year-old fight to organize Canada's bank workers is continuing and Canadian Labor Congress representatives in British Columbia are appealing for support in the campaign.

CLC Regional Director Len Ruel has invited interested bank workers

or trade unionists who have friends, family members or acquaintances who may be interested in joining the Union of Bank Employees to contact 294-3034 or 294-6405 in Burnaby.

Canada's chartered banks are among the

country's largest, most powerful, most anti-union employers. According to the Union of Bank Employees, the banks have spent millions of dollars trying to stop their employees from organizing to get a fair wage and a real say in working conditions.

Help break the banks!



FRONTLINES

Eaton's employees win certification

The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union has made a significant break-through in the organization of retail workers with the awarding of certifications to at least two Eaton's stores in Ontario.

Eaton's stores in Brampton and St. Catharines have been certified and a major organizing



drive is now underway in Toronto. In that city, some 3,000 Eaton's workers (half of the company's Toronto work force) turned out for a union meeting recently.

Only 9 per cent of Canada's 1.7 million retail workers are currently unionized. Many retail workers are paid at or near the minimum wage.

MILESTONES

Martha Fors, a cook at Squamish General Hospital is retiring in late September. Sister Fors has worked at the hospital since 1960 and has held HEU unit executive positions of chairperson and trustee.

She plans to try her hand at landscape painting in her retirement, in between tending the garden and visiting her family.

George Porter, an HEU member in the stores department, has retired from Richmond General Hospital in Richmond. Brother Porter has been a member of HEU for 18 years. Also retiring from Richmond General is Nellie Torsky, a cook. Sister Torsky plans to do some travelling.

A housekeeper at Grandview Towers #2, Phyllis Boraston Kaneen, retired in early January.

Sister Kaneen had worked at the facility for almost 10 years.

Isabel Curiston from Nelson's Kootenay Lake District Hospital is looking forward to her retirement and plans to do "what I please, when I please." Sister Curiston, who worked in the dietary department, has been employed at the hospital since 1971.

Another Nelsonite, Irene Rutherglen, retired this year. Sister Rutherglen, a physiotherapy aide at Willowhaven Private Hospital, was honored at a special luncheon put on by her co-workers just prior to her retirement in April. She says she plans to sit back and really enjoy being at home for awhile.

Katherine Doerksen, a nurse aide at the MSA Extended Care unit in

Abbotsford, retired in June. Sister Doerksen has also worked at Menno Hospital where in 1976-77 she served as the unit's secretary-treasurer. She transferred to MSA in 1977 and has worked in the extended care unit since then.

Four HEU members from Dawson Creek retired recently. They were: Mary Lewis, a dietary worker for 15 years; Rudy Landsfried, who worked as an orderly for 18 years; Hildergard Landsfried, an HEU member in the laundry department for 18 years, and Dorothy Mattson, a 15 year veteran of the housekeeping department.

After 24 years of service, Pat Dutton of Mission Memorial Hospital retired this year. Sister Dutton was honored with several parties before

retiring and received gifts from fellow workers in the laundry and housekeeping department and from the unit as well.

New Vista in New Westminster lost the services of one of the unit's former assistant secretaries with the retirement in July of Anne Hiscock. Sister Hiscock was an HEU unit officer in 1978 and 1979. Her retirement plans include travelling.

Jessie Brooks, a patient service aide in the extended care unit at Delta Hospital, retired August 15. Sister Brooks has worked in the hospital industry for some 24 years, and at Delta since its opening 7 years ago. She and her husband are planning an extended holiday back in Ontario to visit friends.

FRONTLINES

B.C. government found guilty

The United Nations chief body on labor relations has found the B.C. government guilty of violations of internationally accepted trade union rights, and in violation of some international labor agreements.

The International Labor Organization targeted three legislative bills that accompanied the July 7, 1983 budget: Bill 3, the Public Sector Restraint Act; Bill 11, amendments to the Compensation Stabilization Act; and Bill 26, the amendments to the Employment Standards Act.

The ILO was acting on complaints filed by the

Canadian Labor Congress and the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession — of which the B.C. Teachers' Federation is a member.

In their judgment the ILO committee members considered the arguments of the complainants and of the B.C. government, which made its submission last April.

According to the committee's findings, Bill 3, which allows for the dismissal of public sector employees for a variety of reasons, contravenes a 1948 international convention, to which Canada is a signatory, decreeing

that workers should have the right to free collective bargaining.

The committee found Bill 11 violates a 1949 convention governing voluntary collective bargaining, although Canada has not ratified this agreement.

It accepted the argument from the teachers' organization that the bill extended controls on public sector wages for an indefinite period and made the employer's "ability to pay" the paramount consideration in wage settlements. Since the government determines this by setting public sector budgets,

and since the relevant minister's approval must be sought before a wage settlement takes effect, the principle of free collective bargaining is violated, the committee found.

The ILO also found fault with Bill 26, the amendments to the Employment Standards Act, which, the teachers' group argued, would encourage employers to opt out of bargaining conditions.

The committee stated it lacked enough information to make a decision, but asked Victoria to consider amending sections of the act.

Phone deregulation spells trouble

The Telecommunication Workers' Union has launched a \$100,000 media campaign in B.C. against possible deregulation of the phone system.

The union is convinced that while deregulation may result in lower long distance rates, monthly telephone bills could double in cost.

The media campaign, encompassing both newspaper and TV advertising, is designed to warn the consumer of this possibility and prevent Canadian Radio-TV and Telecommunications

Commission (CRTC) approval of deregulation.

"The deregulation and resultant dismantling of Canada's phone system would benefit only two groups: big business users of the system (who would get the big benefit of lower long distance rates) and companies that want a share of the (most profitable) communications pie," says a TWU brochure on the issue.

The Communication Workers' of Canada have agreed to expand the campaign to other provinces.

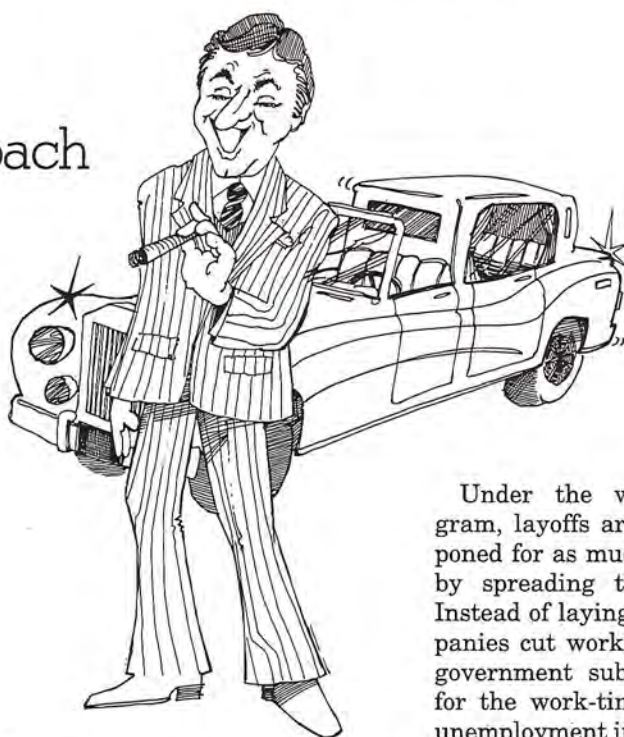
THE NUMBER
YOU HAVE
CALLED IS NO
LONGER IN
SERVICE



BELL PROFITS \$ 745,200,000

The sharing of scarcity

A corporate approach
to the crisis
of unemployment



Canada's corporate elite had more to worry about than just a delay in the arrival of their new BMWs and Mercedes Benzs when West German auto workers went on strike this spring.

That country's 400,000-member I.G. Metall Union struck for seven weeks over a demand for a five-hour cut in their workweek and Canadian workers are now talking about placing similar demands on the bargaining table.

And at the heart of the debate is money: how much of the economic pie will go to management and stockholders and how much to workers.

The West German union officials finally accepted a compromise of a 38.5-hour week, scoring a decisive breakthrough in the fight for shortening working hours.

Almost simultaneously the Canadian Labor Congress decided at its biennial convention in June to follow I.G. Metall's lead and place the shorter workweek at the top of the CLC's political agenda for the 1980s.

The drive for "shorter working time with no loss in pay" is fueled by the need to slash Canada's escalating unemployment rate. That task will require even greater urgency by the end of the decade as

the micro-computer revolution transforms the workplace.

The CLC feels a shorter workweek is perhaps the most effective way to quickly create jobs and sees it as an alternative to the federal government's job sharing program. Labor wants to share work but without a loss in pay. And that's the catch with Ottawa's work-sharing scheme which wants employees to share work and the paycheque too.

Canadian Union of Public Employees researcher John Calvert says Ottawa sees work-sharing as a "bargain basement" way of dealing with unemployment.

"Both the federal and the provincial governments, unwilling to create the millions of new jobs that are needed, are promoting the idea that workers should share a shrinking amount of work. The sharing of scarcity, rather than the creation of plenty, has become official policy of our governments, as well as employers."

Under the work-sharing program, layoffs are averted or postponed for as much as nine months by spreading the work around. Instead of laying off workers, companies cut working hours and the government subsidizes employers for the work-time lost by paying unemployment insurance benefits.

The federal work-sharing money is also an incentive to employers to begin converting production to a part-time operation. Those kind of changes are easy during a recession. Many workers are willing to accept reduced wages in a world where they hear the constant refrain: "You're lucky you have a job."

While some unions have used the work-sharing program to soften or postpone layoffs, most labor leaders see it as a dead-end.

That's why the HEU at its last convention opposed work-sharing, saying the program would reduce the total amount of wages paid. Instead, the HEU is fighting for increased government funding and a reduction in the workweek.

Arbitrator Don Munroe, in his recent contract award, reduced the HEU workweek to 35 hours from 37 and a half but that was rolled back by Compensation Stabilization Program commissioner Ed Peck who declared the reduction

"excessive." Jack Gerow, HEU secretary-business manager, says a 35-hour workweek would have kept many more HEU members on the job and at the same time helped to stimulate local economies.

United Auto Workers research director Sam Gindin says the increasing participation of women in the workplace makes the need for less working time crucial. Families with two wage earners are finding less and less time for parenting and domestic responsibilities.

"If we think of changes in our hours of work from the perspective of the family rather than the individual, a very noteworthy fact emerges: today, in spite of higher productivity than in the past, an average family is selling more labor hours in the marketplace than ever before.

"In a very real sense, therefore, the historical trend to shorter hours has not only slowed down, but reversed."

Gindin says the federal work-sharing program already contains the idea that it's in the social interest to subsidize reduced work time. He argues that Ottawa and all employers should follow that logic to its natural conclusion: a reduced workweek.

The federal government, however, appears reluctant to move beyond the confines of its current work-sharing program which appears incapable of making a serious dent in the unemployment rate. The program has not helped those workers forced on the dole because of plant and mill closures.

So far this year the work-sharing program is involved nationally in 2,252 agreements, covering 33,853 workers. According to Canada Employment and Immigration, these subsidies amount to \$21 million and are preventing the layoff of 13,823 employees.

In B.C., the program is involved with 500 agreements, covering 5,232 employees and preventing the layoff of 2,045 employees at a

cost of \$3,769,000.

Federal officials say the majority of agreements in B.C. cover small businesses employing less than six workers. Large companies showed initial interest in B.C. at the outset of the recession when it looked like there would be an eventual recovery. However, profit margins in the resource industries have not been high enough to satisfy corporate appetites so many layoffs became permanent. (Editor's note: After tax profits for Canadian corporations in 1983 were 75 per cent higher than in 1982.)

And that's the rub: work-sharing has little to offer for employees whose jobs will never return because their industries are going through profound structural change.

Many workers, unable to secure full-time employment, are settling for the reduced standard of living and benefits that are offered through part-time jobs.

SHORTER WORKTIME



MEANS MORE JOBS



Most of Canada's labor movement is opposed to work sharing schemes and instead proposes a general reduction of the workweek to help create badly needed jobs.

CUPE's Calvert says that 565,000 full-time jobs were terminated in 1982, compared with 107,000 newly-created part-time positions.

And the majority of these positions — averaging 16 hours a week — are not being filled by married people bringing in extra family income, but by workers with no other source of income.

Part-time work became a big issue in B.C. this summer with the Lower Mainland transit shutdown. The Metro Transit Operating Co. wanted to bring in part-time drivers to operate during the non-rush hour period. The Independent Canadian Transit Union rejected this rollback demand, saying it would erode their membership and also allow MTOC to implement service cutbacks.

Patti Schom-Moffat, a Vancouver consultant who has written about work-sharing, says the jump in part-time employees can under-

mine contract gains won by unions. "I think you'll find that employers are reluctant to admit part-timers into existing bargaining units and that part-time workers don't get normal contract fringe benefits."

Over time, says Schom-Moffat, increasing numbers of full-time jobs are going to be reallocated into part-time positions when full-time employees leave or retire.

This all begs the billion-dollar question: If work-sharing isn't the answer how do we pay for a reduced workweek?

B.C. Federation of Labor president Art Kube says the Social Credit government's restraint program has restricted in B.C. the kind of economic recovery that has occurred in the past six months in other provinces.

That's because there isn't enough stimulation to spur consumer demand, says Kube. The aggressive, anti-union policies of the Socred government have made workers afraid to spend the money that is needed to spur the recovery, he adds.

As any economist will attest, jobs disappear when consumer demand is low.

But beyond the creation of needed jobs, a reduced workweek would improve morale on the job and reduce absenteeism, says Calvert.

What about Canada's ability to compete with its international competitors? Well, Europe is already far ahead of Canada when it comes to shorter working time, including paid holidays, paid vacations and early retirement.

And the decline of the Canadian dollar has made labor costs in many industries less than in the U.S. As well, a reduced workweek in such unionized industries as auto-manufacturing would likely be matched by the same industry across the border.



Work sharing appears to have done little to improve the employment prospects of the unemployed. In fact, in B.C. where there are more than 200,000 unemployed, only 2,000 jobs have been extended because of the federal work sharing program.

Finally, Canada will never be able to compete with Third World nations which will always be able to drive down their labor costs to meet any Canadian challenge.

Calvert points out that labor costs only account for 15 per cent of productivity in most industries. The other 85 per cent is determined by management decisions on plant and equipment, on technology and a host of other managerial prerogatives.

Indeed, productivity will go down when business is only operating at 70 per cent of capacity, and when nearly two million workers are laid off.

Commenting on the economics of a shortened workweek, the UAW's Gindin points out that Ottawa paid out about \$12 billion in unemployment insurance — over \$1,000 for every worker in the country. And this doesn't include the hidden costs of runaway unemployment.

So why pay out \$12 billion? Why not just shorten the workweek?

Gindin said it was clear at the CLC convention that a shorter workweek was on people's minds because delegates — in a rare move — rejected an executive action program and passed an alternative strategy with a shorter workweek as its centerpiece.

"The new document sounded more like the West German auto workers because it talked about how important it is to put reduced work time on the agenda. Of course, what will happen in the future is one thing, but that floor fight was significant."

What is labor's chance of breaking through the 40-hour barrier?

Says Calvert: "It's negotiable at the bargaining table. There are a lot of social goals the union movement has advocated which aren't negotiable but this one is."

"For instance, if the UAW makes inroads on the issue, it could set a trend. However, nobody should underestimate how difficult it will be."

One step closer to job security

Practical nurses win major victory

The photos on these two pages show practical nurses demonstrating outside of the old Victoria General Hospital in May 1983. The PNs planned the protest after learning that hospital administration planned to phase them out of the health care delivery teams at the new Helmcken Road site of VGH.



Practical Nurses at Victoria General Hospital have won an important victory in the battle to regain their jobs at the new acute care hospital.

A landmark ruling by Victoria arbitrator David Vickers has found that the hospital violated HEU's collective agreement when it assigned registered nurses to practical nurse job duties at the new Victoria General Hospital.

Vickers was ruling on a grievance launched by HEU last fall.

As soon as HEU learned that 85 PNs would be left without any work at the new acute care facility and that the hospital would hire only registered nurses, the Union initiated grievance action against the hospital.

While HEU advanced the PN grievance to arbitration, the practical nurses remained at the old hospital which was converted to a long-term care facility. At the old hospital, PNs provide nursing services to long-term care patients only.

The Vickers decision could well have province-wide implications for practical nurses whose job classifications have been under attack for years.

A study recently conducted by HEU showed that in the past five years alone, more than 1,000 practical nurses have been replaced by registered nurses in B.C. hospitals. Registered nurses are paid some 35 per cent more than practical nurses and, in many cases, they are doing almost identical work.

This trend is particularly alarming considering there are some 6,000 unemployed PNs in B.C. compared to a shortage of registered nurses. In fact, RNs are being imported from outside the province to fill the positions once held by PNs.

The exclusion of practical nurses from health care delivery is part of a concept known as primary nursing. This model relies on a single registered nurse to provide complete patient care to a number of patients. Practical nurses are used in team nursing care where essentially a team of two registered

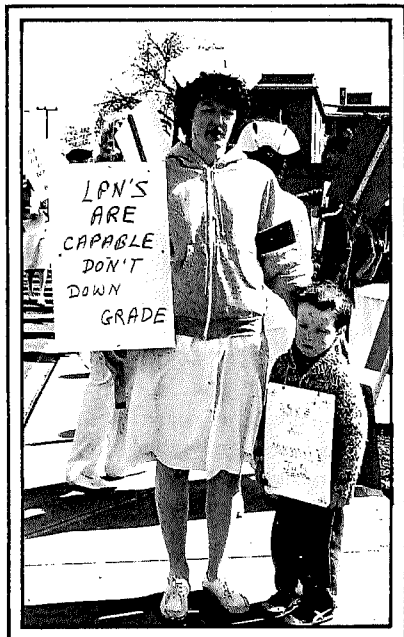
nurses, one practical nurse and one nurse aide provide care to 20 to 25 patients. Team nursing has been practiced in B.C. hospitals for the past 20 years.

Several B.C. hospitals, most notably Victoria General, Grace Hospital and Vancouver General Hospital, have abandoned the team nursing concept and replaced it with primary nursing.

This concept is being adopted even though official Ministry of Health policy does not favor or fund primary nursing care. In fact, the health ministry acknowledges that some hospitals simply manipulate their budgets to pay for this new model of health care. They call it a case of "robbing Peter to pay Paul."

Undoubtedly, many B.C. health officials are aware of the U.S. and Canadian studies which show that the team method is more cost efficient and preferred by patients. These studies show the amount of time spent by practical nurses in direct bedside care of patients is much greater than the amount of time spent by registered nurses who have many other responsibilities to perform in the primary model.

The Vickers arbitration award did not offer any new fuel to this



argument. In fact, Vickers stated quite specifically that his role was not to assess the merits of one system over another.

Instead, he resolved the issue of the elimination of PNs at Vic. General on the basis of existing HEU contract language and the labor code.

It is a decision which could have an impact on PNs in every B.C. hospital.

Vickers ruled that HEU has work jurisdiction over the duties of practical nurses. This means the employer cannot re-assign the duties of HEU workers to other non-HEU workers without negotiations occurring.

In addition, Vickers ruled that technological change was in part responsible for the displacement of the practical nurses. Under the HEU master agreement and the B.C. Labor Code, technological change is an issue which must be mutually negotiated. This had not been done at Victoria General Hospital.

The arbitrator fell short of ordering the employer to reinstate the practical nurses at the new Vic. General Hospital. Instead, he referred the matter of the 85 dis-

placed PNs back to HEU and the hospital for negotiation. And he reserved jurisdiction in the event a "satisfactory solution can't be reached."

However, negotiations on the reinstatement of PNs cannot be scheduled because the arbitrator's ruling is being appealed by the hospital.

Peter McAllister, president of the Health Labor Relations Association of B.C., which represents the hospital, has announced that HLRA will be appealing the ruling on behalf of Victoria General.

VGH spokesman Dr. Don Carlow confirmed that position when he said there will be no change in the current status (of practical nurses) until the issue is clarified.

Until the appeal is completed, there will be no PNs rehired at VGH.

It's also expected that other hospitals who have been phasing out PNs will await the outcome of the appeal before changing any policies.

In the meantime, HEU's legal counsel is preparing for the appeal and will take all steps necessary to ensure that the Vickers ruling is upheld.



SPEAKING OUT

Don't give in to concessions!

By Colin Kelly
President, Local #1
Independent Canadian Transit
Union

On Saturday, July 21, I was sitting in a well known west-end eatery in Vancouver. It was the 37th day of the transit shut-down. A middle-aged woman approached me to say she recognized me from TV newscasts and asked how long it would be before the buses run again. She identified herself as a worker at St. Paul's Hospital, a member of your union, and told me of the difficulties being experienced by other employees and patients because of the absence of buses. But the most important thing she wanted to tell me was, "No matter what the inconvenience to my workmates or our patients, it is absolutely vital that you don't give in on the demand for concessions. If you do, then they'll be coming to get concessions from us next and that will hurt our patients too."

That is the critical issue here. As soon as one union accepts the loss or deterioration of any of its working conditions then that acquiescence will be used by other employers. It is particularly true in the public sector.

The Independent Canadian Transit Union is a relatively small, independent, public sector union. It is affiliated to a small labor cen-

tral, the Confederation of Canadian Unions. However, we did have a high profile at last year's August 10 Empire Stadium Rally and we continued that high profile through our "Unstrike" tactics which were designed to put the public "in the picture" regarding cuts to the transit system.

Just think of the demoralizing affect on other public sector workers if the bus drivers or any other militant unions were forced to accept the concession demands of its employer. Other workers would become resigned to the inevitability of "take backs" in working conditions without being clear as to why it was necessary.

The question of productivity (the guise under which most concessions are demanded) is solely within the responsibility of management. Even the Employers' Council of B.C. agrees with that.

If a public service is not operating at a high level of efficiency then the place to look for improvement to that efficiency is within the management. If management then turns around and tries to take away a working condition from employees in order to make management look more efficient then something is drastically wrong.

A large part of the manager's responsibility is to maintain a workforce which is motivated by fair treatment to produce a good day's work. They are also expected to maintain, indeed enhance, the services they are in charge of providing.

If the motivation doesn't exist, it is the management that is inefficient. And the motivation doesn't increase as you take away more and more.

We consider that public sector workers are the guardians of the public interest. Certainly this government doesn't care about transit or health care — and that leaves us on the front lines preventing the erosion of vital public services.

Take aways in our working conditions necessarily adversely affect the service the public gets.

So fight hard for those hard won benefits. They were won for you over many years by workers long since retired. They were to be for the benefit of workers everywhere whether or not they worked inside that system. It is workers that are hurt by health care and transit cutbacks. These benefits are ours, in trust, to keep and to improve for those who will follow; they are not ours to give away!