

THE HOSPITAL GUARDIAN

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION, LOCAL 180

VOL. XIII, No. 7 NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1976



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

THE HOSPITAL GUARDIAN

Provincial Executive

J. D. GEROW

Secretary-
Business Manager

JOHN DARBY

Financial
Secretary

Published by



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STEPHEN BREWER

Editor

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private hospitals

For 350 workers-contract sought

A three-man arbitration board, formed to award a first contract to about 350 employees in six Lower Mainland private hospitals, was wrangling over the terms of settlement as this issue of *The Guardian* went to press.

The board, appointed in September after eight months of negotiation, was originally scheduled to hand down its award before October 31, but reported then its members had been unable to reach agreement on a first contract.

Vancouver lawyer Bruce McCall chaired the board; the Union was represented by provincial office Servicing Representative Hans Brown, the employers by another Vancouver lawyer, Peter Archibald.

Arguing the Union's case before the board was a four-member bargaining committee:

Greta Fogstrom, representing Como Lake Hospital (Coquitlam) employees;

Pat Boyer, representing employees at Vancouver's Kensington Private Hospital and Burnaby's Willingdon Private Hospital;

Lesley Honscharow, representing employees at Delta's Ladner Private Hospital;

Barbara Nicholson, representing workers at West Vancouver's Altamount Private Hospital and Inglewood Hospital and Lodge.

The bargaining committee was assisted by Servicing Representative Sharon Yandle.

Over 70 items were in dispute in this latest arbitration hearing, including wages, statutory holidays and vacation benefits.

The employers conceded, early on in the hearings, that their employees performed much the same work as their counterparts in the public sector, though they are paid, in most cases, only the minimum wage.

Using this as a basis for its arguments related to wages, the Union argued forcibly for parity with the public sector hospital employees for the workers at the six hospitals.

The employers went so far as to concede the principle, but then went on to say they simply "couldn't afford" to pay their employees the wages, or give the benefits, contained in the union's master agreement with hospitals in the public sector.

The employers maintained this position even after the provincial government announced, in early October, that it was increasing its payments to private hospital operators for welfare patients by a whopping 30 per cent.

The increased revenues, the employers argued, did not substantially alter their profit picture and could not be passed on to employees without seriously jeopardizing their ability to make the private hospitals show a profit.

Additionally, the employers argued that the employees fell under the restrictions

bargaining

More of the same-a

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The refusal, which came in the form of a denial by the Association that it had ever received the proper legal notice to begin bargaining, came as no surprise to the Union:

On June 10, the day after the provincial government ended the Union's strike against the Association by imposing a collective agreement with the Hospital Services Collective Agreement Act, Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow told a press conference the need for



BILL ROLFE

of the federal anti-inflation wage control program, and that the first contract awarded them could therefore not total more than an eight per cent total-package increase.

As most of the employees now earn the \$3-an-hour minimum wage, this argument would mean, if accepted, that a contract with no improvement in benefits, a contract which provided only an eight per cent increase and nothing more, would result in a total pay increase for the workers of about 24 cents an hour.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS bargaining committee at arbitration hearing.



arator sought

legislation to impose the contract the Union had already ratified showed the HLRA was not interested in bargaining, only in confrontation.

Gerow predicted then that the 1977 collective agreement would not be negotiated either, that it would have to be arbitrated.

On September 1, the Union — as required by provincial law — served notice on the Association's members to begin bargaining on the issues at stake for the 1977 agreement.

On the same day, copies of the notice to commence collective bargaining were sent to the Association itself.

One week later, copies of the notice were sent, again as required by law, to Labour Minister Allan Williams in Victoria.

In late October, the Association's labour relations consultant, Bill Rolfe, informed the Union it had adopted the position that the "HLRA had not been served with written notice to negotiate."

This despite the fact, in the two-month period between Rolfe's claim and the serving of notice, many of the hospitals which form the Association had not only acknowledged receipt of the notice to begin bargaining, but also indicated they had forwarded copies of that notice to their bargaining agent.

On October 29, the Union informed the Association, through Rolfe, that it was seeking the appointment of an arbitrator to hear the issues in contention.

On November 3, the application for an arbitrator was made, with the Union recommending the appointment of D. R. (Bert) Blair, Clive McKee or Jack Sherlock to the position.

At press time, no decision had been made as to who the arbitrator was to be.

But the decision of the Association to force the naming of an arbitrator had made one thing clear: it was still pursuing its policy — adopted almost as soon as it was formed last year — of "cockfight bargaining."

That is an alien philosophy of bargaining in the British Columbia hospital field, one imported from other industries where the aggravated version of adversary collective bargaining harms no one but the parties directly involved.

The idea of a third party, similar in many respects to the pit master at one of the cockfights outlawed so many years ago, setting employees against management in a series of repeated confrontations may work well when the industry in question is shipping.

There is no real danger that continued disruptions in the shipping industry will threaten human life.

Nor does poor morale among the long-

shoremen, for example, mean that the job won't get done properly when they're working.

Unfortunately, disruptions in the hospital field, and poor morale among hospital employees, mean people — the patients and the public — are being made to suffer, to accept health care which isn't quite as good as it might otherwise be, as they have a right to expect.

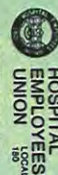
The only people who benefit from the Association's cockfight approach to bargaining, in fact, are the people who draw fat pay envelopes from the Association, its highly-paid officers and consultants, who grow rich at public expense by promoting continuing discord which they are then called upon to "resolve".



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Implement apprenticeship program now, Union urges Hall

While Delegates to the Union's Tenth Biennial Convention in early October debated the policies which were to guide it through the next two years, another gathering was taking place in Vancouver.

That other gathering was one which will also have far-reaching implications for the future of not only the Union and its membership, but for thousands of British Columbians entering the health care field in this province in coming years.

It wasn't a gathering which could be called a meeting . . . it was, in fact, the public hearing called by Dr. Noel Hall's Commission of Inquiry into the education and training of practical nurses/orderlies and related hospital personnel.

The hearing was held to allow Dr. Hall — who is serving as a one-man commission of inquiry appointed by the provincial government — to hear Briefs from interested parties concerning the apprenticeship program the Union has been promised since 1973 (*Guardian*, special edition, August, 1973).

That promise to establish an apprenticeship program was given by then-Health Minister Dennis Cocke, on behalf of the provincial government, and was contained in the agreement signed in August, 1973, designed to end sex discrimination in the province's health care field.

To solidify the agreement, the Union

negotiated the apprenticeship program into its 1974-1975 collective agreement, a contractual clause which was carried over into the 1976-1977 agreement — imposed by the provincial government as law this spring — with only minor modifications.

After noting that the Union felt a "Commission of Inquiry (did) not have the Term of Reference to supersede" a collective agreement, and could therefore not recommend changes to the apprenticeship program as it is outlined in the current agreement, the Union went on to ask Dr. Hall to keep "the small-minded, parochial and would-be empire retainers" from blocking the Union's "legitimate rights to an apprenticeship program."

protests

Protest against wage controls draws Union support

Hospital employees across the province joined in the October 14 National Day of Protest against federal wage controls by staging noon-hour demonstrations to show their support of the drive to have the unjust Anti-Inflation Program scrapped.

The demonstrations, following guidelines recommended by Delegates to the Union's Tenth Biennial Convention in Vancouver, did not involve work stoppages at any of the

hospitals where the Union is certified (*Guardian*, September-October, 1976).

Members instead sacrificed their lunches or reported for picket duty during their non-working hours.

The National Day of Protest, called by the Canadian Labour Congress, was the largest mass demonstration of any kind in Canadian history.



The Union argued the basics of the apprenticeship program it wanted to implement were already in operation: because seven of the 10 months spent in the current course are spent in a hospital, "in effect, the present arrangement is one of unpaid apprenticeship, one of on-the-job training," without pay.

What would change would be the unpaid status of the students and control of the program.

The problem is that the course is now controlled by the regional colleges, not by the hospitals and the Union, which know best what their needs are — and will be.

And the regional colleges, spurred on by several professional groups in the province, are jealous of their control, not wanting to relinquish it to a Joint Advisory Committee made up of representatives of the Union, the Health Labour Relations Association and the Provincial Apprenticeship Training Branch, under the chairmanship of D. R. (Bert) Blair.

And since they have not received money from the provincial government specifically earmarked for paying practical nurse/orderly apprentices during their seven-month practicums, the hospitals are refusing to accept such apprentices.

It has been, the Union said in its Brief, a long, hard battle to force the implementation of an agreement it reached with the minister of health more than three years ago, an agreement written into two collective agreements since then.

It is time, the Union said, and long past, to implement the program.

It recommended:

The immediate implementation of the apprenticeship program, as it had been

agreed to, in accordance with the understandings already reached by the Joint Advisory Committee.

That legislation governing the training of practical nurses and orderlies be amended to enable the Apprenticeship Branch to function in the role envisioned by the agreements already reached.

That the provincial government "discard its previous indecisiveness and take whatever action is necessary to reconfirm that the Joint Advisory Committee has jurisdiction for the training of practical nurses/orderlies."

That the minister of health provide adequate funds to the training hospitals to pay the wages of the apprentices, "in order that the apprenticeship program can become a reality."

That the practical nurse/orderly category be made a "designated trade" within the meaning of existing provincial legislation, so that persons wishing to work in the category would have to be an apprentice or a qualified "tradesman."

If that's what Dr. Hall recommends to the government when he hands down his report (expected sometime before the end of the year), and if the government implements his recommendations, a program which has been fought for for years should become reality.



AUGUST, 1973 . . . Dennis Cocke, then minister of health, signs the agreement which guaranteed the implementation of the apprenticeship training program the Union had already been fighting for for more than 10 years. The agreement, still unimplemented, was later codified in the 1974-1975 and the 1976-1977 master agreements. Now it has become the focal point for a provincial commission of inquiry.

convention

The Preacher and the Slave - 1976

*Long-haired preachers come out every night,
Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right;
But when asked "How 'bout something to eat,"
They will answer with voices so sweet:*

*You will eat, bye and bye,
In that glorious land above the sky;
Work and pray, live on hay,
You'll get pie in sky when you die.*

Joe Hill wrote the song, *The Preacher and the Slave*, in 1911; it was a virulent attack on ministers, priests and preachers as a group, condemning them for their support of union-busting bosses and their preaching against unions generally.

It was a valid point in 1911 and — in some churches and with some men of the cloth — remains so today.

But not in all churches, and most certainly not with all ministers, as Delegates to the Tenth Biennial Convention discovered October 7, when the Rev. King Huguet — of Vancouver's Fraserview United Church — delivered the invocation.

"I'm sure you all must get the feeling

sometimes that nobody gives a damn . . ." Huguet said.

"I visit hospitals, and when I see people who work around the clock delivering the things that are necessary, the menial things . . . I sometimes think you must wonder if anyone really cares about it . . .

"I don't know why you became hospital workers, and perhaps hospitals aren't what they used to be for you — but when you go back to your places of work, I hope you'll walk with your heads up, because you are the people who make a hospital work."

All this was by way of preliminary to the opening prayer; and when Rev. Huguet delivered that, he included something which warmed the hearts of all the Delegates listening:

"We just pray, too, that the people who are in control of the purse strings may recognise that human care is a thing of dignity . . . worthy of just reward . . ."

It's the sort of thing which would have made even Joe Hill say "Amen".



What's the expected high for today?

Public employees form united front



PROVINCIAL PRESIDENT Bill Black at PSECC founding convention.

Labour history was made in Burnaby November 8, when representatives from nine trade unions and employee groups met to found the Public Sector Employees' Co-ordinating Council (PSECC), a council dedicated to the presentation of a united front against attacks on public service employees by all levels of government.

The nine organizations which became founding members of the Council represent over 80,000 public service employees in the province.

Other groups, including the B.C. Teachers' Federation, the Registered Nurses' Association of B.C., the Vocational Instructors Association, the College Faculties Federation and the Health Sciences Association, were granted observer status by the Council, a move which gives them six months in which to decide

whether they wish to become full members.

(The Teachers' Federation, one of the groups most active in the establishment of the Council, is in the process of polling its membership in a bid to receive endorsement of its plans to join.)

When the observer groups become members of the Council, it will represent over 120,000 B.C. public service employees, almost every public sector worker in the province.

In a statement of objectives, adopted by the founding convention, the Council said its purpose was to:

- Provide a united voice to speak on all matters of mutual concern for all federal, provincial, municipal and crown corporation employees, and for all other employees in the B.C. public sector;
- Co-ordinate the efforts of the participating unions in promoting the interests of their members;

PSECC establishes representation, structure

PSECC's structure was among the items considered by delegates to the founding convention in Burnaby in November.

By consensus vote, it was determined that the Council would consist, initially, of 24 delegates from eight trade unions and employees' groups (the founders).

Representation on the Council was awarded on the basis of two delegates for each union, plus an additional two delegates for unions with membership in excess of 10,000.

This, of course, meant the Union will seat four delegates at the Council: Provincial President Bill Black, Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow, Financial Secretary John Darby and First Vice-President Paul Urmson.

Decisions of the Council will be made by a simple majority of the delegates present when a matter comes to a vote.

Representation on the steering committee has been guaranteed to those unions with more than 10,000 members, ensuring the Union constant representation on the seven-member committee.

Breakdown of the founding members and their representational strength:

Hospital Employees' Union, Local 180: four delegates, one seat on steering committee;

Canadian Union of Public Employees: four delegates, one seat on steering committee;

B.C. Government Employees' Union: four delegates, one seat on steering committee.

Office and Technical Employees' Union: two delegates, one seat on steering committee;

Association of University and College Employees: two delegates, one seat on steering committee;

Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees' Union: two delegates, one seat on steering committee;

Registered Psychiatric Nurses' Association of British Columbia: two delegates, alternate to steering committee;

Service, Office and Retail Workers' Union of Canada: two delegates.

The alternate member of the steering committee, one of the RPNABC's two delegates, will serve until the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, now balloting on the question of membership in the Council, completes its poll.

Should the teachers vote to join the Council, they would be entitled to four delegates and a guaranteed seat on the steering committee.

- Undertake a program of public education to promote, advance and protect the rights of public employees;
- Plan joint membership meetings, rallies and other joint actions on behalf of public service employees;
- Raise the public perception of the vital social role of public employment; and
- Provide a forum for the sharing of information of mutual interest and concern.

The Council's affairs will be overseen by a steering committee (see box story, page 6), which was empowered by the founding convention to issue statements on "matters which are of concern to all public sector employees."

This doesn't mean, the convention decided, that the individual unions would surrender their right to react individually, or that the Council could override a union's decision to adopt a stand at variance from that adopted by the Council.

Council members, it was decided, would be free to withdraw at any time.

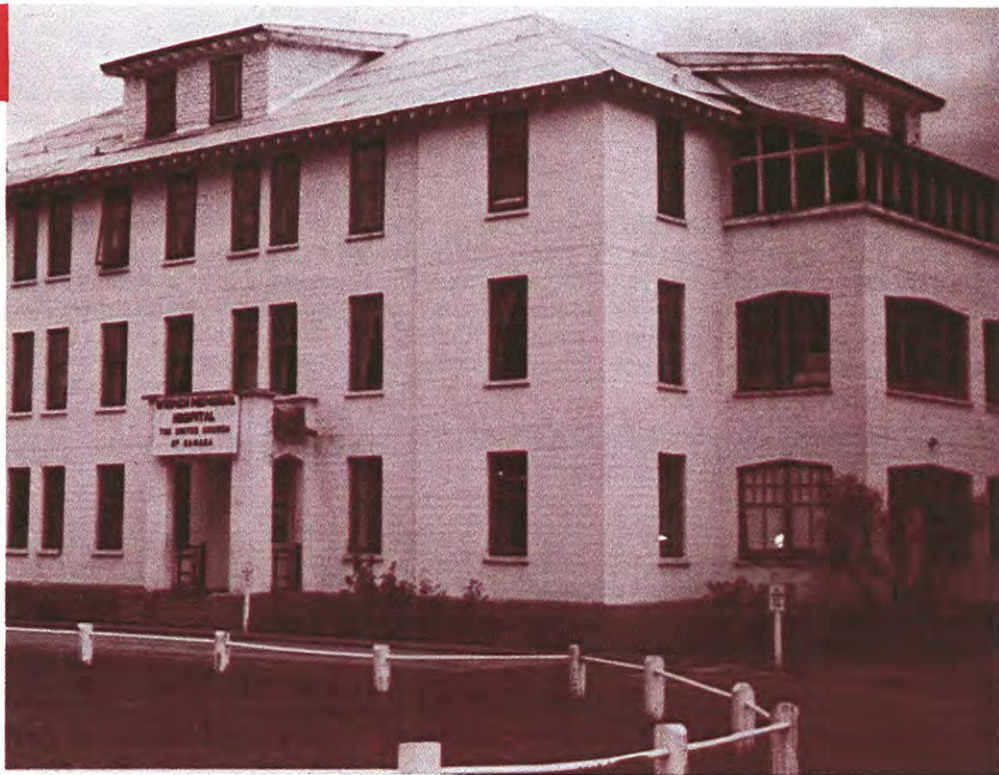
Additionally, strictures were placed on the steering committee which prohibits it from making statements concerning issues affecting only one Council member without the specific consent of that member.

The safeguards against abuse were probably unnecessary . . . the sole purpose of the Council is to bring public sector employees together, something which obviously could not be done by a Council, or a steering committee, which operated outside the best interests or views of its members.

The formation of PSECC is the beginning of joint action by public sector employees which can only improve the lot of all its members' members.



The recall notice for our car finally came today, dear.



WRINCH MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, HAZELTON

Hazelton 'only a start', IUOE warns

The International Union of Operating Engineers' successful bid to organize hospital employees at Hazelton's Wrinch Memorial Hospital was "only the start" of an organizing drive by the union in the province's northern sector, IUOE organizer Paul Peregoodoff has told Union Servicing Representative Bernice Gehring.

Peregoodoff hinted his union may attempt to organize other hospital employees at such non-union hospitals as Bella Coola, Bella Bella, Poucecoupe and McBride, Gehring said.

The certification vote at the Hazelton hospital was held November 5, after more than three months of organizing attempts at the hospital by Gehring and Peregoodoff (*Guardian*, September - October, 1976).

Of the 35 employees eligible to cast ballots in the certification vote, 33 voted; the Union got 15 of those ballots, the engineers' union 18.

"They were sold a bill of goods," Gehring said, "by an organizer who made them believe his union represented hospital workers."

"It was never really made clear to them — though we tried — that the engineers represent only a handful of people at a handful of hospitals, while we represent most employees at most hospitals in the province."

The Union, and Gehring, tried to make that point clear, both by mailing literature to the Hazelton employees and by personal discussions with them (Gehring

travelled to the Northern community no fewer than five times during the attempt to organize Wrinch Memorial).

It failed to do so not for lack of trying, but because the engineers' union was successful in clouding the issues before the employees.



BERNICE GEHRING

An impartial newspaper? Wel-l-l-l,

Has a California Socialist finally managed to give British Columbians the prize they have so long clamored for and so long failed to get?

Is *BC Today* — the brainchild of Peter McNelly, who describes it as "a provin-

cial newspaper dedicated to serving its readers with excellence in public affairs journalism" — really the "something new in the newspaper business" he has proclaimed it to be?

Well-l-l-l-l-l, yes . . . and no.

McNelly likes to convey the impression — without every really coming right out and saying so — that *BC Today*, which he started after he lost his job as executive assistant to ex-Premier Dave Barrett in the Social Credit landslide, is an impartial, balanced publication, with no axes to grind.

And he does try, or seems to try, to follow an editorial policy in keeping with that line of thought.

He doesn't succeed, of course, because what he's set out to do falls into the realm of walking on water: short of a real-life miracle, it's just not possible.

No matter how hard McNelly tries, he can never really look at public affairs in this province (exactly what "public affairs journalism" is seems unclear to most newspapermen, though most agree it probably is a nice-sounding phrase for what they call political reporting), with any eyes but his own . . . and his eyes are the same ones which used to sit behind that desk just outside the premier's office, back in the days when the New Democratic Party had its man sitting on the other side of that door.

What McNelly does succeed in doing is somewhat less than what he set out to; but what he does succeed at is, in itself, important and probably long overdue.

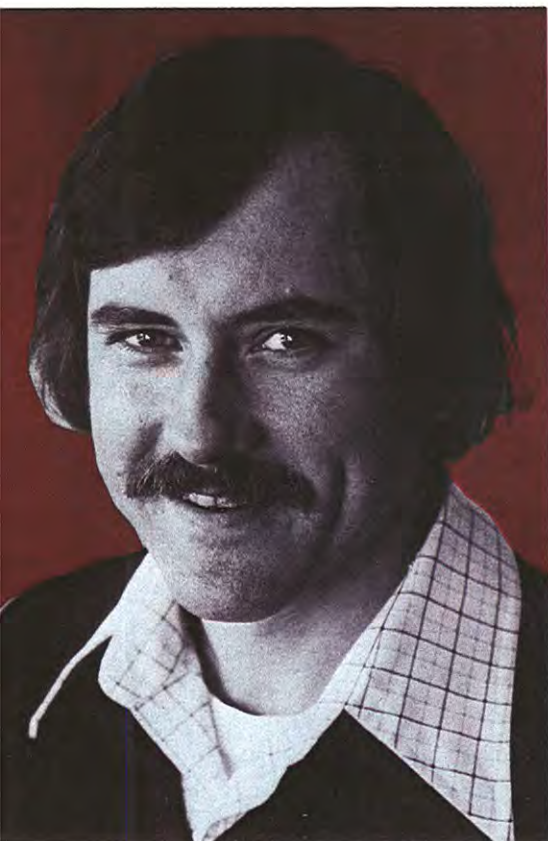
In a sense, he fulfills his promise to "serve his readers," most of whom are

likely to be found in the ranks of the left-of-centre political spectrum.

He serves those readers, in fact, extremely well, providing them — for perhaps the first time in memory — with a coherent, not-too-obviously-slanted voice in the public print media.

The right wingers have long had their own voices, most notably the so-called "establishment press" such as the *Vancouver* and *Victoria* dailies.

The political left-leaners have had no paper of their own, unless they wished to embrace the radical sheets like the *Geor-*



PETER MCNELLY

BCToday

"The only newspaper in British Columbia supported solely by its subscribers."

VOL. 1, NO. 9

AUG. 31 — SEPT. 13, 1976

NEWSSTAND PRICE: 60 CENTS

Economist slams Socreds

'Medicine Men' managing economy

By GORDON POLLARD



GETTING THE MESSAGE at Gerry Smith's Horseshoe Bay Inn in Chemainus, BC Today listens to workers discuss wage and price controls. See stories on pages eight and nine.

A look at Labour Day

To mark the coming Labour Day, Laudadio discusses the reasons behind holiday. BC Today salutes the history of inflation in Canada while columnist

British Columbia's economy "is being completely mismanaged by a bunch of economic medicine men," according to the chairman of the University of Victoria's economics department.

Dr. Leonard Laudadio charged in a recent interview with *BC Today* that the fiscal policies of the Social Credit government are "an incredible hodge-podge of nonsense."

"Members of the Bennett cabinet, especially the premier and Finance Minister Evan Wolfe, don't seem to have a clue what they're doing. Their ideas on economic policy are so antiquated they could almost be called pre-Adamite," he said.

Dr. Laudadio, who says he feels most economic decisions should be left to private enterprise with the government intervening only to protect the public interest, noted he sometimes criticized the former NDP government "because it did a number of rather foolish things."

"There was, in fact, no big mess at all. Although I often criticized it, I'd have to say in fairness that the NDP government was a positive economic force. It left our economy in generally good shape—a hell of a lot better shape than it's in now."

The Socreds, he said, "seemed to be taken in by their own propaganda and brought in a series of extremely harsh economic measures that were exactly what B.C.'s economy didn't need."

"These measures weren't just unrealistic. They were so stupid I simply can't understand why any government would have brought them in. Who in his right mind would even have thought about increasing the sales tax by 40 per cent or ferry fares by 100 per cent?"

Dr. Laudadio said members of the Socred government "seem to be obsessed with the antiquated and completely discredited idea that the budget must be balanced every year regardless of the consequences."

interview

'THOSE WERE THE

The Social Credit government of Premier Bill Bennett is "devastating" local hospitals with its policies of budget and financial cutbacks, former New Democratic Party Health Minister Dennis Cocke charged in a *Guardian* interview.

"They have decided to strong arm the industry . . . (and, in so doing) are showing an absolute lack of understanding of what is needed in this province today," Cocke said.

Cocke, who said the budget limitations and funding policies of the government were "totally unnecessary," claimed it had been different back in the days when he had been health minister:

"For three years [while he was minister], health care in this province enjoyed priority status . . . immediately after the (December, 1975) election, it resumed its usual position . . . as a non-priority area."

The former health minister said he remembered working "very closely" with the Union during his term as a cabinet minister, with only "occasional small disagreements and arguments" to mar the record of "friendly co-operation."

One of the most difficult of those disagreements, he said, had been over the inclusion of the Job Evaluation Program in the 1974-1975 Collective Agreement.

That program, a major bargaining demand of the Union when negotiations with the British Columbia Hospitals' Association (since transformed into the Health Labour Relations Association) began in the fall of 1973, still has not been fully implemented, of course. (See story, page 4.)

It was a major stumbling block in the 1973 negotiations, until Cocke stepped in and agreed it needed to be done, though he and the Union con-

gia Straight, usually scorned by all but the most militant of leftists for its somewhat questionable language (and sex ads) and burn-the-courthouse-off-the-pigs rhetoric.

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If he sometimes tends to get just a little boring with his wordiness (often, unfortunately) on subjects which everyone knows **should** concern them, but which, somehow, often just don't, that is probably forgivable.

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plus for unionists in the province: *BC Today*, true to its editor's Socialist ideals, usually offers more support for unions than the big newspapers available on newsstands, something which could persuade those readers who waver between labour and management sympathies.

One added plus, which may ultimately spell the death knell of the paper: McNelly doesn't accept advertising for *BC Today*, relying solely on subscriptions to keep himself and his staff solvent.

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Whether he'll be able to keep the bill collector at a like distance remains to be seen.

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AYS, MY FRIENDS' — COCKE

tinued to disagree on an implementation timetable.

Cocke conceded in the interview that the program "should have started long before it did," but blamed the Association for the fact that it had not been.

"The Association was ambivalent (about the program) to say the least," Cocke said, adding it had made no commitments to him to implement the program before he agreed to its inclusion in the 1974-1975 contract.

Asked if it would not have been possible to put pressure on the Association — and its member hospitals — to first accept, then implement, the Job Evaluation Program, Cocke agreed he could, as minister of health, have done just that.

"You can put on pressure, true, but you are loath to do that when you want local hospital boards to remain autonomous," the former health minister said.

The idea of local autonomy of hospital boards was a valid one, Cocke said, or at least had been when his party formed the government.

"Autonomy has become a real farce under the new government," he added, "which is using it as an excuse to let

the Health Labour Relations Association and the hospitals take the blame for the inadequate care which is a direct result of inadequate funding."

That the level of care being provided British Columbians in the province's hospitals today is deteriorating is un-

questionable, the former health minister said.

The cutbacks in such things as equipment renewal, training programs and staff levels mean there are fewer people, with less expertise and equipment, to handle an ever-increasing number of patients, he said.

"This can be seen clearly just by looking at one area of health care, the emergency services," Cocke said.

The NDP government, he said, had originally planned to purchase 45 new ambulances for the province in 1976; the Social Credit government has already reduced that number to 15 and is considering slashing it even further, he claimed.

"In addition, they have suspended all training" for ambulance personnel, he charged, adding that the suspension would mean a drastic shortage in trained ambulance drivers and attendants in the province before the year's end.

DENNIS COCKE



An impartial newspaper? Well-I-I,

Has a California Socialist finally managed to give British Columbians the prize they have so long clamored for and so long failed to get? The brainchild of Peter McNelly, who describes it as "a provin-

cial newspaper dedicated to serving its readers with excitement in public affairs and with objectivity in private life," the newspaper business' he has proclaimed it to be?

Well-I-I-I-I, yes . . . and no.

McNelly likes to convey the impression — without every really coming right out and saying so — that *BC Today*, which he started after he lost his job as executive assistant to ex-Premier Dave Barrett in the Social Credit landslide, is an impartial, balanced publication, with no axes to grind.

And he does try, or seems to try, to follow an editorial policy in keeping with that line of thought.

He doesn't succeed, of course, because what he's set out to do falls into the realm of walking on water: short of a real-life miracle, it's just not possible.

No matter how hard McNelly tries, he can never really look at public affairs in this province (exactly what "public affairs journalism" is seems unclear to most newspapermen, though most agree it probably is a maddeningly complex and messy business) without looking with an eye but his own. And his eyes are the same ones which used to sit behind that desk just outside the premier's office, back in the days when the New Democratic Party had its man sitting on the other side of that door.

What McNelly does succeed in doing is somewhat less than what he set out to; but what he does succeed at is, in itself, important and probably long overdue.

In a sense, he fulfills his promise to "serve his readers," most of whom are



PETER MCNELLY

BCToday

VOL. 1, NO. 4
AUG. 31 — SEPT. 13, 1991

NEWS AND ANALYSIS REPORTS

'Medicine Men' managing economy

Economist slams Socialists



GETTING THE MESSAGE: NEW Socialists' Medicine Men' are trying to get the message across to voters in western district and price controls. See stories on page eight and nine.

By GORDON FOLLARD
Vancouver, B.C. — It has to be the case of the "Medicine Men" who are trying to get the message across to voters in western district and price controls. See stories on page eight and nine.

likely to be found in the ranks of the left-centre political spectrum.

He serves those readers, in fact, extremely well, providing them — for perhaps the first time in memory — with a coherent, not-too-obviously-slanted voice in the public print media.

The right wingers have long had their own voices, most notably the so-called establishment press, and the left has had its own, the *Vancouver Advocate*.

The political left-leaders have had no paper of their own, unless they wished to embrace the radical sheets like the *Geor-*

interview

'THOSE WERE THE DAYS, MY FRIENDS' — COCKE

The Social Credit government of Premier Bill Bennett is "devastating" local hospitals with its policies of budget cuts and financial cutbacks, former New Democratic Party Health Minister Dennis Cocke charged in a *Guardian* interview.

"They have decided to strong arm the industry . . . (and, in so doing) are showing an absolute lack of understanding of the health care system in this province today," Cocke said.

Cocke, who said the budget limitations and funding policies of the government were "totally unnecessary," claimed it had been different back in the days when he had been health minister.

"For three years (while he was minister), health care in this province enjoyed priority status . . . Immediately after the (December, 1975) election, it resumed its usual position . . . as a non-priority area."

The former health minister said he was "not at all surprised" to find himself with the Union during his term as cabinet minister, with only "occasional small disagreements and arguments" to mar the record of "friendly co-operation."

One of the most difficult of those disagreements, he said, had been over the inclusion of the Job Evaluation Program in the 1974-1975 Collective Agreement.

That program, a major bargaining demand of the Union when negotiations with the British Columbia Hospital Association began in the fall of 1973, still has not been fully implemented, of course. (See story, page 4.)

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DENNIS COCKE



roundup

It's late, but still worth mentioning, that the Union got some strong support from other trade unionists during our strike early this year.

Some of that support was very visible, such as the unionists who came down to the picket lines to help in any way they could.

Some unions sent financial assistance. And some union members offered support, almost invisible, at great personal sacrifice . . . that's the kind of support the Union got from four members of **Local 1, Association of University and College Employees**.

The four — employed by the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Medicine facility at Vancouver General Hospital — joined a strike which wasn't theirs, and from which they personally stood to gain very little (if anything), the first day the picket line went up around VGH.

For the entire 17 days of the strike, they consistently refused to cross the Union's line, sacrificing their salaries without even the small compensation of strike pay.

It's the kind of trade unionism which should be remembered, particularly when — as is now the case — the people who display it begin to have troubles with their own employer.



The Union has awarded the bursaries offered each year to Union members' families to six students.

The bursaries were awarded to:

Vancouver General Unit Bursaries (\$350) — John D. Lowe and Pearl R. Nakauchi;

Provincial Executive Bursaries (\$500) — Cameron Beheshti and Charles Monaghan;

Royal Jubilee Unit Bursary (\$350) — Edward Lee;

Victoria General Unit Bursary (\$350) — Dianne M. Coupe.

As only two students qualified for the three Provincial Executive bursaries offered this year, one will be carried over to the 1977-1978 school year.

Once upon a time, there was a worker who had never joined the union.

All his life he took the benefits won for him by the union, but refused to join because he didn't believe in unions.

On his death bed, he told his wife, "Please do something for me — I want union members to be my pallbearers."

"But you never belonged to the union," his startled wife objected, "why do you want union members to be your pallbearers?"

"Dear," he replied, "they carried me this far, they may as well carry me the rest of the way."

★ ★ ★

The It's - Good - To - Know - Someone-Loves - You Department: In a recent letter to the provincial office, Lions Gate Member **John Gamache** made the day of his Unit officers, the Provincial Executive and the Servicing staff. He wrote:

"Despite the fact that the Anti-Inflation Board has ordered our wages rolled back, I would like to 'thank' the Union and all the Heads and Union officials for fighting for us hospitals workers, and for all the wage increases and benefits that you people have fought for and won for us over the years.

"I am a porter at the Lions Gate Hospital and have worked here for 23 years, come this January.

"I can look back at all the Union has fought for and successfully won for us workers over these years . . . and we have come a long way in those 23 years.

"You people have done a very good job."

The praise may not really have been directed to the right people — the Union is the Members, the people like John Gamache who have fought for so long to gain adequate working conditions and wages for themselves, their fellows and those who follow them — but it was both accepted and appreciated nonetheless.

★ ★ ★

Not that we think they *really* know something we don't, but it was interesting to note that the administration at **Vancouver General** marked the October 14 National Day of Protest against federal wage control by ordering all supervisory staff into work at 0730, bringing in thousands of shepherd's pies to feed patients and generally preparing for a one-day total work stoppage by Union members at the hospital.

Medical World News reports the case of a man in Heilbronn, Germany, who resisted when his wife told him she had stopped taking the pill and wanted a baby.

Not ready for a family, he decided to take matters into his own hands.

★ ★ ★

Remember Mary, the smiling "girl from the Royal Bank" who once beguiled British Columbians from billboards, television screens and junk mail campaigns?

The Royal Bank remembers her, and her sisters, as do the bankers at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, the Bank of Montreal and the Bank of Nova Scotia.

They remember because "Mary" (who never really existed) and her sister bank employees are up to something entirely new these days: they're forming a union, a union which has already applied for certification at 12 British Columbia chartered banks.

Local 2, Service, Office and Retail Workers' Union of Canada, told *The Guardian* it had made applications for certifications at bank branches in the Lower Mainland, the Fraser Valley and on Saltspring and Vancouver Islands before the federal Labour Relations Board by late October, though hearings weren't expected to begin before the board until January.

The attempt to organize the bank employees — 72 per cent of whom are women — came after growing dissatisfaction with wages and working conditions among the workers, many of whom earn only the minimum wage.

SORWUC granted the Bank Employees' Organizing Committee a charter as the United Bank Workers, Local 2 of SORWUC, on September 26.

The Local, which at that time had made 11 applications for certification, celebrated by organizing another chartered bank branch.

Dodie Zerr, Local 2 president, has appealed to the Union for help in SORWUC's organizing drive, asking for volunteers to distribute leaflets at bank branches in their communities.

Anyone wishing to assist in this organizing drive should contact SORWUC by phoning 684-2834 in Vancouver, or by writing the Union, at No. 1114, 207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver.

He first read the instructions, which directed that the first pill be taken on the fourth day after the onset of menstruation. After finding out from his wife what those dates were — he took the pills as directed.

He continued taking them for seven years and his wife had six children.

The story came to light when the man was hospitalized for a foot operation. Asked by the anaesthesiologist what medication he took, he replied "the pill".

Told by the astonished doctor that the pill was only for women, the husband replied: "It didn't say that in the instructions."

★ ★ ★

Life in a British Columbia hospital was summed up recently by **M. A. Westerhout**, a Union Member at the Cancer Control Agency Unit:

We the willing,
Led by the unknowing,
Are doing the impossible
For the ungrateful.
We have been doing
So much,
For so long,
With so little,
We are now qualified
To do anything,
With nothing.

★ ★ ★

Available, at no charge, from the **B.C. Federation of Labour** are two new pamphlets which could be of interest to some Union members.

The recently-updated brochures are titled "Your Rights As An Employee in B.C." and "A Guide to Unemployment Insurance Claims."

COMING NEXT:

Money

A report on where the Union's money has gone, and is going. Not a financial statement, but an easy-to-read, easier-to-understand breakdown on Union finances.

Interview

With Len Guy the newly re-elected Secretary of the B.C. Federation of Labour. His views on unionism in the province, and the nation, today.

Private Hospitals

An award for a first contract for about 350 employees in six Lower Mainland private hospitals will have been handed down. A report on its terms and conditions.

Superannuation

Answers to some of the questions most frequently asked about the Municipal Superannuation Plan, from the people who should know: the folks at the Superannuation Branch.

Bulk copies are available from the Federation offices, at 517 East Broadway, Vancouver V5T 1X4.

★ ★ ★

On the hot list:

All **Seagrams'** products (*Guardian*, September-October, 1976);

Sandman Inns (see story, page 12); California non-union table grapes, to support the **United Farm Workers of America**;

Firestone Tire and Rubber Company products and services, to support striking members of **Local 635, United Rub-**

ber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America in Calgary;

Tilden Car Rentals, the only major car rental service to successfully resist organization by the **Office and Technical Employees' Union**;

All **Sunmaid** raisins and all **Diamond-Sunsweet** products.

Boycotts against **Time-Life Incorporated** and **American Hospital Supply (Canada) Division** have been lifted, as settlements with the companies have been reached by **The Newspaper Guild** and the **Teamsters' Union**.

superannuation

Answers coming to Plan questions

Probably one of the most confusing deductions from Union members' paycheques is the one in the little box marked "Superannuation".

It's a confusing deduction because, when an employee tries to find out what that money is being taken out for, and what becomes of it once it's gone, s/he finds that almost no one seems to know.

With the help of the Commissioner of Superannuation, W. H. Forrest, *The Guardian* is going to try to explain the Superannuation Plan in this, and future, issues.

That's no easy task: the Plan is governed by a series of pieces of legislation which could keep a team of lawyers busy for years, just trying to figure out what they say, and what they mean.

The series explaining different aspects of the Plan could have as many as 25 different articles . . . so it might be a good idea to clip and save them, just to have a reference which can be used later.

★ ★ ★

The Plan is a province-wide pension plan, designed to provide public service employees with a retirement income based on their years of service to the citizens of British Columbia.

Security in retirement and protection in the event of death or disability are the key benefits of the Plan.

When combined with Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security benefits, Superannuation Plan benefits can provide a reasonable level of income for those employees who are forced to leave work as a result of disability or age.

In the spring of 1973, the former New Democratic Party government passed amendments to the legislation governing the Plan which increased the benefits paid to participants.

Those amendments also established greater equity between employees, eliminating discrimination in benefit payments on the basis of sex and/or marital status.

All employees — whether male or female, single, married, divorced or separated — now build up identical benefits, depending only on their length of service and final average salary.

In addition to these changes, the 1973 amendments allow for portability of pension benefits between all public sector pension plans in the province.

Which means, put simply, that employees can transfer benefits — without forfeiture or penalty — from one public service employer to another.

The next in this series of articles will try to answer some commonly asked question about the Superannuation Plan.

But hospital employees with specific questions can get answers from the Superannuation Branch, simply by writing them, at the Parliament Buildings, Victoria.

parting shot



BRINGING THINGS TO A HEAD, Vancouver General Unit member on the picket line October 14, the National Day of Protest against federal wage control.

boycotts

Being non-union isn't enough to get a British Columbia hotel or motel on the B.C. Federation of Labour's boycott list . . . if it were, the list would contain the names of literally hundreds (if not thousands) of hotels.

Which could be a pretty good indication that the 15 hotels which *are* on the list have done something over and above the ordinary, day-to-day harassment of unions which anyone associated with the trade union movement has come to expect.

It should also be enough to make any trade union member stay away from the hotels which have managed to get themselves on the official boycott list.

That's not hard; there aren't 15 different names to remember, just one: **Sandman Inns.**

The hotel chain, owned and operated by former Social Credit cabinet minister (back in the days of Bennett the elder) Flyin' Phil Gaglardi, is probably one of the most viciously anti-union companies in business in British Columbia today.

It not only does not tolerate union workers in its direct employ, it consistently refuses to deal with union firms.

Its latest branch, in Vancouver, was the first major hotel construction project in the city in recent memory which was built with non-union labour.

Its other branches were also built with non-union labour; when construction unions established informational picket lines around the building sites in an attempt to organize the workers, the company went to court in a successful bid to get injunctions prohibiting the picketing.

Trade unionists across the province have been asked to join in the boycott against Sandman's hotels in Blue River, Cranbrook, Kelowna, Prince George, Vernon, Smithers, Revelstoke, Cache Creek, Kamloops, Princeton, McBride, Terrace, Williams Lake, Vancouver and Edmonton, Alberta.



new faces

Welcome aboard

There's a new voice on the telephone at the Union's provincial office, and a new person sitting behind the receptionist's desk to go with that voice.

The voice belongs to Morag McGruer, the newest addition to the Union's full-time staff, who has been toiling at the switchboard since early this fall.

If callers detect a certain (slight) burr in the voice greeting them, that's understandable: McGruer is a native of Scotland, having been born and raised in Helensburgh.

She emigrated to Canada in 1947, with her husband Ewing, settling first in Ontario.

The pair returned to Scotland for two years, came back to Ontario, then moved to Vancouver about one year ago.

McGruer's apartment shows ample evidence of her — and her husband's — prowess in the area which is the true passion of their lives: sailing.

Frequent competitors in sail races and regattas in both Canada and the United States (and, before that, in Britain), they have more trophies, cups, medallions and other symbols of sailing success than they know what to do with.

McGruer has two sons: Colin, living in Vancouver, and Lorne, a sailmaker in Barrie, Ontario.



MORAG MCGRUER