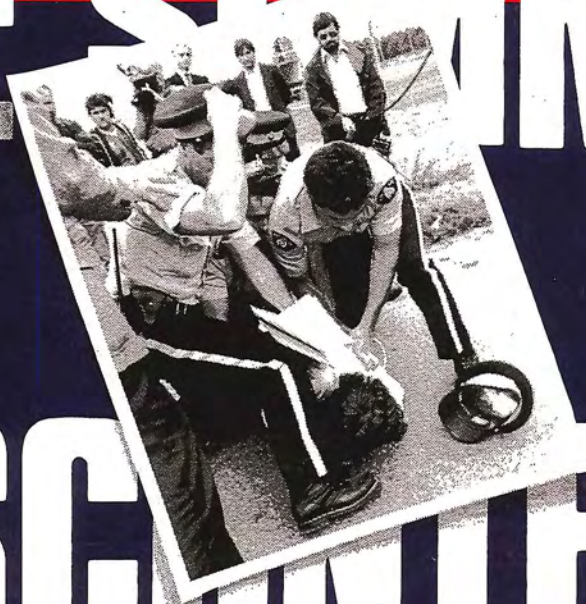


THE HOSPITAL
Guardian

Volume 6 Number 2

Summer Issue

**1986 ...
THE SUMMER
OF
DISCONTENT**





HOSPITAL
EMPLOYEES'
UNION LOCAL
180

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

THE HOSPITAL Guardian

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Contributing writer: Diane Lake

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, MIKE BARKER, FRED MUZIN, JULIA AMENDT.**

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Cover photo courtesy Ian Smith, Vancouver Sun.



By Jack Gerow

COMMENT

The right to strike — now you see it, now you don't

What public sector workers in the province of British Columbia have the right to free collective bargaining?

Answer: None.

What public sector workers in the province of British Columbia have the right to strike?

Answer: None.

That became clear this summer when Bill Bennett and the provincial government took unnecessary and unprecedented action against the members of the B.C. Government Employee's Union and the Health Sciences Association.

The BCGEU, without a collective agreement since October 31, 1985, commenced escalating strike action on July 3, 1986 to back its bargaining demands — no wage freezes and no concessions.

The strike involved only 160 workers in the finance ministry. And yet, after only six hours on the picket line, they were declared essential and were coerced into returning to work by Bill Bennett and the provincial government. In addition, their 34,000 brothers and sisters were told the government would not tolerate a strike during Expo '86. This ultimatum came at the same time union members were faced with concession demands amounting to approximately four per cent.

But Bill Bennett and the provincial government were not finished in their program to destroy the

trade union rights of public sector workers.

On July 18, 1986, negotiations between the HSA and the HLRA broke down. The HSA decided to commence limited strike action at the Prince George Regional Hospital. The strike action was to be nothing more than a one-hour demonstration to protest the lack of progress in their negotiations. But Bill Bennett and the provincial government stepped in anyway and went to work on the Health Sciences Association. He ordered a 90 day cooling-off period and stripped the right to strike from 5,500 health professionals across the province.

In both these cases, the right to free collective bargaining and the right to strike are deemed to be "rights" by Bill Bennett and the provincial government — but only as long as public sector workers don't try to use them.

Working people in British Columbia — and especially public sector workers — will long remember the summer of '86.

It will be remembered because of the continued confrontations with working people, initiated by Bill Bennett and the provincial government and then orchestrated by him for his shallow political purposes.

It will be remembered because of Bill Bennett and the provincial government's inaction that resulted in hundreds of Vancouver East Side residents being needlessly evicted from their homes in hotels near the Expo '86 site.

It will be remembered because of the government-inspired concession demands, wage freezes, cooling-off periods and back-to-work orders.

And there is something else that will be remembered.

The union-bashing tactics we have seen in British Columbia, have also been seen in other provinces. In the province of Newfoundland, public sector workers there were ordered by government law to cease their strike action against their provincial government.

But they did not obey that "bad" law. They stayed on strike — illegal strike action — until they found an acceptable reason to return to work.

And just next door to B.C. in the province of Alberta, some 1,080 workers refuse to return to work until they achieve an acceptable collective agreement and a new law that doesn't take away workers' jobs just because they have engaged in legitimate strike action.

In all these disputes there is an underlying reason for the confrontations. That reason is anti-worker, anti-union legislation. And the legislation is so bad that workers are prepared to risk jail sentences to win their rights to fair and reasonable treatment.

Will workers in British Columbia take similar action — will they refuse to obey bad laws like workers have done in other provinces and in other times?

Answer: It's up to the new premier.

If the provincial government continues to deny the right to free collective bargaining to public sector workers — if the provincial government continues to deny the right to strike — if the provincial government continues to make bad labor laws, the day may come very soon when the challenge of such confrontation will be met with the dignity, determination and collective action that has, throughout the history of the trade union movement, brought labor's biggest victories and brought an end to bad laws and bad law-makers.

1986... THE SUMMER OF OUR DISCONTENT



In March of this year, the media carried stories about the very real prospect of a long, hot summer of labor discontent in British Columbia.

Headlines read "Summer of their discontent," as political pundits, labor reporters and ivory tower editorial writers dusted off various crystal balls in an attempt to forecast the shape of things to come. Would the labor movement in this province be able to satisfy the very real needs of their collective memberships in the face of the arbitrary and almost impossible restrictions of the Compensation Stabilization Act? Would a government that seemed to be obsessed with cutting ribbons and touching off fireworks for Expo rather than taking care of business be interested in settling contract disputes?

Now that the short dark days of winter have turned into those long hot days of summer picketing weather, it would appear that at least some observers were partially correct in their forecasts of a summer of labor discontent.

The Social Credit government, notwithstanding the recently announced departure of its chief confrontationist, Premier Bennett, has shown no signs at all of backing away from its permanently fixed position on public sector bargaining.

First revealed in the 1986 budget speech by Finance Minister Hugh Curtis, and later publicly confirmed by the Premier, the government has arbitrarily maintained all along that there would



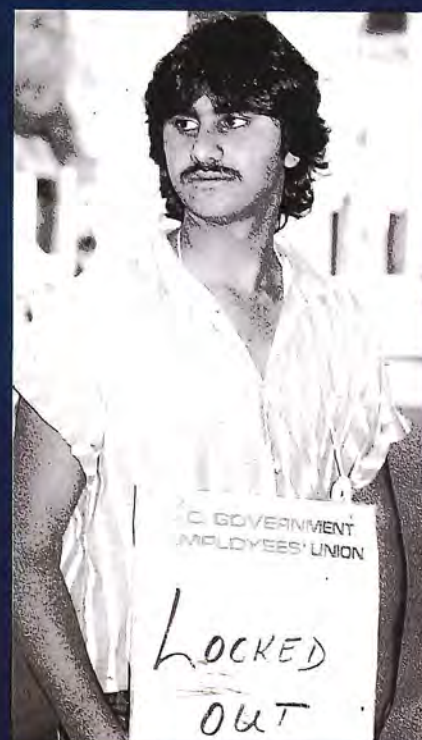
RCMP riot squads turn up in full force at Building Trades picket line in Langley to escort scabs into the construction site.
Photo courtesy of Pacific Tribune.

be no money in the 1986 budget for public sector pay increases.

Employers in the private sector, for the most part, were quick to take their cue on cutbacks and restraint from the government and immediately jumped on the wage freeze bandwagon.

The ingredients for that "Summer of their discontent" were then brought together in that same familiar boiling cauldron of labor relations in our province.

Most major unions in B.C. are, or were, at the bargaining table this year and, without exception, they have been presented with a list of concession demands which include giving up major rights and benefits accompanied by either a wage freeze, as is the case with public sector unions, or a wage rollback, which Building Trades negotiators were presented with by the Construction Labor Relations Associa-





Members of the B.C. Nurses Union demonstrate in Prince George to protest government demands for contract concessions.

tion.

Major public sector unions at the bargaining table in 1986 include the Hospital Employees' Union, the B.C. Government Employees' Union, the B.C. Nurses' Union and the Health Sciences Association. The Canadian Union of Public Employees is also negotiating a number of municipal employee contracts during the summer.

Private sector unions facing contract renewal this summer include the Building Trades, the International Woodworkers of America and the Canadian Paperworkers' Union.

1986 will see almost 80 per cent of the unionized workforce in B.C., almost a quarter of a million workers, looking for new contracts as 379 unions go to the table with their employers.

As the collective bargaining situation continues to evolve, one

main thread runs through all negotiations to date - any economic turn-around in 1986 will definitely not be shared with the wage earners of this province.

Predictions of a major economic turn-around in 1986 have been a strong theme for the Socred government and early indications suggest that this will be true as far as corporate profits are concerned.

Special deals in deferred taxes and government subsidies have almost guaranteed that most corporate shareholders in B.C. will enjoy increased profits which are not ear-marked for sharing with the workers.

Consider the following facts:

— In 1986, B.C. (fish) Packers netted \$17 million profit and for 1986 "the fishing industry expects a banner year" according to the January 23, 1986 edition of The Globe and Mail.

— "MacMillan Bloedel made a profit of \$42.9 million in 1985" an increase of 222 per cent over 1984 profits according to the March 28, 1986 edition of The Globe and Mail.

— The Bank of Nova Scotia - Fall, 1985 Report states that Canada-wide corporate profits, after taxes, increased 113 per cent from 1983-86.

— Since 1981, provincial taxes on corporations have decreased by 9.5 per cent. During the same time, B.C. taxes on working people have grown by 33.7 per cent.

— In 1982 alone, MacMillan Bloedel deferred \$55 million of its taxes, bringing its total of overdue and unpaid taxes to \$227 million.

All major employers in B.C., including the provincial government, have taken the position that any economic increases that working people may gain will be at the expense of existing rights, benefits and working conditions.

The battle lines have been clearly drawn. The traditional fight of the labor movement to improve wages and working conditions for their members, in order to match dwindling paycheques with rising costs, has been escalated by the actions of the employers into a desperate struggle by the trade union movement to protect current contract conditions against concessions and take-aways.

Bargaining Resume

A full chronological report on HEU bargaining can be found on page 21 of this issue.



B.C. Government Employees' Union (contract expired October 31, 1985)

- BCGEU began negotiations by introducing a negotiating technique called "Getting to Yes". Both sides appeared optimistic that a new era had dawned in the traditionally confrontative style that had marked BCGEU negotiations in the past

- negotiations, using the "Getting to Yes" method, begin October 21, 1985 and continue until January 17, 1986. Government negotiators reveal, for the first time, their full set of bargaining demands.

- A BCGEU bargaining bulletin on January 27 states that "virtually every specific proposal demanded a concession from the union"

- Shields states, "It appears the employer slid back into the old style of negotiations that we saw all too often in the past"

- the union's master bargaining committee sets January 31 as a deadline to reach agreement. Both parties negotiate for 16 days straight until February 1.

- Employer does not remove any major concession demands.

- BCGEU completes three worksite canvasses of its members as a preliminary to the taking of strike votes

- employer's February demands still call for a wage freeze in the first two years of a three year con-

tract and a freeze on increments in the first year

- government also demands an increase in the hours of work from 1,827 per year to 1,892.5 with no increase in pay. This represents a rollback of 4 per cent in wages.

- BCGEU suspends talks on February 5 after Premier Bennett announces changes to the Compensation Stabilization Program would be announced shortly

- union announces it will be taking a strike vote between March 3 and March 21

- Shields announces on March 25 that BCGEU members have voted 83 per cent in favor of strike action.

- no progress is made at the bargaining table and on June 2 the union serves 72-hour strike notice

- BCGEU announces on June 5 it will entertain a three-week delay in strike action. Both sides apply to the LRB for an extension of the strike mandate

- veteran Mediator Vince Ready is hired privately by BCGEU to help the parties reach an agreement

- a "productivity investigator" is appointed and given 21 days to find ways to turn productivity into a wage increase

- no progress is made. Employer's concession demands will cost each member \$1600 per year.

- government remains solid on its latest demand for a three year agreement with no wage increase in the first year

- July 3 the union commences a series of escalating work stoppages designed to slowly take all employees in the bargaining unit off the job by the end of three weeks

- one hundred and sixty employees in Victoria are the first to strike

- Premier Bennett calls both sides to his office on July 3 and declares that there will be no

strike or lockout, citing a "fragile economy" and Expo as the reasons

- Premier Bennett orders BCGEU members back to work by 8:00 a.m. Friday, July 4 or he will reconvene the legislature and legislate them back to work with a possible loss of right to strike.

- At a press conference on Friday, July 4 Shields announces that the 160 members will go back to work. BCGEU will hold a special bargaining conference on July 30.

- Shields also states that the union will wait until the Socreds select a new Premier to resume negotiations thereby preventing the Premier from carrying out his plan to recall the legislature



B.C. Nurses' Union (contract expired March 31, 1985)

- BCNU began negotiations with HLRA in mid-March, 1985 and continued until the end of June when negotiations were recessed for an indefinite period of time

- HLRA offers a three year wage package of 0, 1 and 2 per cent plus the usual concession package also tabled with HEU, HSA and BCGEU

- BCNU begins a strike vote among its 16,000 members May 21

- by June 28, BCNU has served strike notice on 48 hospitals covering 10,000 members

- strike vote result is 91 per cent in favor of strike action

- union spokesperson states that BCNU strike will not necessarily involve work stoppage but may be an "un-strike" such as wearing black stockings and working to rule

- HLRA responds to BCNU strike vote on July 1 by stating they will lock out nurses at individual hospitals if strike action is taken

- no strike action can take place until the mediator has reported out

- as of mid-July this had not happened

- BCNU serves 72-hour strike notice July 4 covering 15,000 nurses in 133 hospitals



Health Sciences Association (contract expired March 31, 1986)

- negotiations begin with HLRA on March 17

- HLRA offers a three year contract with 0, 1 and 2 per cent wage increase and presents HSA with a similar package of concession demands tabled with HEU, BCNU, and BCGEU

- negotiations break off on May 27 after 10 weeks

- HSA takes strike votes from June 9 - 12

- members vote 83.2 per cent in favor of strike action

- in mid-June, Mediator Fred Long is appointed

- four days of talks take place under the auspices of Fred Long June 24 - 28 and again in mid-July

- no progress is reported

- HLRA announces on July 8 it will lock-out in the event of a strike by HSA



Canadian Union of Public Employees

- negotiators for CUPE will be at the bargaining table during the

summer and fall of 1986

- fifty-nine contracts are up for renewal

- a significant contract for the 7,000 Lower Mainland municipal workers of CUPE Local 1004 was settled when negotiations were concluded in May

- Local 1004 members, whose contract expired January 1, had voted 80 per cent in favor of strike

- a two year agreement, offering 2.5 per cent and 1.5 per cent, has been ratified by the membership



B.C. Teachers' Federation

- contracts with 75 school boards, representing 30,000 teachers, will be negotiated during 1986

- 41 contracts have now been settled with a 2.1 per cent average salary increase

- BCTF negotiators also report gains in professional development funding, substitute rates, leaves, and protection for temporaries

Private Sector Bargaining

Major private sector unions in British Columbia at the bargaining table during the spring and summer of 1986 have been faced with strong and persistent concession demands from their employers.

Many contracts, such as those in the construction industry, contain benefits that recognize the seasonal nature of the industry and the specific demands that construction work makes on the individual worker.

Like their counter-parts in the public sector, private sector employers took advantage of the government's restraint philosophy and the high unemployment caused by economic mismanagement, to demand massive concessions.



Building Trades (contract expired April 30, 1986)

- the British Columbia and Yukon Territories Building and Construction Trades Council bargains with the Construction Labor Relations Association of British Columbia on behalf of 33,000 construction workers in 16 unions

- bargaining began during the first week of May and broke off May 7 when the council received the employer's demands containing massive concessions including immediate wage reductions of \$4 per hour and a three year agreement with no wage increases

- council served 72-hour strike notice on May 7 and began selective strike action on May 12

- eleven projects were initially picketed

- CLRA locked out construction workers on May 22 and invited them back the next day at \$4 an hour less than current rates

- building tradesmen do not accept CLRA offer to return to work at reduced wages

- May 27, the council asked the Labor Relations Board to rule on the legality of CLRA's offer to pay reduced wages and benefits to locked out workers if they return to work

- CLRA states for the first time on May 30 its proposals for a return to work "are negotiable"

- negotiations resume in June and rumors of an agreement surface on June 18

- a tentative settlement is announced on June 2 which calls for a two year roll-over agreement and does not contain the massive concession demands originally placed on the table by the CLRA

- CLRA agrees after LRB hearing not to invite locked out tradesmen back to work at reduced wages

- picket lines begin to come

down on June 23 as the ratification process begins

- ballots will be counted July 25
- all building tradesmen return to work by July 2



International Woodworkers' of America
(contract expired June 30, 1986)

- contracts covering 30,000 woodworkers in the coastal, northern and interior regions are being negotiated with the Forest Management Groups

- IWA proposes a one year extension of the current contract providing the issues of pensions and contracting-out are included

• forest industry negotiators turn down IWA offer

- IWA begins strike votes in late June and counts ballots on July 10

- on July 12 the IWA voted 89 per cent in favor of strike



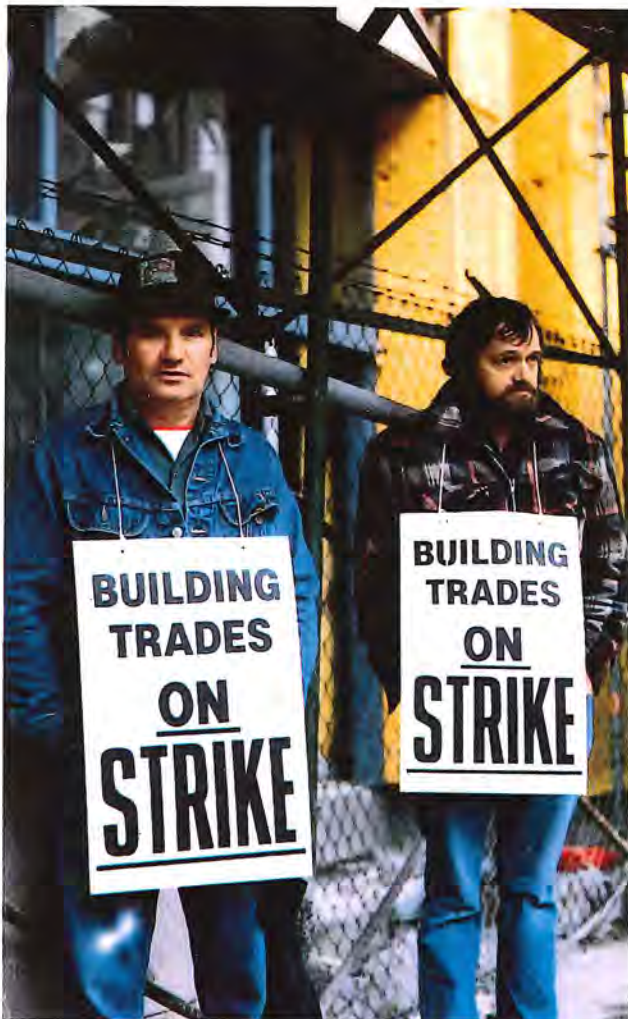
Canadian Paperworkers' Union and Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada
(contract expired June 30, 1986)

- the 7,000 member CPU and 6,000 member PPWC negotiate with 13 pulp companies

- negotiations were completed on April 6, three months before the contract expired

- a two year agreement was concluded and ratified by the membership

- the agreement contained significant pension and benefit improvements in the first year, amounting to 2¼ per cent, and a 3 per cent wage increase was negotiated for the second year.



Wage increase lags in west

Statistics released by Labor Canada show that average annual base rate increases negotiated in major collective agreements declined moderately in the first quarter of 1986 to 3.5 per cent, from 3.8 per cent in the last two quarters of 1985.

The public sector led the quarterly decline with average increases of 3.5 per cent, down from 3.9 per cent in the previous quarter. By contrast, the level of increase provided by private sector settlements rose marginally to 3.6 per cent from 3.5 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1985.

By major industry division, settlements reached in manufacturing continued to be among the highest, averaging 4.4 per cent in the first quarter of 1986 compared to 5.2 per cent in the previ-

ous quarter. Base rate increases in other industry divisions were all below 4 per cent, averaging 3.8 per cent in transportation, communication and other utilities, 3.6 per cent in the community, business and personal service industries, 2.9 per cent in public administration as well as in trade-finance, insurance and real estate, 2 per cent in construction and 0 per cent in primary industries.

Average annual base rate increases continued to be substantially higher in Ontario than in any other jurisdiction. In the first quarter of 1986, Ontario settlements stood at 4.7 per cent compared to 3.7 per cent in the federal jurisdiction, 2 per cent west of Ontario, 3.5 per cent in Quebec and 2.6 per cent in the Atlantic provinces.



Workers' agenda set at CLC convention

Close to 3,000 trade unionists from across Canada met in Toronto in late April for the 16th convention of the Canadian Labor Congress.

Forty-four HEU delegates, attending HEU's first CLC convention since 1969, took part in the five day event.

The biennial convention, which sets policies and programs for Canada's largest house of labor, directed the leadership through resolutions to carry out a program of action in defense of workers' rights.

This program called for the mobilization of the labor movement to defeat free trade. In addition, delegates adopted an alternative economic program that calls for jobs and industrial development based on public ownership of natural resources, financial institutions and key economic sectors.

The acclamation of Shirley Carr as president of the two-million member CLC places a woman for the first time at the head of Canada's largest labor body. She is also the first CLC leader to come from a public sector union (CUPE).

Carr succeeded former president Dennis McDermott who ended his 38-year involvement with labor by accepting the Canadian ambassadorship to Ireland.



HEU delegates (above) and newly-elected CLC officers

Other highlights of the convention included:

- A resolution was passed calling for changes to the Canada Labor Code that would require advance notice be given to workers and their communities affected by technological change.
- Acting on resolutions from the Women's Committee, the CLC and the federations of labor will campaign for legislation requiring equal pay for work of equal value in both the public and private sectors.
- The CLC will continue campaigns against user fees, extra billing and the privatization of health care. Other resolutions called for the creation of health clinics, the funding of health care from general tax revenues instead of premiums, and adequate federal funding to the provinces to permit the establishment of "a truly universal non-discriminatory medicare system for all Canadians."
- The Congress will urge the federal government to pressure provincial governments in B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Newfoundland to restore full bargaining rights to their employees, as recommended in a report from the International Labor Organization.
- The CLC was also called upon to intensify its boycott campaign of South African goods in Canada, including the withdrawal of South African products from liquor outlets.
- Unions were encouraged to increase their involvement in municipal elections.
- Free trade dominated much of the convention debate. The CLC's major economic statement contended that free trade will mean turning our economy over to large corporations who will be free to export and import goods and to move their operations without regard to jobs, communities and the welfare of working people.

LETTERS

Time running out

For the past 51-months, HEU members have been locked into a wage restraint program. Although this has meant a reduction in our living standards, we have dutifully carried on with our jobs of providing the best public medical care available in North America.

This has been done with less staffing in a period of population and hence patient growth in the Okanagan.

This increase in our workload has meant an increase in stress that has affected our health, our work efficiency, and the quality of care that the patient has a right to. For example, the WCB has reported that the public health industry in B.C. is the most hazardous one to work in. Eighty per cent of the injuries that occur in our industry are from back strain. This is due to an increase in lifting unaided by the lack of staff and equipment needed for proper practical nursing services.

The question has been asked by some about our wages "do we dare publish them?" As an example, my wage as a nursing orderly before taxes was \$1,589 in 1982 and \$1,653 according to our Master Agreement in 1985. An increase of only \$64 in over three years as a skilled tradesman.

As one can see, this means a real loss in wages and an increase in the cost of living.

Hospital workers are as hard hit as anyone else in B.C. We, like most people, are struggling to get through these hard times with reduced wages, heavier workloads, and spiraling increases in the cost of living.

We are not asking for much. We just want to maintain what we already have and for some relief in our workload and a decent wage. But, our time and patience is fast running out.

H. F. Davis
Kelowna Unit

Concessions rejected

As interested members of HEU, the registered respiratory therapists in this province are aware of the many concessions HLRA is demanding. Like you, and each member of HEU, we are shocked and disappointed by these unreasonable demands. This is indeed a difficult time for all of us but, in particular, for those of you who are so intimately involved in negotiations. Your efforts are sincerely appreciated and we urge you to continue such efforts. We would like you to express our opposition to the concessions and offer you our sound support.

Registered Respiratory
Therapists
St. Paul's Unit

Benefits help member through early retirement

I am writing to tell you how very grateful and thankful I am for the help and benefits that your union provides for its workers.

I had to retire early last December due to my health and since then the payments I have been receiving from vacation and sick leave pay have certainly been a god send, to say the least. When you are not working and not receiving that steady paycheque, it sure changes your way of living and you certainly have to make every cent

and dollar count. So, as I say, the help from the benefits that your union has fought and won for us certainly comes in very handy when you need it in a time of emergency.

Thank you once again, one and all, for all the help you people and your union have given me over these last seven months and over the years that I was employed at Lions Gate. I will always remember.

John Gamache
Lions Gate Hospital

Convention a success

I want to say how good it was to go to the B.C. Federation of Labor Convention.

It was interesting to see how the biggest labor organization in the province works but, best of all, were the people. Someone came up to me and asked my name and union. I said "HEU" and the reply was "Good to see you here. Glad you're back!"

It had to be the friendliest group of people I've met and I come from a

friendly town.

I hope that this first time is an indication of things to come. If it is, then I'm sorry it took us so long to get back in.

I know that everyone there had a good time and I personally had my eyes opened. I hope to go again and make new friends and renew the old ones and maybe help to make our province a better place to live.

Marianne Davies
Cumberland Unit

LETTERS

HEU member speaks out on volunteer issue

I would like the public to realize that The Arthritis Society is a certified hospital the same as Vancouver General, Prince George Regional, or any other hospital that is certified by the government. As such, it receives funding for the treatment programs from the government. If The Society does not receive adequate funding to support the treatment programs, it is not HEU's responsibility that money raised by volunteers must be used. HEU staff at The Arthritis Society is not directly involved with patient care or treatment. We are support staff to the doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and management staff, working in areas such as the medical office, accounting, public information,

etc.

HEU members at The Arthritis Society have been attempting since 1982 to reach some agreement that both sides could live with regarding the duties of volunteers. When nothing was resolved by mid-1983, grievances were filed. In 1984, HEU was informed by management that there would be no agreement made with the union. They stated The Arthritis Society would use volunteers anywhere, anytime, to do anything The Society wanted them to do.

As I'm sure most people realize that at this time in our country, and especially in our province, work is a difficult thing to get and those that have a job are going to fight to keep it. I wish we all had the choice to

be volunteers but most of us don't. I want to continue to contribute to the Society and our society in general in a meaningful, productive way, by working. Members of HEU at The Arthritis Society are not selfish, self-seeking, greedy, against the public good workers. The majority of us are single men and women, single parents, widows or spouses of partners unable to find work in this province. We wish to keep our jobs so we will not become an additional burden on society. Is this so wrong? I'm sure this has been a very difficult situation for staff, volunteers and management at The Society. But HEU members at The Society have not stooped to the name calling or mudslinging that has been directed at us in the last

few months.

We realize that this has now become a public concern. Of course, people must make their own decisions and we hope they will do this by finding out both sides of the issue. Realize the financial problem The Society is having and I would hope they would realize our concerns regarding keeping our jobs. I do not believe there will be or has to be a winner or loser in this dispute. I feel there is still time and a way to settle this between the two parties as other hospitals have done. To do this, The Arthritis Society must be willing to talk with the union but until that happens the difficulties will continue.

Linda Gulbransen
Arthritis Unit

Government demands outrage workers

In the editorial entitled "Hospital Zone - quiet please" the claim is made that it is "rhetorical hyberbole" when the Hospital Employees' Union states that all-out war has been declared by the government on the health care system and health care workers. Here are the facts. The concessions demanded by the hospitals take up 35 pages. The financial effects of these demands add up to a loss of \$4,000 a year on average. One demand would

see hospital workers, who must work around diseases, receive no pay for the first four days off the job while ill. These demands outrage workers who have seen the buying power of their wages substantially reduced over three years of wage controls.

Other demands are designed to drive the HEU out of health care. They include an end to our contracting out clause. They include an end to the right of union representation when

members defend themselves against arbitrary actions by management. The goal of all these demands is to shift the burden of health care cuts onto the backs of health care workers.

The burden of cuts also falls on patients who suffer directly from lengthening surgical waiting lists, from the "in and out" policy of hospitals and from less assistance while in the hospital.

Our union has watched the Socreds dismantle

education, attack government workers, use Expo to assist the drive to de-unionize construction. The Socreds feel it is our turn. We will inform the public of this fact. We have no choice but to take the strongest stand in defence of our economic and trade union rights. And we have every right to tell the public what government policies are doing to health care in B.C.

Michael Barker
Vancouver General Unit

LETTERS



HEU support lifts spirits

On behalf of the CALFAA members who are on strike against PWA, I would like to thank you for your support.

We know that your members avoided using PWA when travelling to Vancouver for your con-

vention. This entailed sacrifice and hardship that was truly appreciated by our members.

Those HEU members who picketed at the Vancouver Airport, helped to lift the spirits of our members. You showed them

by your actions, that we are indeed brothers and sisters who care about each other. Thank you for your support.

Gaye Healey
National Strike Co-ordinator, PWA

Unions extend thanks

Please accept our most sincere thanks for the contribution of \$5,000 from HEU in support of our struggle. While things are looking a bit better at the moment, we suspect that there is many a crisis still to surmount.

It's both the gift and the trade union thinking behind the gift that gives us heart and we want you to carefully pass on our thanks to your fellow officers and membership.

Roy Gautier, Chairman
Bargaining Council of
British Columbia Building
Trades Unions



Building Trade members who walked off the job at a Terrace construction site in their demand for fair wages attracted the support of other local unions, including the Hospital Employees' Union. Carrying a picket sign at left is Elaine Pigeau, Terrace Unit chairperson.

FRONTLINES

Trickery or Peckery?

Vancouver newspapers carried a story reporting on a recent ruling by compensation stabilization czar Ed Peck granting the "employees" of the Cancer Control Agency a 7.7 per cent wage increase.

Peck was quoted as referring to those who were granted this "out-of-guidelines" increase as "medical/dental staff." He later identified the group of "employees" as oncologists. The May 29 edition of The Vancouver Province screamed a headline over their lead editorial saying, "Pay Hike the fuse to Labor Blowup" and went on to wring its editorial hands

about what kind of ripple effect that this huge pay raise might have on other unions in the public and private sector.

The facts behind this exercise in "Peckery" would lead one to draw a quite different conclusion.

Fact: The "employees" who received the 7.7 per cent boost from Peck are not members of HEU, HSA, BCNU, or any other union.

Fact: All of these "employees" are doctors of medicine employed as oncologists by the Cancer Control

Agency. There are approximately 30 of them.

Fact: These doctors earn an average of \$100,000 per year and a 7.7 per cent pay raise will give them \$7,700 more per year.

This latest smoke and mirrors exercise by the compensation stabilization commissioner is another example of how twisted logic can be made to appear straight, and making the rich richer at the expense of working people can be disguised by conveniently not telling the whole story.

School's out!

HEU's 1985-86 Intermediate Education Program has now been completed.

One hundred and eighty-one HEU members participated in the three-part Education Program. The program consisted of Seminar #1, Contract Analysis; Seminar #2, Parliamentary Procedure and Public Speaking, and Seminar #3, Labor Law/Labor History.

Upon completion of the three-part program, graduates were presented with a Certificate of Merit from the union.

Graduates received their certificates on the last day of the Labor Law/Labor History seminar held in Victoria on June 13; in Kelowna on June 17; in Prince George on June 25; and in the Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley on July 4.

Education of HEU members was seen as a top priority by delegates to the union's Fifteenth Biennial Convention. In accordance with the mandate of the convention, the union is investigating the establishment of a comprehensive advanced education program that can be conducted in a residential setting. The program will be designed to serve the widest number of members and supplement existing programs throughout the province.

Management "cleans-up" act

A sit-in by frustrated housekeepers at Surrey Memorial Hospital has prompted management to clean up their act.

The one-day protest in February by about 35 housekeeping aides was sparked by the department's refusal to replace sick employees, which would leave only one worker to perform the cleaning jobs normally performed by two.

Since the protest and an inspection by the Workers' Compensation Board, aides have reported that staff is now

being replaced. And they say a WCB order that the department develop a priority list spelling out what duties should be performed by understaffed aides will offer them future protection.

The hospital's other reaction was to dock a day's pay from participants who, in turn, have all filed grievances for unjust discipline.

HEU members said the short-staffing problem had been especially critical in the four weeks prior to the sit-in.

One of the tasks short-

handed housekeepers were faced with was flipping adult-sized mattresses — a job the WCB ruled should be performed by two people along with the lifting of dirty linen bags.

The stress on the job was further compounded by the department's "quality assurance program" — a checking system to keep tabs on cleaning efficiency.

Through the protest, workers say they feel confident that they got the message through that one person can't do the job of two.

FRONTLINES

Support the fight for parity! Boycott Gainers products



Every time you buy packaged meats at your grocer, we ask you to avoid purchasing the following Gainers brand names:

SWIFT BACON — Premium, Lazy Maple, Sugar Plum, Capital, Eversweet, Royal Breakfast, Sunny Morning, IGA

OTHER BACONS — Superior, Freirich, Royale, Capital, H.R.I., Hickory House, Food Services, Holiday, Sunshine, Devor, Royal Breakfast, Sierra, Armour, Country Morning, Alberta Gold, Harmonie

HAMS — Homesteader, Superior Dinner Hams, Captain Cabin, Royale, Superior Cottage Roll, Alberta Gold, Lazy Maple

MEATLOAF — Superior (Red & Gold Label)

SMOKED MEATS — Premium Corned Beef Brisket, Royale Pork, Superior Porks

Here's why

The 1,080 employees of Gainers meats in Edmonton, Alberta went on strike on June 1, 1986. Their demand is for a contract which brings them up to parity with other workers in the meatpacking industry.

They aren't asking for huge wage increases. They want a raise of 51 cents in their base rate this year, bringing it up to \$12.50 per hour. They want a further increase of 52 cents next year. And they want their new hire rate increased from \$7 to \$9.37 per hour. Gainers has made no new wage offer to union negotiators.

Gainers owner, Peter Pocklington, wants to get rid of the employees' union by replacing them with non-union workers. He has been granted an injunction to limit picket-

ing at Gainers so that he can bus strikebreakers into his plant. He refers to the strikers as his "ex-employees" and says he'll never negotiate with a union again.

The men and women on the Gainers picket line have resisted Pocklington's attempts to liquidate their union. They've been arrested by the hundreds as they peacefully demonstrated outside the plant. But the Edmonton police say they'll continue to enforce Pocklington's injunction.

You can help the strikers by using your buying power to let Pocklington know he must negotiate with the union which represents his employees.

The striking workers at Gainers thank you for your support.

PARTY STICKS/ SMOKED MEATS

Superior, Safeway, Alberta Gold, IGA

THIN SLICED MEATS

Safeway, Royale

WEINERS — Firebrand Pork, Firebrand Beef, Smokies, IGA Pork & Beef, Alberta Gold, Country Morning, Superior, Premium

SMOKED HAMS

Superior, Sugar Plum

RINGS — Superior Blood Sausage, Fine & Coarse, Garlic & Bolo

BOLO — Superior & Salami

OTHERS — Magic Pantry

All packaged meats sold in Canada bear a small government inspection label. The number in the label indicates the plant where the meat was produced. The number for Gainers, Edmonton is 18B. You can use this number to identify the Gainers products sold in your store.

FRONTLINES



A West German television crew in town to capture the glitzy opening days of Expo, went beyond the fair's hoopla to cover some of the social costs in mounting a world's exposition. Jack Gerow, HEU secretary-business manager provides details of health care cutbacks.

Health and safety problem at VGH?

HEU members who work in the surgical-supply department of Vancouver General Hospital have been forced from their place of work four or five times in the past month with stinging eyes, nausea and dizziness.

The problem, according to a VGH management spokesperson, is a leak of an unknown gas into the surgical-supply area. Officials speculated that negative air pressure in the department allows fumes from drains to be concentrated in the area.

Members are reminded that all such incidents must be fully and immediately reported in order to provide documentation for any future compensation action should it be necessary.

mate. Those aims can be fostered by extending union rights to more unorganized workers and by the unions taking a stronger role in the fight for social justice.



Bishops accuse employers of using high jobless rate to attack unions

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has accused employers in Canada of exploiting the current high unemployment in Canada in an effort to weaken unions and threaten social programs.

This dramatic accusation came in a statement marking May 1, the Inter-

national Workers' Day and the Catholic feast of St. Joseph the Worker. The bishops in their statement said that labor unions have become "one of the scapegoats of the present economic crisis."

The statement says new technologies threaten job security. Many industries and service companies are also changing their hiring patterns so that "a clear trend (has developed) towards low-wage, part-

time or insecure forms of employment."

High unemployment among Canadian workers, cuts in social services, privatization of some forms of public services and enterprises and deregulation in some industries have all served to further weaken unions and threaten their role in society, the bishops say.

The bishops say unions must find ways of strengthening their status and of adapting to the changing economic cli-

FRONTLINES



Trade union, community, church and peace groups all let their voices be heard at this year's peace walk, held April 27. The walk was the culmination of a nine-day festival sponsored by Vancouver city's centennial commission. HEU members who joined in the procession backed up a resolution passed at the last biennial convention urging government and business to end Canada's involvement in Star Wars.

Thanks again!

In the last issue of the Guardian, we extended a special thanks to outgoing officers of the 1984-86 HEU Provincial Executive.

In addition to those already mentioned, the Guardian would like to add Brother Henry Theobald and Sister Phyllis Shiplack to the list of those who dedicated their time and effort on behalf of all HEU members.

Sister Shiplack, who was elected at the Fif-

teenth Biennial Convention as 1st Provincial Executive Alternate, will now move up to become a Member-at-Large.

replacing Brother Steve Morrall who has been working as an HEU staff rep in the northern region.

Weekend workers get 40 hours pay

About 340 workers at 3M Canada's plant in London have ratified a three-year contract that includes a new concept in the workplace called the "weekend worker." Under the deal, specially-

hired workers will work 12-hour shifts on Saturdays and Sundays but will be paid for 40 hours instead of the actual 24.

The concept addresses concerns of UAW Local 27 about excessive

overtime and will mean the creation of up to 35 new jobs because of the need to hire additional workers to fill the weekend shift.

Job seekers, attracted by the possibility of a regular paycheque for what would be the shortest work-week in North America, began calling the company after news reports about the plan. Within a year, 35 people will work 12 hours each Saturday and Sunday and collect 40 hours' pay at a top hourly rate of \$15.58.

FRONTLINES

Mount St. Francis unit says 'no' to South African Products

Members of the 2001-02 United Fruit Local 1000 and members of a local branch of South African students and young adults and young professionals took to the streets waving flags and holding placards that read "Boycott Apartheid Fruit".

In support of the anti-apartheid boycott, the United Fruit Local 1000, General Executive Board, the Federation of Labor and Canadian Labor Congress Conventions, Unit Chairperson Bruce Bystron and Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Logan, inspected the kitchen stores at their unit and found this of South African products on the shelves. A letter was sent to management pointing out that mem-

[illegible]

The following were
 members of the
 Executive Committee
 of the American
 Society of
 Engineers and
 Architects
 in 1900:



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 management to settle long outstanding disputes.

—**Burlington Northern Air Freight**

—**Victoria Plywood** (items identified by the logo "Vicply")

—**California Grapes**

—**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)

—**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.

—**Slade & Stewart Ltd.**

—**Okanagan H.R.I. Supply Ltd.**

—**Stevenson Construction** — Pennyfarthing site

—**Purolator Courier**

—**Entex Door Systems Ltd.**

—**Royal Canadian Legion Branches in the Fraser Valley** — #4 Chilliwack, #15 Abbotsford, #265 Aldergrove

—**Gainers Meat Products** — from the Edmonton plant identified with government inspection label 18B (for more details see page 14).

RCH members stage sit-in

VANCOUVER — 200 members of the Royal Columbian Unit staged a 10-day sit-in starting on July 24 to protest a management policy that allowed the hospital administration to call in casual employees rather than full-time workers to fill vacancies of less than a month.

The sit-in began when 45 dietary workers decided to bring the issue to a head on July 24. They were joined in their protest by 20 hospital transport workers who refused to move items in and out of the kitchen, which was being staffed by management.

Hospital administrators took the dispute to the

Labor Relations Board on July 1 asking the LRB to declare the work stoppage illegal and order the food service workers back on the job. The

union's position at the LRB hearings was that the new management policy was in violation of the job posting provisions of the collective agree-

ment.

After 11½ days of hearings, the Labor Relations Board found that the work stoppage was illegal and contrary to the provisions of the Labor Code, and ordered the members back to the job.

The Board's ruling also ordered the immediate suspension of the controversial staffing policy and directed the employer "to meet with the Union to discuss and clarify its proposed policy".

RCH dietary workers received the full support of their brothers and sisters in the transportation, clerical, laundry and housekeeping departments, some of whom staged rotating walkouts during the protest.



Karen Rudy, Chris Todhunter, Shirley Stoushnoff, Bree Marining.

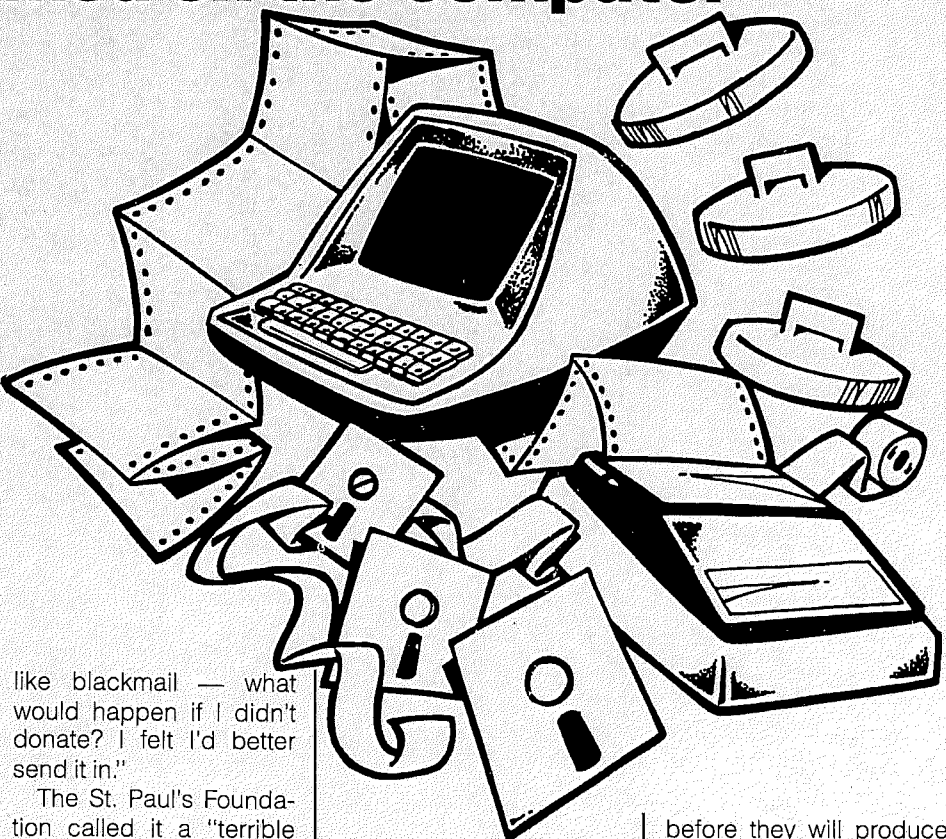
FRONTLINES

St. Paul's fund raising foul-up blamed on the computer

The Vancouver Sun of June 2 carried an interesting item describing how patients awaiting surgery at St. Paul's Hospital received letters from the St. Paul's Foundation asking them to "please help St. Paul's" with a donation of any size.

One patient described how she had filled in a pre-admittance form in order to get on the waiting list for an elective surgery bed in the next six months only to receive a few days later a personalized computer letter from the Foundation asking her for money.

Her reaction to being asked for money before she went in for her operation was one of shock and surprise. She is quoted in the Sun as saying, "I was so stunned when I opened the envelope. I could understand if it was after the operation, but I thought it was rather strange to be asking for money before I'd even gone in. It seemed



like blackmail — what would happen if I didn't donate? I felt I'd better send it in."

The St. Paul's Foundation called it a "terrible oversight" and the letter was described as "the unfortunate result of a computer mistake." Yet, those that are familiar with the operation of a computer will know that

they operate on the "Gi-Go" principle, which means Garbage-in/Garbage-out. Computers have to be programmed

before they will produce and someone, somewhere told that computer to send letters to the patients awaiting elective surgery. Computers don't make mistakes, people do.

CSP Approves 3.25% wage increase for management at Kootenay Lake District Hospital

Management at the Kootenay Lake District Hospital have found the key to Compensation Stabilization Commissioner Ed Peck's purse and have won his approval for a 3.25 per cent wage

hike for non-union personnel.

While this hefty increase has yet to be stickhandled through the hospital board, it is

apparently connected with a "restructuring of salaries reflecting added responsibilities and promotions" among senior management at the hos-

pital.

The administration has indicated that they will not be implementing the increase until the "current negotiations with the various unions are concluded."

FRONTLINES

HEU Bursaries for 1986-87

Once again, the union is making available a number of bursaries to HEU members and their sons and daughters. There are eight bursaries available for the 1986-87 academic year. Present members of the Hospital Employees' Union who have had one year of continuous service are eligible for bursaries as well as their spouses and children.

The bursaries, which range from \$350 to \$1,000 are awarded to

students who need financial assistance and who demonstrate satisfactory academic standing and are administered by a Bursaries Committee under the direction of the Provincial Executive:

- Edward James Ashmore Memorial Bursary (jointly sponsored by the Surrey Unit and Provincial Executive): \$1,000
- Provincial Executive Bursary: \$500
- Lions Gate Unit Bursary: \$500
- Royal Jubilee Unit

- Bursary: \$500
- Victoria General Unit Bursary: \$350
- Mission Unit Bursary: \$350
- Vancouver General Unit Bursaries: Two \$350

Applications must be received by the Provincial Office no later than July 31, 1986. If there are any difficulties with meeting this deadline, please contact Mary LaPlante, Financial Secretary, 734-3431. Applications and further information are

available from: Hospital Employees' Union, 2286 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V6K 2N5.

HEU welcomes new members

HEU would like to extend a special welcome to its new members from Arrowsmith Lodge in Parksville, Arranglen Lodge in Qualicum Beach, Beacon Hill Villa in Victoria and Cedarview Lodge in North Vancouver.

Brother Jenkins had worked at the hospital for 11½ years.

Brother Jenkins and his wife plan to move to Victoria to enjoy his retirement.

A retirement dinner was held in honor of Irene Muir who retired from Langley Memorial Hospital after almost 20 years' of service.

Sister Muir was an active union member and held the positions of unit chairperson for one year and secretary-treasurer for four years. In addition, she participated in the union's education program.

MILESTONES

Jacqueline Schamehorn, a purchasing clerk at Glengarry Hospital, retired from her position on April 1, 1986.

Sister Schamehorn will now have more time to participate in activities at the Golf and Country Club and the Pickle Rocking Chair Club where her and her husband are active members.

After sixteen years of service, Mary Stocks of Squamish General Hospital, retired June 20, 1986.

Sister Stocks plans to move back to England to be with her family and to do a lot of travelling.

Ethel Lamont retired from Dawson Creek District Hospital on Decem-

ber 31, 1985. Sister Lamont worked as a dietary aide at the hospital for the past eight years.

Marie Beebe, a practical nurse at Ashcroft and District General Hospital, retired in April of this year.

Sister Beebe has worked at the hospital since 1968 and held HEU unit executive positions of chairperson and secretary-treasurer.

Sister Beebe's retirements plans include spending time with her grandchildren and "seeing the world."

HEU member Wolf Balcke retired from his position of food production supervisor at Royal Jubilee Hospital on Janu-

ary 31, 1986.

Brother Balcke worked at the hospital for thirteen years and held HEU unit executive positions of chairperson and chief shop steward.

A tea was held in honor of Margaret Zieke who recently retired from Kelowna General Hospital.

An HEU member since 1969, Sister Zieke worked in the house-keeping department for five years and spent the last 12 years as a nurse aide in occupational therapy.

Following a party put on by his co-workers, Harry Jenkins retired from his position as chief engineer at St. Mary's Hospital in Sechelt.

HEU negotiation notebook

A history of HEU bargaining in 1986



HEU members, including the union's provincial executive, hold an impromptu demonstration in front of HLRA offices.



Members listen intently to report at Kootenay Lake Hospital Unit meeting before casting their vote.

February 12

The first negotiation session for a new Master Agreement between HEU and HLRA is held.

February 22 to 27

HEU bargaining demands are formulated by 400 delegates from 200 units at the union's Wage Policy Conference. Top priorities identified by the membership included a settlement of classification in the Master Agreement and no concessions.

March 12

HLRA presents HEU with a massive list of concession and take-away demands that attack the collective agreement in every area of benefits, wages and terms of employment. The total cost of the employer's concession demands will result in as much as a \$4,000 a year rollback for an HEU member earning \$19,000 a year.

March 31

The HEU/HLRA Master Agreement, covering 23,000 HEU members, expires. The Standard Agreement between HEU and the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association, covering some 650 HEU members in long-term care, also expires.

April 1

HLRA unilaterally freezes all increment steps. A provincial government mediator is appointed to become involved in the dispute.

April 1

After several weeks of unsuccessful attempts by the HEU Provincial Bargaining Committee to get the employer to remove the concession demands, the union's Provincial Executive authorizes strike votes at all units covered by the Master Agreement.

March 27 to April 9

HEU launches a radio and newspaper advertising campaign to tell

our side of the concession story. Local radio stations across the province carry two-30 second spots, supplemented by print ads in weekly and community newspapers.

April 2

The first strike vote is held in Prince George. Members at Prince George Regional Hospital voted 95 per cent in favor of strike action. Voting continues at 144 facilities through to the end of May. The overall strike vote is 90 per cent in favor.

April 7

Mediator Jim Toogood meets with HEU and HLRA. After more than a week of mediation HLRA still refuses to remove its concession demands.

April 14

HEU asks mediator to report-out of the dispute. Seventy-two hour strike notice is served on St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. No strike action can take place until the mediator has reported-out.

April 22

HLRA tables a revised set of bargaining demands. The HEU bargaining committee rejects this counter-proposal which still contains some 30 concession demands. Also, the employer demands a three year collective agreement with no wage increase in the first year, 1 per cent in the second year and 2 per cent in the third year.

April 25

The provincial government appoints Donald R. Munroe to act as Industrial Inquiry Commission in the dispute. The union welcomes the appointment as a step forward.



May 7

Munroe meets HEU bargaining committee. HEU tables its counter-proposal. Munroe asks both HEU and HLRA to enter into a media blackout. HEU bargaining committee breaks into sub-committees so that negotiations can proceed on several critical areas of the collective agreement simultaneously.

May 8

HEU Secretary-Business Manager and Provincial Bargaining Committee Spokesperson Jack Gerow states that the union will make every effort to achieve a fair settlement and does not plan to launch strike action during Munroe's term of appointment.

May 10

HEU receives an assurance from HLRA that it will continue the terms of the expired Master Agreement (i.e., benefits, wages and working conditions) during Munroe's involvement. HLRA, however, still refuses to pay increments. HLRA announces hospitals have voted to lock-out HEU members in the event of job action.

May 15

The union announces that progress is being made in classification negotiations, a key area in dispute between the parties. HEU and HLRA continue to meet throughout May and early June with the Industrial Inquiry Commission.

May 28

HEU classification sub-committee takes part in on-site visits to selected hospitals and works towards a solution on outstanding classification issues. HEU's Provincial Bargaining Committee predicts that the critical point in negotiations will be reached in mid-June. If HEU is not well on its way to settling a new Master Agreement by then, the union will have to consider engaging its strike votes.

June 16, 17 and 18

Three days of meetings between HEU and HLRA under the auspices of IIC Don Munroe are held in Kelowna.

June 25

The union reports that negotiations are back "on track" for the first time since talks began in mid-February. HLRA agrees to resume paying increments. Progress has also been made in classification, a top priority with the union. As a result, strike action by HEU members will probably not be necessary this summer.

Negotiations on outstanding issues between HEU and HLRA will continue through the summer with the continued involvement of Munroe. HEU strike votes are extended until Munroe's term expires.

July 15

HEU/HLRA's classification sub-committee exchange proposals on benchmarks for housekeeping, maintenance and transportation. Benchmarks for stores and laundry departments have already been settled.

July 16

IIC Don Munroe issues an interim report to labor Minister Terry Segarty on negotiations to date. He states that HEU and HLRA are "of one mind" in resolving outstanding classification issues at the earliest possible date. He adds: "While significant progress has been made over the past several weeks, much remains to be done" in classification.

In referring to negotiations on contract language, Munroe states that all matters have been tentatively settled except for wages and the term of the Master Agreement. The matters settled thus far are



subject, of course, to the ratification of the HEU membership and the HLRA member hospitals. Munroe expresses optimism that a continuation of "good faith" negotiations "should result in a full and complete resolution of all outstanding matters."

At press time, HEU and HLRA were in the process of setting additional negotiation dates to discuss wages and the term of the agreement. Munroe also requests that the specific contract language on the tentative agreement reached not be circulated beyond the negotiating committees. The media blackout remains in effect during the IIC's term.



July 31

The classification subcommittee resumes on-site visits to selected hospitals to verify information

required to develop benchmarks for patient care, patient care technical and miscellaneous job categories.

CCERA Update

May 26

Negotiations begin between HEU and the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association (CCERA), a long-term care employer's bargaining agent representing dozens of facilities employing HEU members.

The union succeeds in getting CCERA to agree that negotiations will cover 1,200 HEU members working in 28 units. Originally, talks with CCERA covered only a smaller group of units, known as "the group of 12." The consolidation of bargaining efforts marks another important step in the union's goal of one collective agreement for all HEU members.

May 27

CCERA tables a massive list of concession demands, similar to those tabled by HLRA in the Master Agreement negotiations.

May 30

CCERA withdraws some of its concession demands after HEU makes it clear it will accept nothing less than a fair and reasonable collective agreement with no concessions. CCERA also agrees it will honor its agreement with HEU that comparability with acute-care wages and benefits will not be an issue in this round of negotiations. (In 1985, 650 HEU members working in long-term care spent more than six weeks on the picket line to win a contract that recognized their right to equal pay with other health care workers.)

June 9, 10 and 11

Talks continue between HEU and CCERA under the auspices of mediator John Waterston.

July 14 to July 25

Further negotiations are scheduled.

Pricare Negotiations

June 3

Talks are held for a new collective agreement for Como Lake Private Hospital, Ladner Private Hospital, Parkridge Private Hospital, Wilshire Lodge, Inglewood Private Hospital and Edith Cavell Private Hospital.

June 12 and 13

Employers from Willowhaven Private Hospital, Raspberry Lodge, Simon Fraser Private Hospital and Beacon Hill Lodge meet as a group with HEU for the first time. Contracts for these units

expired March 31, 1986. Bargaining demands are exchanged. Employer's concession demands surface again. More negotiation dates to be set up.

June 27

The parties exchange bargaining demands and once again the employer is demanding concessions. HEU reiterates its position taken in other rounds of negotiations that the union will not agree to any concessions. At publication time, further meeting dates were in the process of being set up.



Other Units

June 6

Bargaining demands are exchanged between HEU and West Coast General Hospital in Port Alberni. Further meeting dates are expected later this summer.

HEU members vote



They gathered at a small home in Bella Bella and turned up in droves at a large hotel in downtown Vancouver. They met in tiny community halls on Vancouver Island and community centres in the Kootenays.

But no matter where they converged, members of the Hospital Employees' Union were united by the common resolve to take a stand and be counted at the ballot box.

At unit after unit, the resolve of the membership came through loud and clear as members voted overwhelmingly in favor of strike action to defend their collective agreement.

The fight-back spirit was in full force from the very first strike vote held April 2. Sporting square blue buttons bearing the HEU logo and slogan "I'm Standing My Ground," members at Prince George Regional Hospital listened attentively as union spokesperson Jack Gerow outlined the extent of the



government's demands for concessions and cutbacks that would effectively eliminate the painstaking gains hospital workers have made over the years. Their angry response was a resounding 95 per cent endorsement of strike action.

In quick succession, a strong strike mandate was chalked up at six other major hospitals across the province in the first phase of the union's attempt to gauge the membership's mood.

When the seven strike vote results were tallied April 10, it was clear that the mood was militant and the message unmistakable — bring the collective agreement into line with the real needs of health care workers and patients. And most of all — No Concessions!



The momentum kept building as members cast their votes at a further 138 health care facilities over the next seven weeks. In total, 19 units turned in a record 100 per cent vote in favor of strike action.

Terry Siemens, an assistant admitting clerk at Chilliwack General Hospital, said the consistently high strike votes came as no surprise to her.

"They show that people just aren't going to roll over and let the government take away our rights," she said. "I think our members have reached such a level of frustration that all they could do was vote yes to strike."

The situation in Nelson, where members from the Kootenay Lake District Hospital registered a 95 per cent strike vote, was much the same.

In spite of an unemployment rate in Nelson that tops 30 per cent, HEU members there were in no mood to accept any concessions.

“yes” for strike action



“The members have had it,” said Heather Suggitt, unit secretary-treasurer. “In the past six to eight months, things have gotten progressively worse at our hospital.”

Suggitt said cutbacks and restraint measures have caused morale to plummet.

“Over time, they’ve just gotten fed up with what’s happening to them.”

Suggitt pointed to a recent 3.25 per cent wage increase granted to senior management at Kootenay Lake Hospital as an example of the kind of injustice that workers face.

“At the same time as our bosses are getting pay increases, we’re being told there is no money for our wages and benefits.”

“That,” said Suggitt, “just doesn’t wash.”

The one strike vote, undoubtedly watched closely by politicians across the province, was Kelowna. As the home town of B.C. Premier Bill Bennett and Social Credit stronghold in the past, a strong rejection of the concession demands would surely signal dissatisfaction with the present government’s method of negotiating with its employees.

The 88 per cent strike vote returned by HEU members in Kelowna was among the highest in the province.

Clearly, neither political boundaries nor local economic conditions appeared to have any significant impact on the HEU strike vote.

The province-wide strike vote was the union’s first since 1976. In that year, units around the province voted overwhelmingly in favor of strike action in an effort to secure a new Master Agreement.

Some 7,000 HEU members at six hospitals walked the picket line for almost three weeks before the dispute was over.

In 1986, 10 years later, HEU members have again decided to send a strong message to the provincial government and the Health Labor Relations Association. A total of 145 units have voted 90 per cent in favor of strike action.

Says Fred Muzin, chairperson at St. Paul’s Hospital, “If they refuse to listen to the clear message given by the members at strike votes or from the Provincial Bargaining Committee, we will have little alternative but to force them to listen through job action.”

Suppose Bill Bennett wanted to take \$4,000 from your paycheque...

and then charged you a fee to receive what's left?

Sounds outrageous? It is. Incredibly, the Hospital Employees of B.C. have been told by Bill Bennett's negotiators to give up as much as \$4,000 a year in wages and benefits. Our members average only \$1,600 a month. We're just coming off a 51-month collective agreement that included wage freezes and rollbacks. Now, the employer wants to destroy our collective agreement — chopping medical coverage, sick leave and disability benefits, slashing dental plans and time-off provisions. They've even made an absurd demand that Hospital Employees pay to receive their own paycheques!

That's right. Unbelievable as it may seem, the employer is demanding that Hospital Employees pay \$276,000 a year to have our paycheques issued... to have forms processed when we're sick... to have bulletin boards in hospitals for our use.

Where are these shocking demands coming from? From Bill Bennett. The Health Labour Relations Association is getting its orders from Bennett and those orders are to destroy the Hospital Employees' agreement and to pay for health care out of the pockets of health care workers.

Bennett talks about partnerships — partners in enterprise, partners in education and partners in health. What kind of partnership is it when your "friend" picks your pocket for \$4,000 a year?

What kind of "partner" would slash 20 per cent of his partner's wage and benefits? Our workers are being asked to give up \$320 a month.

That's \$320 a month less to take care of our children, feed our families and pay the bills. It is also \$320 a month that won't be spent in our communities or in our local businesses.

We're seeing firsthand our health care system under attack. We've seen staff laid off in hospitals, beds closed, equipment deteriorate, user fees sky-rocket, waiting lists for hospitals soar and hardships for patients increase.

Now, hospital workers are being attacked. The Hospital Employees' Union of B.C., representing 26,000 workers who care about you and your family and the health care you receive, intend to stop Bill Bennett from ruining our health care system.

WE'RE STANDING OUR GROUND AGAINST CONCESSIONS.

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION LOCAL 180

"Where are these shocking demands coming from?"

"Suppose Bill Bennett wanted to take \$4,000 from your paycheque and then charged you a fee to receive what's left? Sounds outrageous? It is. Incredibly, the Hospital Employees of B.C. have been told by Bill Bennett's negotiators to give up as much as \$4,000 a year in wages and benefits."

When B.C. residents turned on the radio and leafed through their community newspapers in April, this was the message they received from the Hospital Employees' Union.

It was all part of a media campaign launched by the union to let the public know the hospital workers' side of the story. And it was designed to put pressure on the



government to withdraw some of its concession demands.

And pressure it did!

The upbeat thirty second radio spots and print ads that began appearing near the end of March sent the government into a tailspin.

Throughout the province, saturation coverage drew public attention to government demands that hospital workers give up as much as \$4,000 a year in wages and benefits — a proposal that seemed outrageous to people from all walks of life.

A nervous Social Credit government, thought by many to be poised for a Spring election call, sent Acting Health Minister Jim Nielsen scrambling to try to polish its tarnished image.

Nielsen's claims, however, that the ads were filled with "distortions and fiction" were never substantiated.

"Neither Premier Bennett or Nielsen denied that the government was trying to get \$4,000 out of the pocket of an employee who makes \$19,000 a year," said HEU secretary-business manager Jack Gerow.

As a result, Premier Bennett and his government did their best to distance themselves from the increasingly embarrassing concession demands.

Nielsen criticized the union's ad campaign for claiming that Bennett was demanding concessions from hospital employees.

"To set the record straight, these negotiations are between the union and the Health Labor Relations Association," Nielsen said.

HLRA President Peter McAllister embarked on an almost comic province-wide speaking tour in an apparent attempt to deflect the criticism from the government over to HLRA.

McAllister's "It was me, it was me" campaign, failed to get the government off the hook and pub-

lic opinion continued to focus on the Socred's failure to provide adequate funding for health care and health care workers.

He was quoted in the Cranbrook Townsman as accusing HEU of politicizing the dispute by attacking Premier Bennett. "The premier has nothing to do with the negotiations"

Gerow, however, said the tentacles of the premier's office creep into all aspects of the health care system.

"Whoever pays the piper picks the tune."

"Bennett pays the salaries of HLRA negotiators at least indirectly and anyone who understands how the system works knows that they take their instructions from the Social Credit caucus," said Gerow.

On the issue of quality health care, HEU ads zeroed in on bed closures, hospital waiting lists, and staff layoffs caused by the government's restraint program.

Again, the health minister was sent scrambling to deny the claims.

A news release from Nielsen's office claimed total staff in B.C. hospitals increased from 37,278 in 1981-82 to 38,400 in 1985-86.

HEU, however, was quick to

point out the figures did not take into account the fact that the government has increased the number of part-time workers and reduced the number of full-time workers since 1981-82.

"The fact is that they cut back staffing dramatically in 1982 under restraint and they have never restored that level of staffing," said Gerow.

"Fifteen hundred beds closed under restraint in 1982 have still not been opened."

In addition, the union pointed out that in 1984 the number of B.C. hospital staff per 100 beds was 192 — among the lowest in Canada. That compares with 283 staff per 100 beds in Newfoundland.

Aside from generating large amounts of publicity in the media, the ad campaign reinforced the strong strike votes taken during the same time period.

"I'm convinced this forced HLRA out of its fox hole and onto the firing line," said Gerow.

An HLRA under siege in the public media quickly withdrew a host of concession demands April 22 paving the way for a return to the union's agenda of negotiating a fair and reasonable collective agreement.



THE GAINERS STRIKE

Fighting the corporate agenda

By Dave Werlin

President, Alberta Federation of Labor

More than 700 union members have been arrested in Alberta during the past six weeks. Their crime is that they are fighting to protect their jobs and their families.

The nature of the struggle is typified by the strike at the Gainers meat packing plant in Edmonton, where over one-third of the city's police force has been detailed to cover the picket line. The incongruous picture of police equipped with riot gear, shields, and gas masks attacking normally law-abiding working men and women has been repeated over and over again. Not just at Gainers, but at Fletchers in Red Deer, Zeidlers in Slave Lake, and Suncor in Fort McMurray, unionists have risked jail daily on the picket lines.

Clearly there is a crisis in labor relations in Alberta. The crisis is a result of the increasing resistance of working people to the corporate demand for concessions. As the union movement in Alberta has exhibited a growing militancy and solidarity, there has been an increasing level of intervention by the courts and police in labor struggles.

Consequently the economic struggle between employer and employees, already an uneven contest in terms of economic power, becomes even more heavily weighted in favor of the employers by biased labor laws. In Alberta, all conditions of a contract may be declared null and void 24 hours after a lockout begins and scabs hired during a strike or lockout can be kept on as permanent employees after a settlement has been reached. Emboldened by such

legislation, employers like Gainers owner Peter Pocklington have even gone so far as to arbitrarily cancel a long-standing pension fund and to confiscate 'excess' money in the fund.

Furthermore, the minute a picket line effectively limits functioning of a plant, court injunctions limiting numbers, places, and times of pickets are routinely issued. Almost inevitably, struggles against bosses become deflected into struggles against the police, courts and laws. Whatever the issues when a strike is called, the struggle immediately becomes a fight to save the striking workers jobs.

The conservative governments, provincially and federally, have been pushing an economic strategy that benefits the corporate sector at the expense of working people. This corporate agenda includes taxation changes in favor of big business, deregulation of industry, privatization of public sector services, free trade with the United States and undermining the labor movement.

Government policies have helped create massive unemployment in Canada, providing a huge pool of workers desperate for any jobs and consequently putting tremendous downward pressure on wages and unions' abilities to serve their members.

However, there is a limit to the concessions that Canadian workers will take. Across the country there is a growing rejection of the conservative, pro-business, view of the world. Labor disputes are longer and more bitter as unionists have



realized concessions ultimately lead only to further concessions. Electoral support for the political right-wing is fading. The surge of support for the NDP in the recent Alberta elections, the re-election of the Pawley government in Manitoba, the election of a Liberal government in Quebec, the decline of the Mulroney government's popularity, and even the ousting of the Ontario and P.E.I. Conservative governments by Liberals are a clear indication that a political shift is taking place in Canada. This shift has obviously thrown the election plans of the Tories in Saskatchewan and the Socreds in B.C. into disarray.

As the human and economic costs of the corporate agenda pushed by the conservatives becomes more and more evident to the labor movement, and in fact to most Canadians, a broad anti-monopoly coalition is building.

In the Gainers strike in Edmonton, the union movement has built unprecedented solidarity, but just as importantly, we have made common cause against economic and social injustice with farmers, church groups, women's groups, and community and social action groups. I think that this kind of broad-based anti-monopoly coalition is the only way the labor movement can effectively combat the corporate sector — both politically and economically.