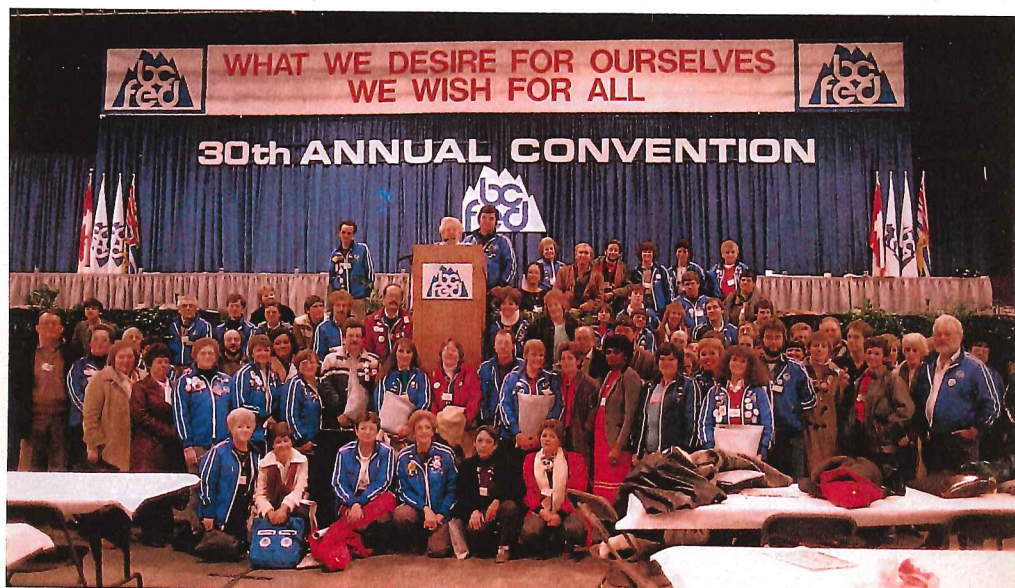


THE HOSPITAL Guardian

Volume 5 Number 4

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30th ANNUAL CONVENTION





HOSPITAL
EMPLOYEES'
UNION LOCAL
180

"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: **BILL MACDONALD, JACK GEROW, MARY LaPLANTE, ALBERTA DORVAL, CLARKE GARDNER.**

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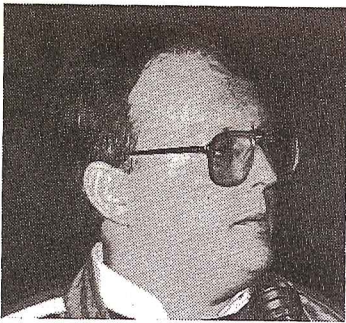
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By Jack Gerow

It's 7:00 p.m. February 18, 1982.

Premier Bill Bennett is about to speak.

He has requested and has received free time on BCTV to make a special announcement to British Columbians.

"I am taking this unusual step of speaking to you this evening to outline some of the measures the government will pursue to strengthen the economy."

As he speaks, it becomes clear that his biggest concern is political survival, not economic stability. And he resorts to one of the oldest political tactics to maintain his political power. He "divides" so he can "conquer."

This time, the public sector is to be the scapegoat.

He says public spending is the cause of the economic recession. But he says he has the prescription to cure the economic ills of the province. He will limit funding to municipalities, schools and hospitals. In addition, he will limit wage increases and benefits to the public sector.

He told British Columbians that his solution would work and would take only two years.

And then, with a straight face, he told British Columbians that "collective bargaining in the public sector will take place in the normal manner."

On February 18 of this year, British Columbians will enter the fifth year of Bennett's restraint program.

Militancy beats concessions

Funding to hospitals, schools, and municipalities has indeed been limited. Wages have been rolled-back, frozen and held well below increases in the cost of living.

And yet the economy is still sick.

British Columbia has one of the highest unemployment rates in Canada and is showing no signs of any economic recovery, yet alone a lasting one.

And the best the Expo '86 will produce is an economic burp not an economic boom.

Collective bargaining has not been normal — in fact there has been no free collective bargaining in the public sector for four years.

After four years of restraint, it is clear to almost all workers that the first principle of the Sacred restraint program was to introduce and institutionalize neo-conservative economic policies similar to those of Britain's Margaret Thatcher and her sole mate in the U.S. Ronald Reagan.

But has Bennett's divide and conquer tactic worked?

In the short term, I regret to say it has.

The unemployed have been pitted against the employed.

Private sector workers have been pitted against public sector workers. And union members have been pitted against union shop stewards, officers and staff. Workers have been divided. And workers have been rendered vulnerable.

For the members of HEU, the divisive reality of the restraint program has been ever present since February 1982. Their 24-month Master Agreement was

stretched to a 51-month contract with no additional compensation. Their 35-hour work week was eliminated and their collective agreements in long term care are taking years to be finally settled.

And further attempts to divide the membership will be seen this March when HEU's bargaining committee goes to the bargaining table to renew expired collective agreements.

HEU's bargaining committee will face the most reactionary set of concession demands ever seen by the union and its members. And it won't be a matter of how few, it will be a matter of how many and how deep the concession cuts will go. Although the employers have kept their concession demands under wraps, a few leaks have surfaced.

First, there will be an all out attack on the sick leave provisions of collective agreements. Next, layoff and bumping provisions will be under the gun. Also, attempts will be made, at the expense of regular employees, to create more casual employees with fewer benefits and rights.

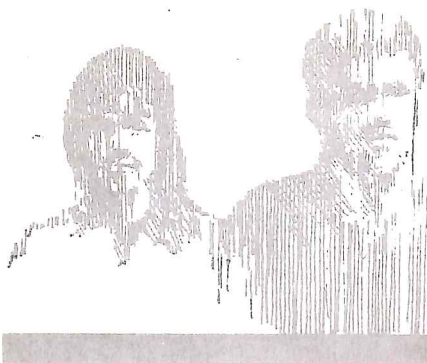
The first stage of the restraint program is wage controls. After being victimized by the first stage of the restraint program, the members of HEU will soon face the second stage — concessions.

I think the membership will say "no" to concessions.

I think the membership will say that the provincial government has gone too far.

Health care workers know that the answer to divide-and-conquer is unity and militancy.

Hanging on! HEU members tell of their



Marie Hill loved her job as an admitting messenger at the Vancouver General Hospital. An active woman, Sister Hill enjoyed the walking and personal contact her job entailed.

In 1984, after being on long term disability for two years, Sister Hill wanted to get back to work. Her previous job had been eliminated but, by pestering the hospital, she was able to start working again in the mail room.

But just a few days after she started, Sister Hill hit her knee on a ladder. Simple enough, she thought, workers' compensation will cover me. It did, but then the Workers' Compensation Board decided to cut the 48 year old HEU member off from benefits. An appeal has been filed, but the Boards of Review can take up to 20 months to reach a decision.

She did receive long term disability -- for a while. Mutual Life also cut her off from those benefits. Suddenly, Marie was in trouble.

"I was in a heck of a position. I



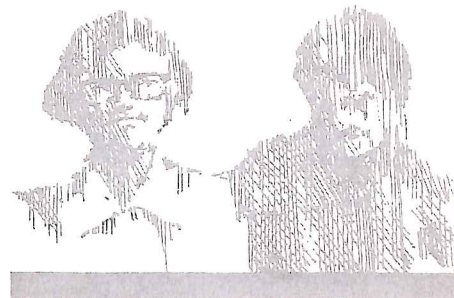
Marie Hill is one HEU member who called on the union for help.

had to apply for welfare and all they give you is \$351 a month. My rent was \$365," Sister Hill recalls.

"I know what it is like to be hungry now. Some people just don't realize that others are in a difficult situation. They just sit behind a desk and make decisions and they don't really care about what happens to people."

So with hardly any food left in her apartment, and the arthritis in her hands flaring up again, Sister Hill called on the HEU for help.

In November, Sister Hill received a much needed cheque from Mutual Life for \$7,400 in long term disability benefits. "I feel very good about what the union has done for me," says Sister Hill,



who is now receiving monthly LTD benefits.

"I want to thank everyone who's helped."

Sister Hill's story is all too typical of the frustration and anger HEU members feel when they have to deal with the complex bureaucratic realm of workers' compensation. What seems to be an arbitrary ruling by the WCB can force hard-working union members such as Sister Hill to survive on social assistance, making hospital workers often bitter at a system originally designed to help them.

But HEU members do have one ally when dealing with the workers' compensation system: the resources of the union.

Carmela Allevato, one of the people who deals with the WCB for the union, notes that in Sister Hill's case, the HEU member began receiving benefits immediately after the union intervened in the case. Of course, not all cases result in prompt results, (Sister

battles with the WCB

Hill is still waiting for the Boards of Review to rule whether she is entitled to workers' compensation), but at least having the resources of the union behind a hospital worker can help to cut through the bureaucratic maze.

An area of serious concern for hospital workers, and service workers in general, is getting the WCB to recognize chronic back injuries as an industrial disease.

If an industrial disease is specified in WCB regulations -- such as asbestosis, which results from continual exposure to asbestos fibres -- a worker doesn't have to prove each and every time that there was a specific incident that caused the injury.

For hospital workers, the most common "industrial disease" is chronic back injuries, which constitute a large majority of the claims filed by hospital workers.

"Yet the WCB refuses to recognize back injuries as an industrial disease," says Allevato. A chronic back problem was the culprit in

forcing Jacoba Van Dyk off the job earlier this year. Sister Van Dyk, who was a nurse aide at St. Mary's Hospital in Sechelt, was lifting a patient into bed one day with the help of a registered nurse. But the patient's legs buckled and Sister Van Dyk caught the person, injuring her back in the process.

She continued working but started developing migraine headaches and her legs continued to go numb. She was forced to stop working and went on workers' compensation.

Van Dyk's case is complicated by the fact that because the WCB doesn't consider the chronic back problems to be work related, it has cut the HEU member off compensation benefits. The case is currently under appeal.

But while Sister Vay Dyk was being covered, the employer was doing a curious thing to her paycheque. Instead of topping off the 75 per cent paid by the WCB with the 25 per cent extra that the

collective agreement requires, the employer was holding back paying by using Van Dyk's accumulated sick pay and holiday pay.

Allevato recalls that as a result of a phone call from Sister Van Dyk, the union looked into the matter and discovered that the employer was definitely in the wrong.

Allevato wrote a letter to the hospital administration requesting immediate repayment of the money to Sister Van Dyk.

St. Mary's Hospital quickly paid up.

"Only through intervention by the union can we be sure that HEU members receive what they are entitled to under the collective agreement," says Allevato.

And Sister Van Dyk appreciated the union's involvement in her case.

"So far the union has given me lots of help," says Sister Van Dyk. "Without that help I wouldn't have gotten anywhere."

Innovative techniques used to spread Canadian Tire boycott

Alex Lutz never imagined that he would be on the verge of spending his third winter walking the picket line in Prince George.

But one thing's certain: Lutz won't quit until there's a union shop inside the store.

"I told the other guys it was not going to be easy when we first went out on strike," says Lutz.

"Since we've got this far, we have to carry on. This is when the pressure must come on."

And bringing pressure to bear on Canadian Tire is exactly what the Retail Clerks' Union is doing. Using a creative leafletting and lawn sign approach, reminiscent of political campaigning techniques,

the Retail Clerks' Union — the labor organization that still represents the striking Canadian Tire workers — is spreading the word throughout the province to boycott the retail giant's 20 outlets in B.C.

"Once in a while, an employer comes along who gives a whole new definition to the words 'anti-union,'" says Bert Rougeau, a spe-



cial representative for the RCU who has been coordinating the boycotting campaign against Canadian Tire. The national firm's total sales last year were \$2.1 billion.

According to Rougeau, the Canadian Tire saga began two years ago when the Prince George outlet — one of the largest in Canada — opened. Employees were hired at a wage of \$5.50 an hour but were promised \$8 an hour after one year of operation by the store's owner, Thomas Steadman. As well, employees were also promised both a profit-sharing plan and a health care package.

But 10 months later, all that changed. Eighty per cent of the employees were let go and replaced by people paid \$4 an hour. During that first year of operation, notes Rougeau, the store recorded \$23 million in sales.

The remaining employees decided that they needed protection and joined the Retail Clerks' Union. In September, 1983, a whopping 92 per cent of the workers were signed up and the union certified. Negotiations with the employer for the first collective agreement hit a standstill when Canadian Tire, afraid that workers at its other stores would unionize, refused to agree to union security and a workable seniority system, says Rougeau. Strike notice was served. Two years later, union members are still on strike.

The RCU's creative approach came as a result of a December, 1983 B.C. Supreme Court injunction prohibiting mass picketing of the other franchised outlets in the province.

"We have to look at labor disputes from a different approach. We have to be more innovative, especially with the current labor board, to get our message to the public," Rougeau maintains.

He points out that the B.C. Federation of Labor and the RCU did some research which showed that each Canadian Tire store in the Lower Mainland tends to draw the bulk of its customers from a 20-block radius. And that's where

Rougeau has focussed the boycott campaign.

Each of those 20-block areas has about two postal codes. By cross-referencing postal walks, provided by postal workers, with trade union membership lists, provided by various unions, Rougeau and the RCU were able to contact trade unionists to ask them whether they would erect a boycott Canadian Tire sign on their lawn.

Rougeau says that 240 lawn signs were erected around one Canadian Tire store on Hastings Street near Clark in Vancouver. The RCU is continuing its campaign by moving the lawn signs around the other store outlets in the Lower Mainland.

"We are trying to get the issue before the public as much as possible," says Rougeau.

"The question is whether we will have a union shop or not."

Handing out leaflets has also been an effective tool. Recently, concerned trade unionists handed out leaflets to sports fans attending the Canadian Football League Western Final in B.C. Place Stadium and at a Vancouver Canucks hockey game in the Pacific Coliseum.

In mid-November, 340 trade unionists made the national news when they manned the bridges and approaches to Vancouver and handed out boycott Canadian Tire leaflets.

All that support is appreciated by workers such as Winnifred Keeler, another one of the striking Canadian Tire employees in Prince George. She says the union is still trying to get the employer back to the bargaining table.

"I don't want to walk out there another winter if I can help it," she says.

"I'd like to tell people that we have to stick together and get this over with — get it settled, so we can go back to work. We'll see it through, but we can use your help."

Rougeau also points out that the union is continuing its battle with the courts. The RCU is appealing a

recent Federal Court of Canada decision which held that the union's use of the Canadian Tire logo bisected with "Don't Shop at Canadian Tire" is an infringement of copyright. The union is arguing that the decals, leaflets and lawn signs displaying the logo are not an offering to trade and is confident it can win the case.

A recent ruling by the Labor Relations Board, however, has given the union some hope. The company has been claiming that because the stores are all individually owned, there is no connection between the retail outlets other than in name. But the LRB ruled that the company has to open its books to the union to show how goods are traded from one store to another. As of press time, Canadian Tire has twice refused to allow the union access to its books.

As Rougeau, Keeler, and Lutz say, the battle to allow workers to represent themselves with a union is a crucial one. HEU members can help fellow trade unionists by refusing to shop in a chain owned by anti-labor employers who believe in right-to-work legislation.

"I'm not going to give up — I'm out there for a purpose," says Keeler.

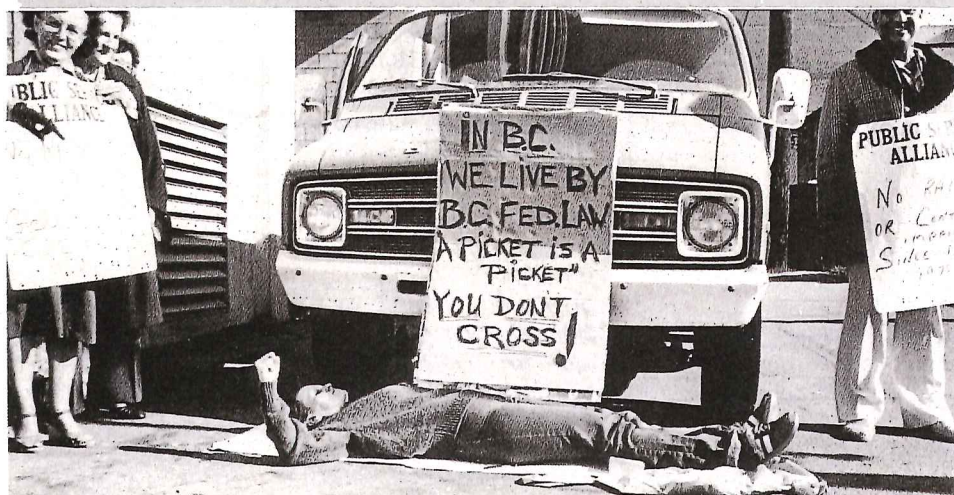
"With a union shop we will be treated the same there and there won't be all these firings all the time. It means your job, your job security, your future. I tell you we're all together on this picket line."

"We'll see it through."

The HEU has also been active in helping the striking Prince George Canadian Tire employees. Besides encouraging its members to boycott the outlet, the HEU unit has also made regular monthly contributions to the strike fund. In addition, Prince George members have also joined the Retail Clerks' Union on the picket line.

And in April last year, HEU also helped to organize a major demonstration which attracted close to 500 trade union members and other supporters.

Trade Unions and the B.C. economy: Exploding myths



Labor's image in the public eye can suffer by the repeated publication of pictures such as this. A recent study however pointed out that the "militant" reputation of B.C. unions is undeserved. In fact, B.C. industries have fewer days lost to strikes than unionized workforces in either Ontario or Quebec.

Unions in B.C. neither raise wages to uncompetitive levels nor deserve to be called "the most militant" in Canada, according to a recent study published by the B.C. Economic Policy Institute.

The 60-page paper written by UBC economist Robert C. Allen also explodes a number of other popular myths about unions and their effect on productivity, wage levels and efficiency.

Called *Trade Unions and the B.C. Economy*, the paper also found that:

- real wages in B.C. are not excessive when compared to wages in Ontario and the U.S.
- in industries where unions have negotiated higher wages than in similar industries in Ontario, those wage rates do not jeopardize the competitive position of the firms because the workers are so

efficient.

- unionized workforces are more efficient and actually raise productivity

Allen's paper also looks at some of the desirable achievements of unions such as the equalization of power within a business, the redistribution of income and the curtailment of sexual and racial discrimination. Trade Unions and the B.C. Economy also refutes arguments by the right-wing Fraser Institute that public sector union members are overpaid.

Art Kube, president of the B.C. Federation of Labor, said that while the study contains information the labor movement has been saying for years, confirmation by an independent study simply gives more credence to labor's position.

"When someone with strong economic credentials says the same thing, then it's natural it's going to

have a stronger impact."

Allen, 38, an economist at UBC since 1975, says the findings of his research surprised him.

"I didn't know a lot of these things when I started out but the more I got into it, the more it became clear that a lot of the myths just weren't right."

Allen says the two key myths which the paper dispels concern union wage rates and the overall militancy of the province's labor movement.

Before World War II, he says, organized labor in B.C. was considerably more militant than its counterpart in the rest of the country. Since then, however, union militancy, measured in terms of person-days lost through strikes and picket-line violence, has actually been less here than in Quebec and Ontario.

Allen also cites statistics which show that incidences of illegality and violence in industrial disputes have also been lower in B.C.

"The facts show that the "excessive militancy" of B.C. labor is an outdated myth," he states in the paper.

Allen also refutes another popular myth in his study: that unions raise wages above competitive levels.

In those industries where the labor movement has negotiated higher wages than what prevails in other provinces, such as the mining and forestry sectors, Allen says that those are the industries where higher wages do not impair the province's competitive advantage.

In other words, the union movement negotiated higher wages in industries that are highly profitable.

Wage rates are a major focus of Allen's study and he found that "real wages in this province are not higher than real wages in other rapidly growing parts of Canada or in many American states."

In general, B.C. wages have historically been about five per cent higher than Ontario, a figure that translates into a one to two per cent cost disadvantage and which Allen calls a "very small number."

Trade Unions and the B.C. Economy does point out that wages here are far in excess of workers in many Third World countries.

But Allen points out that to make B.C. secondary industries competitive with Asian producers would entail an "enormous reduction in the standard of living of B.C. workers."

With the introduction of the Compensation Stabilization Program by the provincial government, public sector unions have come under increasing fire for supposedly being overpaid. Again Allen refutes that myth.

Citing 1984 federal statistics, Allen shows that the average weekly earnings in the "goods producing sector" — which includes

forestry, manufacturing, transportation and others — was \$556.65. Teachers in secondary schools were paid \$428.13 while public sector employees, \$514.61.

"These figures are not convincing for an overpaid public sector," he says.

Allen also points out that arguments by the pro-business Fraser Institute, which contends that public sector wages are too high, are confusing and misleading.

Referring to wages paid to less skilled workers, Allen says it is true that on average, public sector wages exceed private sector wages.

"However, most of the increases accrue to women."

Public sector unions, Allen states, have virtually eliminated wage discrimination between men and women while unfair wage differentials still exist in the private sector.

"The public sector's departure from the structure of pay in the private sector would seem to be a good policy rather than a bad one."



Unionized workforces have been shown to raise productivity; have a lower quit rate; produce better craftsmen through apprenticeship programs, and create a more efficient workforce by standardizing grievance procedures.

He points out that almost every study which compares a unionized workforce with an unorganized one shows that unions raise productivity. Unionized workforces are simply more efficient.

Unionized workforces also improve the quality of management, have a lower quit rate, produce better craftsmen through apprenticeship programs, and create a more efficient workforce by standardizing grievance proce-

dures.

Allen also points out how unions reduce the gaps between their members' earnings and the higher salaries of managers, and reduce wage inequality by negotiating standard rates.

And there are also the purely social benefits as well. Unions play a major role in eliminating racial and sexual discrimination in the workplace.

Allen's findings are consistent with a growing body of Canadian and U.S. studies which look at the effects unions have on the economy. The most influential of those studies is called "What Do Unions Do?" written by two Harvard University economists. Business Week magazine called it "the most complete picture of unions and their effects produced to date by industrial relations scholars."

Unions, according to the Harvard study, not only reduce income inequality among their own members, but their gains spill over to the entire workforce — even to

companies that aren't unionized.

"Unionism raises the wages of workers in large non-union firms by a substantial 10 to 20 per cent," the Harvard study states.

As both the UBC and Harvard studies show, unions are not only beneficial to the economy as a whole, they also act as leaders in achieving social and political goals for all workers.

For trade unionists everywhere, that's good news indeed.

Debating the future

HEU convention approaches

When delegates to the Fifteenth Biennial Convention of the Hospital Employees' Union meet in convention at the Richmond Inn during the week of February 22-27, they will be facing a full agenda of discussion, debate and decisions.

Union members from every corner of the province representing dozens of work locations and different occupations will put their collective experience and knowledge to work charting the course of the union for the next two years.

This year, the union will also be holding its Tenth Provincial Wage Policy conference concurrent with the biennial convention.

Close to 400 HEU members have been delegated from their units.

One hundred and ninety general resolutions were received at provincial headquarters before the cut-off date of Dec. 23, 1985 and their contents expressed the widespread concerns of HEU members on a variety of issues.

Ranging from general health concerns such as turning the convention into a non-smoking area, to international issues such as the boycotting of South African products, resolutions submitted to the convention touch on most facets of the problems confronting people in British Columbia.

Social concerns rate high with HEU members as the resolutions mirror the reality of working life. And the convention floor will ring with debate on issues such as lowering the price of prescription drugs, early retirement, superannuation, support for the Haida nation, the NDP proposed Australian accord, and support for pub-

licly elected school trustees who have been arbitrarily removed from office by the provincial government.

In the democratic cauldron that a union convention becomes, not all resolutions survive intact, and some do not survive at all. The delegates at HEU conventions are like those at any other union convention and resolutions are often amended from the floor or amalgamated with others of the same thrust in order to sharpen the intent or clarify the meaning.

The HEU has always prided itself in having a well developed social conscience and those resolutions dealing with issues in this area that are adopted by the convention will take their place as HEU policy and will join past convention resolutions as policy of the union.

There are other issues of importance to the union which will also be dealt with on the convention floor as delegates work their way through the business of the union.

HEU members, like the rest of the working people in British Columbia, have suffered from the ill-advised economic policies of the provincial government and convention resolutions reflect their anger, frustration and concerns with a government that has turned its back on the real problems of its citizens.

The much reviled CSP (Compensation Stabilization Program) with its unfair and arbitrary wage guidelines that make a mockery out of the collective bargaining process is still very much on HEU member's minds, and the conven-

tion will discuss resolutions calling for its immediate end.

Volatile issues, such as the case of volunteers working during the long term care strike, supervisors in HEU bargaining units, and the current mess in the workers' compensation system will also be aired on the convention floor during the six day convention.

In addition, delegates will debate the effects of technological change at the workplace, leave provisions, northern allowances, compassionate leave provisions, and electronic surveillance.

The 190 general resolutions will be dealt with separately from the 80 constitutional resolutions which will also form part of the conventional agenda. The constitutional amendments will require a two-thirds majority of the delegates voting in order to become part of any new union constitutional policy.

On top of the biennial convention's business of resolutions and debate, delegates to the wage policy conference will be hammering out union positions for use at the bargaining table when the HEU Master Agreement expires in March, 1986. More than 460 bargaining demands have been submitted from units across the province.

HEU conventions in the past have always provided the union with the necessary guidance, support and energy for it to carry on its work on behalf of the membership, and judging from the resolutions that will be forming the core of the Fifteenth Biennial Convention debate, 1986 will be an outstanding convention year.

Volunteers and HEU members can . . . and do . . . work together

Love of neighbor comes first

Volunteers who work in the health care system are often motivated by a love of neighbor. This is the message of a new book, "The Love of Neighbor," which is being distributed by the B.C. Federation of Labor.

The book, written by a volunteer, describes the importance of the volunteer's role in the health care system. It is a guide for volunteers and a resource for employers.

The book is available for free to all volunteers. It can be obtained from the B.C. Federation of Labor, 1000 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 1G6.

Invaluable backbone of B.C.'s health care

Volunteers are the backbone of the health care system in British Columbia. They provide a wide range of services, from home care to hospital care. Without volunteers, the health care system would be unable to function.

The B.C. Federation of Labor is committed to the volunteer system. It believes that volunteers are an essential part of the health care system and that they should be treated with respect and dignity.

The Federation is working to ensure that volunteers are properly trained and supervised. It is also working to ensure that volunteers are paid for their services.

Patient the loser if volunteers go

The health care system in British Columbia is facing a crisis. If volunteers were to leave the system, patients would be the losers. The health care system would be unable to provide the same level of care.

The B.C. Federation of Labor is working to ensure that volunteers are properly trained and supervised. It is also working to ensure that volunteers are paid for their services.

The Federation is committed to the volunteer system. It believes that volunteers are an essential part of the health care system and that they should be treated with respect and dignity.

Volunteers-union row branded disturbing

The relationship between volunteers and the health care union in British Columbia is becoming increasingly strained. This is a disturbing trend that needs to be addressed.

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of volunteer system feared

The B.C. Federation of Labor is concerned about the future of the volunteer system. It fears that the system is being undermined by the health care union.

The Federation is working to ensure that volunteers are properly trained and supervised. It is also working to ensure that volunteers are paid for their services.

The Federation is committed to the volunteer system. It believes that volunteers are an essential part of the health care system and that they should be treated with respect and dignity.

Union, hospital agree on volunteers

The B.C. Federation of Labor and the health care system have reached an agreement on the use of volunteers. This is a positive step towards resolving the dispute.

The agreement states that volunteers will be properly trained and supervised. It also states that volunteers will be paid for their services.

The Federation is committed to the volunteer system. It believes that volunteers are an essential part of the health care system and that they should be treated with respect and dignity.



Volunteers working in a health care setting.

Volunteers have a traditional role in the province's health care system as long as the jobs carried out by HEU members are not threatened and patients continue to receive safe, consistent and reliable care HEU Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow says.

"In general terms, our position is this: we think there is a place in the health care system for volunteers to provide services that are not provided by the union," Gerow says.

"But we don't think there is a place for volunteers to take jobs away from qualified health care workers."

Gerow was commenting on an issue that received widespread media coverage in October after the Arthritis Society of B.C. forced the HEU to go to arbitration over the use of volunteers by the society. Since January, 1983, the HEU

filed 27 grievances dealing with 22 clerical jobs being performed by volunteers -- jobs which should have been performed by three to six union workers.

But the issue, which saw the union case as the villain out to destroy the volunteer system, could easily have been settled by mediation rather than arbitration, Gerow points out.

"The Arthritis Society was not interested in meeting to negotiate a solution over duties carried out by volunteers," says Gerow, adding that the HEU tried unsuccessfully to work out job descriptions for volunteers.

Art Kube, B.C. Federation of Labor president, says that trade unionists and volunteers have worked together successfully for years.

Kube says that Arthritis Society President William Preston was "blowing the issue out of proportion," and trying to create confrontation and "drive a wedge between labor and volunteer groups."

"It doesn't help anyone to grand-

stand like this. It's really hurting the whole relationship. I don't know what motivates someone like him," Kube says.

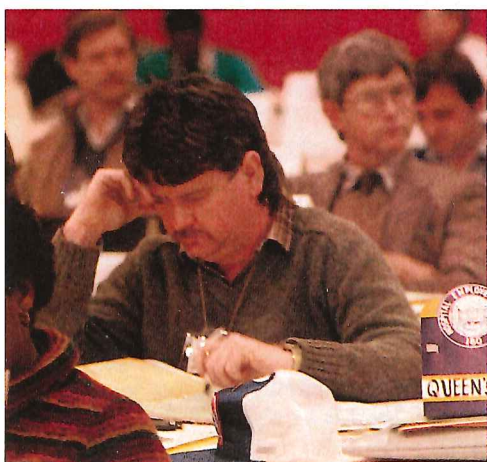
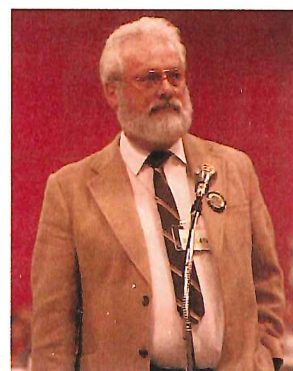
The two major issues at stake over the use of volunteers -- especially when the total number of HEU members has dropped steadily during the past few years -- are job security for HEU members and patient security, Gerow says.

"We don't think it is right that a quality health care system can be maintained by people who are not qualified," Gerow notes.

The HEU secretary-business manager also says that it is common to have meetings with employers throughout the province to cooperatively solve disputes over volunteer job classification. The Arthritis Society, however, refused to discuss the issue for more than two years, forcing the volunteer question into arbitration.



HEU attends first B.C. Fed convention in 15 years



Delegates vote to renew battle against wage controls



Delegates to the B.C. Federation of Labor convention this year voted unanimously to renew the battle against concessions and wage controls.

Both private and public sector unions joined together at the recent Federation convention to send a message to employers and Victoria warning that unions will not be picked off one after the other.

Eighty-six HEU delegates, attending HEU's first B.C. Fed convention since 1969, took part in the debate.

HEU's Jack Gerow, speaking to

the 1,000 delegates from 100 different unions, said he believes that "this Federation is now on the move."

A resolution submitted by HEU calling on the Fed to coordinate public sector bargaining received wide-spread support from convention delegates. "It shows a growing strength and militancy within the Federation," said Gerow.

"Let this be a message to Premier Bennett that we are going to beat you not only at the ballot box, but also at the bargaining table."

Several major private sector union leaders, including Art

"Together, we can do it!"



Stan Reese, right, sits with Kootenay Regional Vice-President Jean Weir during a convention debate.

Stan Reese is a firm believer in the old adage that says there is strength in numbers.

As a first time HEU delegate to the 30th Annual B.C. Federation of Labor convention, Reese says he's now convinced of the need to belong to a strong central labor organization.

"During these tough economic times, unions have to stick together," says Reese, a grounds keeper and chairperson of the HEU unit at Kootenay Lake District Hospital in Nelson. "If we all try to go it alone, we'll end up taking concessions in our bargaining demands."

Reese says that being a delegate to the B.C. Fed helped to bring this reality into focus.

"One union is just too small. We all need the support of organizations like the Fed and the Canadian Labor Congress."

Unlike some popular thinking, Reese says working people and their unions can't afford to take the attitude that "if we don't lose anything at the bargaining table, we'll be all right."

"We have to make gains. Together with other large public sector unions like the BCGEU and CUPE and the private sector unions, we can do it."

Undoubtedly, he says that the impending provincial election and a possible change of government are important events for the trade union movement but says there's no guarantee of a win by the NDP.

"The priority of the labor movement must be directed towards

developing policies and programs aimed at making these gains now."

In addition to gaining a new perspective about what other unions have to say, Reese says he's come away from the convention with a feeling that HEU is a very democratic union that commands a lot of respect from fellow trade unionists.

"I think a lot of working people look up to us as a strong public sector union that voices our opinions. We don't lie down when the government comes at us and maybe that's why we're supported by other unions."

Reese also says the union's ability to stick together on critical issues and present a unified voice at the convention caused many affiliates to sit up and take notice of HEU's presence.

"If HEU wants to win things and get policies established that help us, we're going to have to speak together."

"I think we went in to our first convention in an excellent way. We tried not to get up and speak on every issue and instead concentrated on those resolutions that most directly affected us. We probably had more credibility because of that."

"I know that I learned a lot just from listening to the various debates about things happening around our province and around the world. Now, when I have to start thinking about resolutions for our own HEU convention, I'll be trying to get our union to voice opinions on some of the things I've learned about here."



Gruntman of the Canadian Paperworkers Union and Jack Nichol of the Fisherman's Union, pledged their full support for the battle against public sector wage controls.

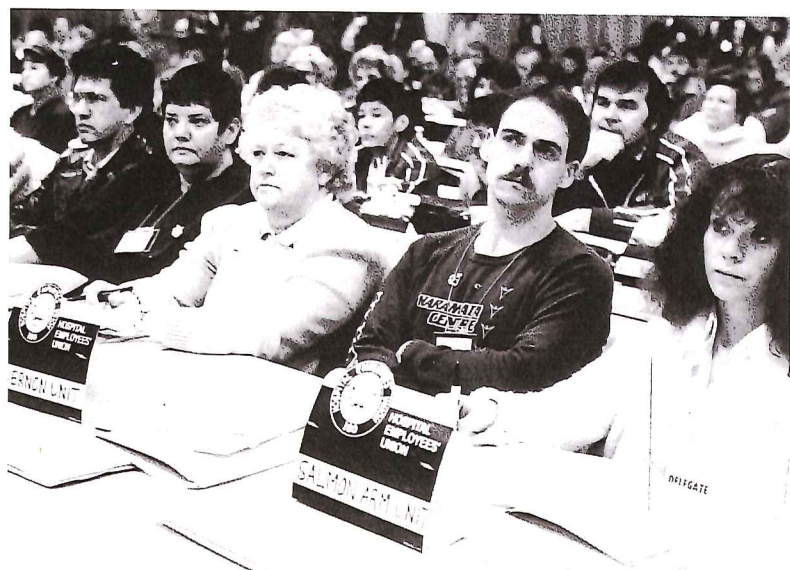
"There is going to have to be a massive fightback if the workers in the public sector are going to maintain living standards and be effective in bargaining," said Nichol. "That fight cannot be won by the public sector alone. The private sector is going to have to fight as well."

Art Gruntman, 1st vice-president of the B.C. Fed, told the con-



vention that he takes a great deal of pride in being able to stand up and offer support to the public sector unions. "It's time private sector unions came to the microphones and said they (the public sector) deserve our support. CSP has completely taken away free collective bargaining from the public sector unions. The private sector not only should help the public sector and support them, but it is a very, very good way of helping ourselves when we do that."

The convention also passed a resolution calling for a coordinated bargaining strategy for industrial unions.



The HEU resolution called on the B.C. Fed to develop a program to coordinate public sector bargaining activities with the objective of defeating the restraint program, stopping the decline of purchasing power of public sector unions and ending layoffs and cutbacks in public services.

In an interview, Gerow said the resolution directs the Fed to continue with the kind of coordinated bargaining developed during the Solidarity experience.

"If one round of bargaining breaks down and another breaks down, then the way unions deal with these could become common. If by March 31 next year, there are a number of public sector agree-

ments not settled, then it's predictable that a common response could develop."

HEU President Bill Macdonald said now that HEU is an affiliate to the B.C. Fed, it will be looking to the provincial labor body for leadership in the area of coordinated collective bargaining.

Blair Thomas from the Shaughnessy unit said public sector workers will not get anything by bargaining union by union. "We need to have coordinated bargaining and a complete boycott of CSP."

"We have to present a united front and then we can defeat the restraint program," said Vancouver General delegate Leo Bibo.

In total, the union submitted 22 resolutions to the convention, covering such issues as health care funding and privatization, workers' compensation, education, economic policy and peace. Many of these resolutions were debated at the convention and have now



become B.C. Fed policy. (A detailed listing of those resolutions are included in this Guardian.)

In addition to five days of debate, delegates heard a variety of guest speakers. These included Bishop Remi de Roo; Bob Skelly, leader of the B.C. New Democratic Party; Dick Martin of the Canadian Labor Congress, as well as a speaker from Nicaragua and another from the striking Union of Bank Employees in Toronto.

HEU resolutions become Federation Policy

For the first time in more than 15 years, the Hospital Employees' Union was able to send delegates to the B. C. Federation of Labor convention, held November 25 to 29 in Vancouver.

HEU units submitted 22 resolutions. Many of these resolutions were debated by and voted on by the convention's 1,000 delegates and are now part of B.C. Federation of Labor policy.

The following are highlights from some of the resolutions adopted by the convention:

RESOLUTION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this convention be opposed to the privatization of health care facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Convention call on the provincial government to move to de-privatize the provision of health care and make all health care facilities publicly owned and publicly controlled; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the B.C. Fed call on the provincial government to introduce legislation to prevent privatization for profits.

Several resolutions submitted by HEU were combined with resolutions on the same subject from other unions. The following were supported and passed by the convention:

RESOLUTION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this 30th Annual Convention of the B.C. Federation of Labor press the provincial government to re-instate adequate financing of provincial hospitals.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS welfare rates in the province of B.C. are completely inadequate to meet the needs of recipients; and

WHEREAS food banks are not the answer for feeding the hungry people of this province; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this convention con-

demn the provincial government for their inadequate welfare rates which force the unemployed to go hungry and demand that welfare rates be raised to at least match the recognized poverty level in B.C.

RESOLUTION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that public control over the forest resource be restored by instituting a program that will require forest companies to re-stock the forest, eliminate waste and harmful cutting methods, and ensure maximum added value in B.C. in the processing of the resource; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a six hundred million dollar reforestation program be immediately undertaken under public control to save the forest industry from total ruin.

RESOLUTION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the B.C. Federation of Labor continue to do its utmost to force the provincial government to amend its regressive policies by:

1. Reinstating the democratically elected school boards in Vancouver and Cowichan;

2. Restoring policy and financial autonomy to locally elected school boards; and

3. Restoring proper levels of funding to the public schools and post-secondary education systems.

RESOLUTION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this convention demand that Canada withdraw from the Defence Production Sharing Agreement and that Canada's industry, scientific know-how and resources be used to create Canadian jobs for peaceful purposes and for human needs.

Two other resolutions, one calling for support of the Nicaragua "Tools for Peace" campaign, and another aimed at increasing sanctions against the racist government in South Africa, were passed.

FRONTLINES

Offending governments urged to "clean up their acts"



Leaders of B.C.'s major public sector unions join together to sign an international complaint against government wage controls on public sector workers. HEU President Bill Macdonald, (far right), is pictured amongst them.

OTTAWA — The Canadian Labor Congress has welcomed the report and recommendations of the International Labor Organization (ILO) concerning violations of ILO conventions by the governments of Alberta, Newfoundland and the previous government of Ontario, and urged the offending governments to "clean up their acts."

The report was adopted in Geneva by the ILO governing body. It was issued following charges by the CLC on behalf of the National Union of Provincial Government Employees and the Service Employees International Union. The charges alleged that the three provincial governments, as well as the government of British Columbia, breached ILO principles by legislation that curbed collective bargaining and the right to strike in the public service beyond the limits acceptable under the standards established by that United Nations agency.

Representatives of 15 B.C. unions, including HEU, signed a joint complaint to the ILO on Sept. 10. The complaint, on behalf of 175,600 public sector workers, objected to the B.C. government maintaining wage controls on public sector workers despite the ILO saying that the laws are against international standards and conventions.

Alberta, Newfoundland and Ontario, were found in violation of ILO principles on several counts. No decision has yet been reached on the complaint against British Columbia.

CLC Secretary-Treasurer Shirley Carr accused the government of British Columbia of bad faith in failing to supply the ILO with information requested by it in time for the report.

"If the B.C. government thought it would get rid of the problem by ignoring it, it was sadly mistaken. The problem will not go away and the government will have to face the charges sooner or later,"

she said.

Sister Carr said she hopes all Canadian governments will take the ILO recommendations to heart in their treatment of public employees.

"The ILO has made a clear distinction between the separate roles of governments as legislators and as employers," she said. "We hope these common-sense rules will be respected in the future."

The ILO ruled, among other things, that Ontario had been wrong in breaking existing collec-

tive agreements signed with its employees; that Alberta went "beyond acceptable limits" by removing the right to strike from a broad range of provincial and hospital employees and by excluding too many public employees from the collective bargaining process, and that Newfoundland should revise, "in full consultation with the union," the legislation which prohibits persons working under employment opportunity programs from joining the unions of their choice."



HEU members at the New Vista long term care facility in Burnaby staged an extended lunch-hour demonstration November 13 to protest against their employer's refusal to settle their contract. The members, who had been without a wage increase since August, 1981, succeeded in forcing the employer to pay out their long overdue wage increases.

HEU say "no" to payroll deductions

The provincial executive of the Hospital Employees' Union is warning HEU members to be wary of hospital fundraising drives that propose a payroll deduction scheme for HEU members.

Several hospitals, including Mount St. Joseph and Burnaby Hospital in the Lower Mainland, have recently canvassed HEU members for contributions to hospital expansion projects.

At Mount St. Joseph, the HEU unit has given the thumbs down to a

request from its employer to donate to a hospital expansion fundraising program.

The decision was made at a recent unit meeting after reports from the membership that the hospital was canvassing HEU members for contributions to a planned \$2.5 million hospital expansion.

The hospital's proposal asked HEU members to donate one hour's pay every payday for five years. Original plans to have personal interviews with each member to ask for donations were scut-

tled after the union became aware of the scheme.

The Hospital Employees' Union provincial executive has said it is not surprised that hospitals are engaging in these aggressive fundraising efforts.

The executive has said that provincial government underfunding is to blame for the resurgence of the charity drives and has urged HEU members to refuse to subsidize the delivery of essential health care services.

The chairperson of the Mount St. Joseph unit,

Tony Beliso, said that HEU members should not have to take money out of their already discounted paycheques to operate hospitals and the health care system.

"It's like being asked to pay for our own jobs," said Beliso.

The unit has also been told by hospital management that such fundraising programs could be an ongoing method used to fund hospital projects.

Burnaby Hospital has also embarked on a \$1.9 million fundraising campaign and has asked every employee to donate.

Safety awareness week

To help HEU members become more aware of safety and hazard facts in the hospital, the Parksville unit has developed a "Safety Awareness Week" and has purchased a plaque that will be awarded to the winning department at the end of a designated week by the Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

The Health and Safety Committee is comprised of Diane Walton, Medical Records Clerk; Michael Duffy, Activity Aide, and Steven Gilmour from the Housekeeping Department and unit chairperson.

CLC opposes child benefit de-indexation

OTTAWA — The Canadian Labor Congress has urged that the government abandon its plans to de-index family allowances and that it refrain from any other attempts to reorganize Canada's child benefit system until it undertakes meaningful public consultations and discussions on the subject.

In a brief to the legislative committee on Bill C-70, an act to amend the Family Allowances Act, the CLC warned that implementation of proposed changes to the existing program would eventually result in the "total emasculation of the system of child benefits,"

rather than a re-orientation of the system, as the government claims.

Projecting the proposed changes to 20 years hence, the CLC (which represents more than two million workers across Canada) predicted that, based on an annual inflation rate of only three per cent and on 1985 dollar values, family allowances will go to \$18 from today's \$32; child tax credits will be reduced to \$326 per child from today's \$384; and the family income level up to which the full credit is payable will be cut in half, from \$26,500 today, to \$13,800.

The projections are

based on Finance Minister Michael Wilson's spring budget which proposed partial de-indexation not only of family allowances, but also of child tax credits and of the family income level up to which full child tax credit would be paid.

The CLC also suggested that no objective of income redistribution can be effectively met without a reform of Canada's tax system.

In conclusion, the CLC recommended deletion of section 3 of the proposed amendments to the Family Allowances Act, dealing with de-indexation of family allowance benefits.

FRONTLINES

'Pay freeze not acceptable' — Shields

The president of the B.C. Government Employees' Union laid out his union's position clearly on the eve of the first bargaining meeting with Socred government negotiators. He warned that a wage freeze — already hinted in the government's spring budget — would be unacceptable to 34,000 BCGEU members.

"There is timber waiting to blow up in this province and the government will risk its future if there is a confrontation," he declared the day before union negotiators sat down with the government side, headed by civil servant Bob Plecas, to work out a bargaining schedule and framework.

Shields was referring to the critical 1985-86 round of contract talks that

recently began and are expected to continue through the spring and summer of 1986. Some 10,000 Lower Mainland municipal workers and 15,000 B.C. Nurses began bargaining at the end of the year, followed by 25,000 Hospital Employees' Union members March 31; 30,000 construction workers April 30 and more than 50,000 workers in the forest industry in mid-June.

In every case, workers have lost considerable purchasing power over the period covered by expiring agreements and will be looking for catch-up increases. Employers can be expected to invoke government restraint in a renewed demand for concessions.

The salaries of HEU members for example

have fallen 6.7 per cent behind cost of living increases during the past 46 months. In spite of this, the employer's bargaining agent, the Health Labor Relations Association, is pushing for a wage freeze in Master Agreement re-opener negotiations. HEU's bargaining committee is seeking a general wage increase of 6.7 per cent.

A wage increase for BCGEU members is expected to be high on their bargaining agenda. Other key issues include contract protection for technological change and reductions in workloads which have been increased substantially as a result of government staff cuts over the last three years.

Shields rejected the "inability to pay" argu-

ment raised by Finance Minister Hugh Curtis in his February budget — and said the union has "studied the revenue flows" and has concluded "there is a considerable amount of money available."

With an election call widely expected this spring, Premier Bennett is expected to keep the profile of the bargaining sessions as low as possible. That the first meeting took place only three weeks before the master contract expired on Oct. 31 suggests that deadlines are still distant.

But at the same time, Bennett could also attempt to make public sector workers in particular and the trade union movement in general the target in an election campaign if he saw he could exploit an advantage to extend his restraint policies.

That danger, as well as the growing demand for catch-up on purchasing power, has emphasized the importance of bargaining coordination.

Table officer conferences held

Three separate table officer conferences were held in Vancouver recently.

On November 19, table officers from all of the long term care units in the Lower Mainland attended a conference to hear reports on collective bargaining, servicing, finances, the B.C. Fed, and the Compensation Stabilization Program. Table officers from acute care units attended a

similar session on November 20.

The purpose of the conferences is to assist in keeping members fully informed of union activities and to provide a forum for resolving any concerns or problems that units may be experiencing.

Provincial Executive members in attendance included President Bill Macdonald; Secretary-Business Manager Jack

Gerow, Financial Secretary Mary LaPlante, and the two Regional Vice-Presidents from the Lower Mainland, Neil Anderson and Gwen Parrish.

A third table officer conference was held December 10 and involved representatives from long term care units that bargain against the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association.

HEU welcomes new units

In this issue of The Guardian, HEU would like to extend a special welcome to its new members from Rosewood Manor in Richmond and Cartier House in Coquitlam.

Unions in do-or-die struggle with banks

TORONTO — Canada's labor movement was ecstatic in June 1977 when the Canada Labor Relations Board decided to recognize individual bank branches as appropriate bargaining units for employees.

But eight years later, there's not a lot to show for that enthusiasm.

Labor is now locked in what top-level organizers see as a life-and-death struggle to revive the cause and pierce the bank's armor.

If Canadian Labor Congress organizers cannot win a big, new contract for 250 workers at a Canadian Imperial Bank Visa centre, Toronto, they concede that they may pack in the struggle. And with the stakes so high, the CIBC has the implicit backing of the other banks to fight on.

So far, the contest looks like a draw.

Strikers well backed

There had been no talks since a week before the strike began.

The Commerce refuses to bargain seriously and so far has tabled an offer that included:

- no wage, benefits or vacation improvements at all
- mandatory overtime
- the right to layoff and recall anyone they like regardless of seniority
- exclusion of part-time

workers from the agreement

- the right to discharge sick or disabled employees

The workers, certified last fall as a bargaining unit of CLC-backed Union of Bank Employees, are drawing on all the resources they can to get their point across. The CLC has guaranteed the 175 strikers a generous \$300 a week for as long as they need it — a tab that comes to over \$50,000 a week. And the 120,000-member United Auto Workers Union has provided experienced negotiators to represent the workers during talks and organizers to deal with the media and run demonstrations.

Banks a tough target

All told, the labor movement has hardly made a dent in the banking system, which has more than 7,000 branches in the country.

"It's very difficult (to organize), particularly when you're up against institutions determined to avoid unions by any means possible," says John Crispo, professor of industrial relations and political economy at the University of Toronto.

Larry Bishop, a member of the CLC's bank workers organizing committee, says there are committees discussing unionization at the Visa



centres run by Royal Bank of Canada and Toronto Dominion Bank as well as at Bank of Montreal's MasterCard centre.

But for now all eyes are on the CIBC's Visa Centre, which the union sees as a make-or-break situation.

Jim O'Neil, UAW negotiator working on behalf of CIBC Visa employees, says if the union doesn't win this one, "it may be the end."

But if the union is successful, then bank workers across the country may decide they want to join in.

Classification negotiations resume at Vancouver General

A breakthrough has been reached in the classification stalemate.

The Health Labor Relations Association has agreed to an HEU proposal to begin classification negotiations on a department basis, beginning in the Stores Department. The union hopes that the parties can then apply their classification experience in the Stores Department to other departments one-by-one.

Although some 85 per cent of HEU members have been classified

through an arbitration process, HLRA walked out of those arbitration hearings in late February and has refused to agree to any further meetings.

Classification negotiations have already begun in the VGH Stores Department.

The wage reopener negotiations for the HEU/HLRA Master Agreement are still ongoing, although no progress has been made on a November 1, 1985 general wage increase. HLRA's final position has been "no increase."

FRONTLINES

Labor groups leading South African product boycott

After decades of fighting against the racist and anti-labor policies of the South African government, black workers there finally won the right to form unions six years ago.

But as hospital and mine workers in the wealthiest nation in Africa recently discovered, the right to strike is still a precarious one.

In early November, close to 400 striking hospital workers at Baragwanath Hospital — which services Soweto, Johannesburg's largest black township of about two million residents — were fired after they refused to end their four-day legal walk out. Student nurses, cooks and maintenance workers are currently paid between \$76 and \$93 a month. They want a monthly raise of about \$52.

Similar anti-labor tactics were also used against striking National Union of Mineworkers members, according to the International Affairs Department of the Canadian Labor Congress.

The NUM was forced to call off its general strike in the Reef mining area when various employers threatened to kick-out 22,500 workers from company barracks, according to Cyril Ramaphosa, the union's secretary general. Close to 2,500 workers who participated in the legal

strike, however, were fired.

Ramaphosa cited an example of how ruthless the employers were by saying that at one site, miners were denied food and water when the water supply was cut off and company stores refused to sell food for 48 hours.

Black member unions in South Africa are organizing regional general strikes and boycotts of white businesses in a comprehensive effort to force an end to apartheid, the South African term for state-sanctioned racism.

But black labor leaders in that country would also like to see more trade

completely disinvest.

Black trade unionists have to be careful, though. Manoko Nchwe, an information officer with NUM, said recently in Vancouver that calling for a boycott in South Africa is considered treason.

Nchwe is a member of the union that makes the Krugerrand, the South African gold coin. He says the message from the union is that even though a boycott of the Krugerrand could harm black South Africans financially, trade unionists should maintain that boycott.

South African workers are struggling for justice and "already face starva-

Although boycotting the Krugerrand has been lauded by South African labor leaders, an equally important decision HEU members can take is to boycott all South African products and any companies who do business there.

HEU members can make a difference. Next time you have to buy tires, for example, bypass Goodyear.

Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, based in Akron, Ohio, is quite frank about its South African investments.

"Because South Africa has always been profitable, we've never really considered leaving," says Jacques Sardas, Goodyear International's vice-president.

Other products HEU members can add to their list of items to boycott include South African wines, fruit — especially Granny Smith apples — and other food products. And, if you are unsure about a product's country of origin, don't hesitate to ask the store manager.

As the CLC points out, "even if there were bound to be a short-term negative impact on the country's black population as a result of economic sanctions ... unions (there) have declared themselves in favor of such actions because of the long-term benefits involved in ending apartheid."



union members in B.C. boycott all South African products and force Canadian companies with investments there to

tion," Nchwe said, adding that "we are prepared to starve for a few more years to correct the situation."

Living with broken promises

The people of B.C. are not getting the care they deserve, need and have paid for, says Jack Gerow, secretary-business manager of the Hospital Employees' Union.

Gerow made this statement at the annual conference of the Health Administrators' Association of B.C. in Victoria.

"No matter what the government says, things are not going smoothly in our health care system," Gerow told hospital administrators.

He viewed the timing of Health Minister Jim Nielsen's promise of more money for the health care system as politically motivated.

"After all, we're getting close to another provincial election and politicians do have a habit of making promises and handing out 'goodies' before an election."

Gerow said that the 25,000 members of the Hospital Employees' Union have seen the end results of restraint and cut-backs placed on the health care system by the provincial government.

"Health care workers are overworked, overtired and overextended," Gerow stated.

And, Gerow said, despite changing services and a growing popula-

tion, hospitals will receive the same funding for the same number of beds — about 11,000 — in the coming year.

"I believe health care, and particularly patient care, is entering another level of crisis in B.C."

Gerow called on the hospital administrators to go public with complaints they have made to the government only in private.

He urged that a partnership of all major providers of health care take place in order to work on restoring B.C.'s health care system.



TWENTY-YEAR MEMBERS HONORED — Participants in the Fort St. John unit annual Christmas party took time out to honor seven HEU members who have been with the unit since certification in 1965. From left to right are Shiela Ricalton, Georgette Ricalton, Joan Poitras, Irene Gillie, Eva Jones, HEU Representative John Hurren, Betty Gould and Alberta Dorval.

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 firms are settled. In all cases, the Federation has called a boycott at the request of the unions who represent workers at those companies in the hopes of pressuring man-

agement to settle long outstanding disputes.

—California Grapes

(The California grape boycott is in support of farmworkers employed by California's corporate grape growers. In 1975, a state law was passed guaranteeing farm workers the right to unionize. However, this law is rarely enforced, and farm

workers continue to be fired, coerced and abused by corporate growers. HEU members are urged to find out where the grapes in their local supermarket come from and to boycott grapes from California.)

—**Canada Trust** (all locations)

—**Canadian Tire** (all locations)

—**U.S. lettuce** (Red Coach, Donny, Big Fred, SAS, Big A, Bobby & Andrews brands)

—**Procter & Gamble** (soap products/detergents)

—**Louisiana Pacific Corporation, Forest Products** (Construction material, Waferwood Construction Panels, Pabco Xonolite Insulation,

Weatherseal windows and doors)

—**Sandman Inns**

—**Chilean Products**

—**South African Products**

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

—**Pacific Western Airlines**

—**Slade & Stewart Ltd.**

—**Okanagan H.R.I. Supply Ltd.**

—**Canadian Tire** — Prince George location

—**Stevenson Construction** — Pennyfarthing site

—**Purolator Courier**

—**Entex Door Systems Ltd.**

—**American Air Filter**

Eaton's ban finally over

The national consumer boycott of Eaton's stores has finally been lifted by the Canadian Labor Congress.

Although the historic struggle to establish a union among Eaton's employees ended last May with the signing of a collective agreement at six Ontario stores, the boycott remained in effect until the CLC was satisfied that several major problems had been solved.

One obstacle had been Eaton's refusal to accept all 1,500 strikers back in their old jobs. Also, the company said it wanted to keep the

scabs it hired when the strike began last November 30.

News about details of the contract, and how the rank and file members of the union feel about it, has been difficult to come by, though it is certain that all the workers' demands were not met. One of the key compromises means that not everyone presently employed at the stores will have to join the union.

The union may have decided to take the contract because of an Ontario labor law that does not guarantee job security for strikers after

six months on the picket line.

Strikers won wide support

During the strike, Eaton's employees won support from several sectors of society. The labor movement as a whole worked together to leaflet Eaton's stores and help inform the public about the issues. Both the Council of Catholic Bishops and the United Church's Committee on the Economy came out strongly in favor of Eaton's employees and against the movement to hire increasing numbers

of part-time workers. The public pressure and decreasing sales revenue due to the national boycott issued by the Canadian Labor Congress was undoubtedly instrumental in settling the strike.

Meanwhile the Eaton's strike appears to have given momentum to organizing efforts in other department stores. Workers at five Simpsons Ltd. stores in the Metro Toronto area recently ratified their first collective agreement which gives them significantly better contracts than those won from Eaton's.

Diminishing quality of care cause for concern

The following letter was directed to the hospital board by the extended care staff of the Cranbrook District Hospital.

Although hesitant, we, the staff of extended care, feel it necessary to express our concern in the matter of the diminishing quality of care in the Cranbrook Hospital extended care unit. You, who are ultimately responsible for the operation of the hospital for the benefit of its patients, must hear this appeal from those of us who care for those who cannot care for themselves.

Though the causes for the dwindling level of care are many, they may be grouped into two categories: those relating directly to the patients and those relating to administrative concerns.

The primary cause of poor patient care that can be directly related to the patients themselves, is that the majority of extended care patients require total care, that is, their existence is dependent upon the nursing care received. Of the 50 patients in the extended care unit, 100 per cent need help to transfer, approximately 56 per cent are unable to feed themselves, a further 40 per cent, approximately, are combative and require much more

time to care for than do non-combative patients. In addition, with the increase of intermediate care facilities in Cranbrook, the number of extended care patients requiring total or near-total care is steadfastly rising. Thus, the extended care nurse finds that demands on her already limited time are ever increasing, leaving her unable to devote enough time to each individual patient to provide a high level of care.

If the quality of care is diminishing due to the needs of total care patients, it is worsening even more due to administrative concerns.

Primary among these concerns is the patient to nurse ratio; on average there are eight to nine patients per each nurse. When the majority of these patients require total care, the result is an extremely heavy workload. A workload that does not allow the nurse to give even minimal companionship to the patient, let alone allow for the provision of the best care. Obviously, a patient to nurse ratio which will not permit anything but inferior care, detrimentally affects the staff as well. This is reflected in increased loss of time due to injury and illness, causing low morale and

hence poorer care.

As the erosion of care progresses, the care giver finds herself functioning robot-like to quickly feed and give hygienic care to a patient, leaving him until the next meal, while she rushes to care for another. It is not the nature of nurses to care for patients in this manner, yet we are left with no choice. Taught to care for elderly patients as though they were our own parent, the patient-nurse ratio of extended care forces us to care for objects rather than human beings.

Nursing is supposed to be a humanitarian occupation, but because of working conditions that severely infringe on the delivery of adequate health care, nursing in the extended care unit is best likened to working on a factory assembly-line. Humanitarianism is lost with the threat of layoffs, non-replacement of absent staff and instructions to use half measures. When we are told to produce quantity not quality it is the patient who suffers most; but in health care productivity cannot be measured as a quantity.

Why must the patient suffer under an attitude that values the dollar more than human life and dig-

nity? Obviously, such a state of affairs cannot be permitted to continue, if the best of care is to be given to patients. If this letter does not fall on deaf ears; if a compassionate heart rather than a business mind is used to judge its merit, then perhaps the extended care patient yet has hope of being adequately cared for.

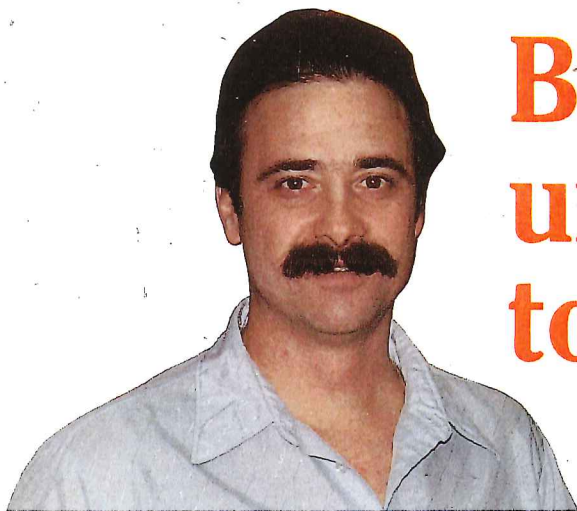
The Staff of Extended Care
Cranbrook & District Hospital

Chetwynd unit awards bursary

This past spring the Chetwynd unit passed a motion to give a \$200 bursary to a graduating student who is going on to further his/her education in the Health Sciences field.

Ms. M. Kelon, former chairperson of the Chetwynd unit for a number of years, presented the bursary to Linda Yee at the Chetwynd High School graduation ceremonies on June 29, 1985.

Jean Pohl
Chairperson
Chetwynd Unit



Bringing new unity to B.C. labor

By Ken Georgetti
Vice-President, B.C. Federation of Labor and President, United Steelworkers of America Local 480

When the members of the Hospital Employees' Union decided they wanted to affiliate to the B.C. Federation of Labor, they set in motion events that would lead to the most significant change that labor has seen in two decades. For most in the labor movement, and the media, the real significance of the HEU affiliating with the B.C. Federation of Labor was lost in a member game. What would the affiliation mean to the size of the Federation? How much revenue would the affiliation generate? What would the size of the convention be after affiliation?

All of these questions are important to some degree but they completely miss the real significance of the HEU's affiliation to the B.C. Federation of Labor. The affiliation of in excess of 20,000 workers to the Federation brings a new unity to the provincial labor movement. In addition, it adds a new voice from an industry that prior to the affiliation had little or no voice at all — the health care industry. These are the significant points which have, for the most part, been ignored by most.

During the 1970s, unions could afford to operate on their own, even in isolation, and still provide services to their members, includ-

ing negotiating acceptable collective agreements. The economic and political climate in the province, while not pro-union, was easier to deal with. At the beginning of the eighties, this situation changed dramatically. The provincial government launched a full scale attack against labor, especially the public sector unions, and the economy went into recession. The results of these two events remain with us today.

It has become increasingly clear that labor cannot afford the parochial luxuries of the 1970s. Labor leaders in all sectors have come to realize that the need for unity within the labor movement is of paramount importance, a reality that was overlooked in years past.

The issue is not that "independent" unions cannot service their own in such an anti-labor climate, even though in some cases, this may be true. The issue is that the labor movement as a whole cannot withstand the prolonged and determined attack of employers and government for long unless it is unified, unless all unions are moving together and working together as one coordinated unit. The affiliation of the Hospital Employees' Union to the B.C. Federation of Labor is a major step in generating

the unity that is so badly needed.

It is important for everyone to understand that the HEU affiliation did not come easily for either side. Major movement and compromise was required by a number of unions, the Federation itself, and the HEU, in order to accomplish the affiliation. It speaks well of the labor movement that such compromises were made. It indicates that everyone involved has the desire and ability to see that compromise is necessary to attain a greater common good. Clearly, there are no losers in the affiliation of the HEU with the Federation. The Hospital Employees' Union members now enjoy the strength of the B.C. Federation of Labor and, by the same token, the Federation now enjoys the strength of the HEU. It will serve both organizations well and, at the same time, strengthen the labor movement in this province as a whole.

The affiliation of the HEU with the Federation is a major accomplishment of which we can all be proud. But the time for basking in our accomplishment is past. We must now work to bring even greater unity and strength by convincing other unions outside of the Federation to join with us.