

# THE HOSPITAL GUARDIAN

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION 180

Vol. X

VANCOUVER, B.C., DECEMBER, 1973

2

No. 6



YOU'LL HAVE TO WORK  
HARD, SON~ BUT IT  
CAN BE DONE.

## UNIONS SIMILAR

## RUSSIAN TRIP EYE-OPENER FOR H.E.U. PAIR

A clinic serving factory workers . . . a hospital for maternity cases only . . . another situated on a collective farm . . . a single spectacular ambulance service answering the needs of 7½ million people . . . the strong emphasis on preventative medical care, and the genuine pride of the people in what has been accomplished.

Just some of the features that made a lasting impression upon H.E.U. President Bill Black and Financial Secretary John Darby during a two-week tour of several Soviet Republics.

"They're proud of what they're doing," Black said upon his return. "The main goal is preventative care. They're working hard at keeping people out of hospitals — not putting them in."

Paid for in a large part by the six-million member Medical Workers Union, the tour spanned a vast land that gave the visitors a taste of both winter and tropical weather.

The purpose of the trip was a study of what Russia has to offer in health care delivery.

"Since we are expecting a change in health care delivery in B.C. we wanted to view what they had," Black said.

## Geneva First

On the way to Russia, Black and Darby stopped at the International Labor Organization in Geneva to gather all available information on what benefits have been achieved for women workers on a world-wide scale. This has been done at a time when H.E.U. is making major gains for women in the hospital industry.

The B.C. delegation, which also included Dr. Jim Corbett of North Vancouver, and B.C. Medical Association Secretary-Treasurer Jack Paul, inspected the famed Moscow ambulance service — an elaborate system that keeps a task force of medical men and women in contact with ambulances staffed by their counterparts. In this way, an ambulance can reach any point in the city of 7½ million in 15 minutes, with the doctor and two paramedics aboard receiving and giving vital information by radio telephone.

Other cities visited included Tashkent, capital of the Uzbekistan Republic, near-by Samarkand and Tallinn, in Estonia, on the Bay of Finland.

Darby and Black said the trip gave them a real awareness of the vastness of the land.

"You'd be going all day, then you'd leave at night for a long journey by rail, or you might even find yourself on an air flight of several hours and three time changes," Black explained.



To Russia with love: Bill Black tries his own red parka on Russian Interpreter Vladimir Panchekhin.

They were impressed by much of what they found, such as the convalescent homes where workers are sent for 30-day rest cures in the warm climate of Parnu on the Baltic Sea.

Other highlights involved visits to a variety of sanatoriums, a maternity hospital, a hospital built in cottage style for the exclusive use of 6,000 people in a collective farm system, a clinic serving 12,500 in a group of six factories. In this case, the factory has a service centre that is staffed at all times by a doctor and paramedics.

## Help Available

Also observed during the tour was an experimental clinic where research is being done on lung disease caused by stone dust.

Both men expressed interest in the availability of medical aid in the Soviet Union, where all services are free — including dental care.

They also noted that the structure of the giant union parallels that of H.E.U. — with some marked differences.

The Soviet workers are not allowed to strike. But there are teeth in the grievance procedures. If a worker is fired or demoted without the union's permission, the local MWU committee can order reinstatement. The union also has considerable say in just how the health care dollar is to be spent.

The reason for this power, of course, is that everyone — including doctors — belongs to the union.

Because of this, the unionists there were able to provide the type of tour Black and Darby don't feel could be matched in this country. Doors were opened everywhere. There were meetings with the Ministers of Health in two Republics — Estonia and Uzbekistan — and top ranking officers of the union were on hand to greet the delegation everywhere it went.

"The hospitality was just amazing," said Black.

The Russians were more than willing to show the visitors what they have accomplished in the health care field.

"They took a great pride in this," Black said.

He and Darby agreed there was reason to be proud. But they did have some criticism of the physical appearance of the hospitals and clinics. Only buildings constructed very recently appeared to have shed the shackles of the past, they said.

"People in British Columbia wouldn't put up with some of the facilities they have," Black said.

As for the trip itself, Darby and Black both agree it was "highly informative."

They left their hosts some tangible memorabilia — several dozen H.E.U. pins, lighters and pocket knives.

# HEAVY *on the* LIGHT SIDE

An interesting side effect of writing humor is the confrontation with people who take you seriously.

Leading American satirist Art Buchwald once wrote a tongue-in-cheek classic in which he declared there really was no such person as J. Edgar Hoover. The switchboard of a certain newspaper came alive with calls from indignant folk claiming proof of Hoover's existence. Who, they demanded to know, was this Buchwald — this obvious merchant of evil lies?

Later, while working as a columnist for the same daily newspaper in the City of Eternal Slumber, I wrote that W. A. C. Bennett lived a secret life as Super Cecil, guardian of public morals. By night, when the occasion demanded, Super Cecil would don a cape and costume that had a picture of Mickey Mouse on the chest. Then, according to the column, he would be off to fight the good fight against the evil Dr. Davistosky Barotovich and his Horde.

First came a call from a little old lady who said Bennett was far too good a dresser to ever "wear a silly costume like that." Besides, she scolded, there was absolutely no resemblance to Mickey Mouse. (That's also what Mickey Mouse told me.)

My next call was from a furious man who said my use of the name Dr. Davistosky Barotovich indicated that I (a) didn't like Premier Barrett; (b) didn't like the Russians; (c) was spreading the rumor that Barrett's election was some kind of Russian plot. I offered him a job as a secret agent for Super Cecil and he hung up.

I suppose I should have let the matter rest there, but I didn't. In a later column I hinted that some fictitious oil company was going to turn out thousands of little Super Cecil windup dolls as part of a campaign. The dolls, to be handed out at service stations, would march up and down a table top giving a speech on the virtues of the oil industry.

Two callers wanted to know if they could have Super Cecil dolls delivered to relatives in other parts of Canada. Another said he had heard from the oil company (which, as I said, didn't exist) and that the company was going to "get" me.

These calls, of course, were simply new chapters in a story dating back many years. I suppose it all really had its beginning when I did a satirical piece in Eastern Canada on how to beat the heat wave.

Among the suggestions was the advice that you should enter an air conditioned cocktail bar and remain there until winter. If all else failed, according to the list, you should try sleeping with your head out the window. It might do nothing to cool you off, but just think of all the interesting things you might hear and see that way.

A letter writer accused me of trying to lead the young people of the world down the trail of drink and ruin.

An excited woman caller, referring to the advice about sleeping with one's head out the window, said: "You . . . you . . . you, Peeping Tom, you."

No doubt someone will take seriously all that I have just written now. I am waiting by the phone. (Of course, it's off the hook.)

—D.M.C.



D. R. Blair with H.E.U. negotiators Peggie Heinze (left) and June Murdoch.

## MAJOR TALKS

### NO PACT HANGING ON PRETTY TREE

The lobby of the swank Bayshore Inn had been transformed into a living Christmas card. Fir trees laden with very convincing artificial snow . . . figure skaters performing on a small, smooth surface . . . the authentic smell of pine.

At one end of a long room on the second floor another Christmas tree reached out with gaily decorated branches.

All very nice — for the visiting fireman, the holidayer or the lunch-hour wanderer. But for those who were making use of the second-floor room, the business at hand was too serious, too demanding to allow anything but a vague consciousness of the festive atmosphere.

At the time — mid December — negotiators were locked into their fifth week of talks aimed at bringing about a new Master Agreement between the 11,300-member H.E.U. and the hospital industry.

For the Union, it was a slow, frustrating process. Day after long day of trying to make progress.

And the days were long — sometimes lasting until 10 p.m. The week was also long. Bargaining was now on a six-day basis.

This is the year the Union has put forward priorities such as an increase of \$1 an hour or 25 per cent — whichever is greater — over a two-year period, and has sought to negotiate an end to discriminatory features affecting the female worker. And there is the attempt to establish an Apprenticeship Program.

Many major issues remained unresolved at the time of this writing.

If anything, Union negotiators had praise for D. R. Blair, who was appointed a one-man Industrial Inquiry Commission by Labor Minister William King.

"He has really been the glue that has held us together," one commented.

There was no doubt in anyone's mind that without Blair the talks would have broken off long ago. If there was no agreement by year's end, he had the power to bring in recommendations. They would not be binding, but would provide something on which to vote.

LEST  
WE  
FORGET

On a bitter cold Remembrance Day (30 below) Kitimat Unit wreath is placed on cenotaph by Unit member Mrs. Dolly Kilally.



# THE HOSPITAL GUARDIAN

Published by

Provincial Executive, Local 180, Hospital Employees' Union

All submissions and correspondence to be sent to:

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538 West Broadway

Vancouver 9, B.C.

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BROADWAY PRINTERS LTD.

## EDITORIAL

### SOME POINTS TO PONDER

Elsewhere in this issue you will be taken on a reader's roller coaster ride to some of the high and low points that the year 1973 provided for the Union. Beyond this, though, is a question worth pondering: What have we learned from the experiences of 1973?

One of the answers should excite us. For we now have before us evidence that a quiet social revolution of sorts is possible in a Democracy. This has been the year of the breakthrough for women in their long fight for equality in the hospital industry. In other times, under another government, it was not possible.

The agreement between Provincial Health Minister Dennis Cocke and the Union to rid the industry of all discriminatory job features by the end of 1975 stands as proof in itself that social change can come about peacefully. It requires only co-operation on the part of understanding men and women. (After the stage has been set by a small army of hard working, devoted people.)

In the past H.E.U. was frustrated in its efforts to gain some ground on the road to equality. Today, of course, it is a different story. In dealing with the new Regime, the Union finds itself facing men and women of reason — men and women who very much want to right some of the wrongs of another day.

At a time when people elsewhere are still resorting to violence to achieve what they consider their rights, it is encouraging, indeed, to find that here in British Columbia we are heading into an era of social change without any real fuss at all.

Another lesson the year 1973 should have taught us — if some of us weren't already sure — was that the strike must definitely remain a right of working men and women. We have passed through this year without a blemish on our strike-free record. There has been no strike called against a hospital in our near 30-year history. This, we believe, should demonstrate to anyone who cares that we are a responsible Union.

At the same time, we don't intend this sense of responsibility to be misleading. Under no circumstances will we discard the strike as an ultimate weapon. Anyone who doubts us on this point has only to refer to the two recent strike votes that were taken as Gorge Road Hospital Employees in Victoria sought their first agreement. They showed the Unit members 98.2, then 98.5 per cent in favor of a strike, if need be.

There was no mistaking the fact that the Union and the Unit meant business. As a result, the Employer invited the Union back to the bargaining table and an acceptable agreement was worked out.

No strike was necessary in this case. But the right to strike was. Without it, the Employees would have been unable to illustrate just how serious they were, and the Employer would have been able to continue dangling them on a string.

As has been pointed out before, the Union favors voluntary arbitration — voluntary, in that the Union has a right to opt for it. The Provincial Department of Labor agrees and has included such a provision in the Labor Code. It lessens the eventuality of a strike. But it does not preclude such an eventuality. It must never do so. Nothing must. As long as men and women remain free, the right to strike must be a part of that freedom.

## HOSPITALS

### PAPER DEFENDS ONT. EMPLOYEES

*(A portion of a Toronto Daily Star editorial on the plight of hospital workers in Ontario.)*

If our society has the wit to devise fair and reasonable standards of pay for doctors, why can't we do the same for the humbler, but no less essential toil of unskilled hospital workers

The essential nature of their work is underlined by the ban on hospital strikes; sick people cannot be left dirty and unfed. This deprives hospital workers of their strongest lever to raise wages. Hospital administrators, required to stay under the government's ceiling of a five per cent annual increase in health care costs, naturally try to buy them off as cheaply as possible.

Arbitration Boards compromise pragmatically between demands and offers, without setting up wage standards for hospital workers.

The result is that they are chronically underpaid in comparison to workers in private industries who are unionized and have the right to strike.

In effect, society penalizes hospital workers for being essential. This is so obviously unfair that it is self-defeating from the standpoint of society's vital interest in maintaining full, uninterrupted hospital services.

We ought to be prepared to put just as much time, expertise and conscience into achieving fair wages for hospital workers — and for other essential public service employees — as the high level negotiators will apply to calculating appropriate pay for doctors.

They should be assured standards of pay and working conditions that match those of employees doing comparable work in private industry. If the government has the will, the means, in terms of wage yardsticks, can certainly be found.



Union's organizing drive has reached a number of new hospitals. But there are still those new members at hospitals already covered by Union, such as the two signed up here by Gwen Parrish.



Joan Wall, Lee Sumners — on the job.

**"IT WAS  
A  
GOOD  
FEELING"**



They worked in Christmas card setting.

## REAL COOL ORGANIZERS

# GETTING THE DRIFT (NORTHERN STYLE)

As the icy winds shifted snowdrifts from one side of two-lane highways to the other, two hospital workers wrapped up seven weeks of organizing for H.E.U. — bringing three more northern hospitals into the Union.

Lee Sumners and Joan Wall, on leaves of absence from their hospitals, tramped through the swirling white powder in six small communities in the central Interior during October and November, winding up with a .500 batting average.

Although Hazelton, Vanderhoof and McBride opted not to join the Union, workers from Burns Lake, Fort St. James and Mackenzie signed up during meetings with the two Organizers.

The two women were disappointed they didn't get majorities in the other three, but feel there will be another chance in the new year in at least one case.

Some Units took more time than others: Joan and Lee worked in Burns Lake for two weeks before the Unit members signed. In Fort St. James it was one week, while Mackenzie Hospital workers joined after only one evening meeting.

"It was a good feeling after getting Mackenzie," Lee said after the meeting.

The Mackenzie Unit members themselves were not unhappy, either, at the prospect of gaining the benefits offered by certification and collective bargaining. The three-hour meeting at the house of one of the employees was a lively one, with little hesitation to sign.

One young woman balked at the prospect because, she said, her wages were

almost as high as a collective agreement would provide. All others present, however, signed with enthusiasm. Although a majority of the Unit joined at the meeting, others who had been unable to attend signed up the next day when given the opportunity.

Lee Sumners said at the end of the trip: "It was a good break, most interesting."

She regarded it as an important challenge, meeting many people and fielding crucial questions.

It was the women's first involvement with organizing and both agree it's a demanding but rewarding job.

"It's a big feeling of accomplishment when somebody who is anti-union listens to what you have to say, argues a lot, then comes over by himself," Lee said.



Is this sign really necessary? It brought a chuckle of relief to busy day of organizers.

**Progress is never painless.**

**This became abundantly clear during the past year as the Union won some seemingly impossible uphill battles and suffered some disappointments.**

**The year was highlighted by the breakthrough in the area of equality for the woman employee. At the same time, the Union won wage rates for Student Practical Nurses, only to find itself up against a wall of resistance.**

**There were successes in the field of organizing, but frustration continued to be the key word at the bargaining table.**

**Details of these and other features of the year can be found on these pages.**

# 1973

## NEGOTIATIONS

Across the Bargaining Table they sit . . . and sit . . . and sit . . .

Even with a new government and open invitations to bargain freely, B.C.H.A. negotiators continue to behave as if they are still shackled by the wage limits of the former Social Credit Regime.

The same stalling tactics are there — the same indecision. It has been apparent in the current Master Agreement talks that are being overseen by D. R. Blair, appointed a one-man Industrial Inquiry Commission by Labor Minister William King.

Blair's power to make recommendations has failed to move B.C.H.A. from its usual stance. The same policy was evident when it took two overwhelming strike votes — 98.2 and 98.5 per cent — to bring about a first contract with Gorge Road Hospital in Victoria.

When considering this, there is one very important point to keep in mind: in general industry the costs of management bargaining and arbitration — both working against the interest of employees — come out of industry profits. Such

costs in the Hospital Industry come out of taxes — taxes paid by hospital employees, as well as others.

## DISCRIMINATION DIFFERENTIALS

For too long the hospital industry has been allowed to openly discriminate against the woman employee in terms of earnings and job opportunity.

Thwarted in past attempts to do something about this, the Union threw itself headlong into the battle in 1973 and its efforts were crowned with history-making success.

It took six months of hard work and travelling the province for the Provincial Staff to set the stage for Arbitration Hearings under D. R. Blair. The hearings provided the initial breakthrough—increases of \$144.25 a month for selected groups of Practical Nurses to bring them to the \$707 Orderly level. Some Housekeeping Maids got an \$88 a month hike.

After this came talks with a new and understanding government — more than

a dozen meetings with Health Minister Dennis Cocke or his appointed representatives. The result was last August's historic agreement between the government and H.E.U. to end all discriminatory job features by the end of 1975.

The initial step meant most of those earning less than the male Cleaner rate of \$669.50 would get an adjustment of \$37.50 a month before the end of 1973 — retroactive to last Jan. 1. The handful earning close to the Cleaner rate would get whatever lesser amount it required to gain parity. Others, too far back, would not realize parity. But the \$37.50 was to be considered an initial step to start them on their way to equality. The move affects about 8,400 of the Union's 11,300 members.

The importance of the breakthrough is emphasized by H.E.U. Secretary-Business Manager Ray McCready, who sees it as one of the "first tangible results of the quiet social revolution" he says is distinguishing this small corner of North America.



*The year has been a busy and exciting one for the Provincial Staff. There has been lots of work in connection with the anti-discrimination breakthrough, and, of course, lots more in preparation for bargaining. This means staff strategy meetings, such as this one. (Missing from picture are Henry Perkin, Bernice Gehring, Bill Muir.)*

# GOOD NEWS ... AND THE BAD

## ARBITRATION AND PAY RATES

This past year the Union has continued to chalk up an impressive score in Arbitration Awards and Pay Rate Adjustments. Overall, the success rate is close to 80 per cent.

The biggest individual award to come out of an Arbitration Hearing saw the reinstatement of Sarah P. Davies at Royal Inland Hospital, Kamloops, with approximately \$3,800 in back pay. Her case dating back to early 1972, ran into delays.

Her dismissal was ruled wrongful and she was ordered reinstated with all benefits, including approximately \$7,500 in back pay for a period covering Feb. 2, 1972, to June 8, 1973. However, deductions were to be made from the \$7,500 for money earned in the meantime outside the hospital.

Where groups are concerned, the year's major award provided 140 practical Nurses at Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria with another \$144.25 per month each to bring them parity with Orderlies. The cost for this would be close to \$250,000 over one year.

## COMMUNITY HELP

Not too long ago H.E.U. members at St. Mary's Hospital, Sechelt, went about the job of raising \$306 for medical aid in Vietnam and \$166 for the Sechelt and District Retarded Children's Association.

While this may not be considered big news, it is important in that it emphasizes the side of the Union story that is seldom told — the unselfish giving of Unionists to the community good.

The Sechelt effort can be added to other recent worthy deeds, such as the contribution of \$100 by the Mission Unit to the Mission Senior Citizens Housing Project, and upgrading of a ward by the Kootenay Lake General Hospital Unit. The Unit, which sponsored the ward in 1969, has added two electric beds at \$533 each and drapes costing \$169.

## UNIT SERVICING

Thousands upon thousands of miles on the road and in the air have been piled up by Provincial Staff Officers attending to the vital task of servicing the Union's far-flung Units.

It is expert servicing, of course, that provides the lifeline and keeps the Union as strong as it is.

It was personal attention to regional problems that brought about an impressive number of victories — small and large — over the year. Included here in addition to the normal pay adjustments and job reclassifications, were Arbitration Hearings that led to a return of jobs to employees who had been wrongfully dismissed.

Servicing in the past year has, as usual, underlined the fact that Union members have all those things that non-union hospital workers can never be sure of — job security, assurance of a decent standard of living, portability of seniority, and a constant vigil over working conditions.

## FREE LEGAL AID

The Union, recognizing the need of the average person to have ready access to legal advice, put a Free Legal Aid Program into effect for its members last March 15. The program offers free legal advice on a wide range of matters including separation agreements, divorce, child maintenance problems, wills, real estate, landlord and tenant troubles, and buying and selling of chattels.

H.E.U. didn't have to wait long for proof that such a need existed. In the very first month 38 members put out the call for help on everything from injury claims to domestic problems.

## BRIEFS PREPARED

There are probably few who realize the full scope of the study and careful preparation that went into the publishing of special briefs from the Union to the Provincial Ministers of Labor and Health during the year.

Briefs turned out carefully by knowledgeable people usually command attention. There were, for instance, a number of points recommended in the Labor Brief that showed up in the new Labor Code.

These included the size of the Labor Relations Board, its location, its provisions for special industrial divisions and troubleshooters, and special arbitration options for unions trying to avoid strikes in the essential service sector. Also, there is the right to apply for a certification vote if only 35 per cent of the people in a proposed Bargaining Unit indicate they want union representation. In the past, the figure had to exceed 50 per cent.

## STUDENT WAGES

Undoubtedly 1973 will be recorded as the year the Union answered a call of distress from Practical Nurse Students, only to run into an enormous wall of opposition.

When Students complained that they were being forced to work without pay while training in hospitals, H.E.U. fought for and won a minimum wage rate for selected groups in the Okanagan. Colleges accused the Union of being interested only in organizing. Some hospitals said they would stop using Students.

If anything, H.E.U. was surprised at the response. It had only entered the picture in the first place to act as a voice for some young people who were very obviously being exploited as a form of cheap labor.

The long-range goal is for an Apprenticeship Program that would provide both financial assistance and proper training for men and women interested in a variety of hospital work. There has been much emphasis placed on the training of Nurses, but in this case Orderlies would stand to benefit as much as anyone else.

## TERRACE TALE

The Union called them "Good Samaritans," those employees at Mills Memorial Hospital at Terrace who staged a three-day sit-in last June in support of a handicapped worker they felt had been wrongfully dismissed.

The worker, deaf-mute Janitor Douglas Pigeau, was reinstated as a result of an Arbitration Hearing and compensated for financial loss. Even so, the employees who took action on his behalf will not do as well. Another hearing ruled they were not entitled to pay for the three days of the sit-in.

The Union fought hard for the employees on the ground that they risked personal loss to help an unfortunate individual. The ensuing loss in this case will have to be considered one of the year's frustrations.

## ORGANIZING

Because of some hard-working "foot sloggers" and "door knockers," the Union realized dividends in the field of organizing.

Nine new groups of employees came into the Union Camp (some certifications are still awaited) and it appeared as if two or three more hospitals might be added to the list.

Organizing success involved Children's and Grace Hospital in Vancouver, Gorge Road in Victoria, Fernie, Clearwater, Chetwynd, Fort St. James, Burns Lake and 100 Mile House Hospitals.



JERRY JASPER  
... "setting up" for cast

It's business as usual in the Emergency Ward of Victoria General Hospital. Orderly Jerry Jasper, with quick efficiency, is "setting up" a patient for a cast.

A second Orderly, Bob Hudson, is poring over some records. He interrupts his work long enough to make a quick decision. Yes, it's all right if someone borrows that stretcher over there for use elsewhere.

In a little while Hudson or another Orderly will be behind the wheel of the ambulance parked outside. The hospital took over operation of ambulance service for the City of Victoria not long ago and the new arrangement means Orderlies must man the vehicles.

The importance of the Orderlies' role is being stressed these days by Director of Nursing Barbara Burke, somewhat of a new addition to the hospital herself.

"The Orderly is as valuable a member of the Nursing Team as anyone else," she says. "Certain patients have to have the expertise of the Orderly."

A Montrealler who spent a short time

## IT'S AN (ORDERLY) LIFE AT VICTORIA GENERAL



BOB HUDSON  
... Just part of the job

in Toronto before coming to Victoria General last July, Miss Burke is watching as the Orderlies finally get the chance she feels they deserve.

This has come about through a significant increase in their number. In the past they were "spread too thin," she says, and couldn't remain with individual Nursing Units. As a result, they were called upon to skip back and forth through the hospital performing various odd jobs — more often than not lifting or shaving patients, or attending to bed pan duties.

"This certainly doesn't give them the feeling they are part of a team," explains Miss Burke.

At Victoria General the Orderlies are now moving into the "total patient care" field by means of attachment to Units. This is being achieved, at least during the day shift, through an increase that has seen the Orderly staff grow from 22 last spring to about 35.

The point that must be remembered, says Miss Burke, is that Victoria General

is hiring only qualified Orderlies — those graduated from courses at Camosun College, or other recognized institutions.

This contrasts with the distant past when untrained men were hired strictly for their brawn.

Today the Orderly is as well trained as the Licensed Practical Nurse, and, as Miss Burke puts it: "It would seem only sensible that he is asked to do the same things."

She is impressed with the ability of the Orderlies. Because of education requirements, the calibre is much higher than what she left in Quebec. "We have an extremely well qualified group of Orderlies right now — they are excellent."

Miss Burke, of course, is speaking for Victoria General. But the same may be expected before long throughout the province as Orderly staffs are enlarged. Because of the Union's victory in achieving equality for women employees, it will no longer be possible for hospitals to hire Practical Nurses for a lower rate of pay than Orderlies.

## TRAINING DISCUSSED WITH 3 MINISTERS

The Union's move to bring the province's Apprenticeship Program into the hospital field appeared a step closer to reality recently following a special Victoria meeting with three Cabinet Ministers, their aides and representatives of B.C.H.A.

The meeting was under the chairmanship of Health Minister Dennis Cocke. With him were Education Minister Eileen Dailly and Labor Minister William King.

It was left with the Union and B.C.H.A. to try and introduce the program through collective bargaining. The cost would lie with the Health Department, curriculum with the Education Department, and the Labor Department would be responsible for the welfare of those enrolled.



Meeting to deal with Union's drive for better training drew large number of participants. Some mingled here during break in session, which was held in main Legislative Building.

## SERVICING EXPEDITION

## HEADING DOWN THE ROAD WITH HENRY

(For a first hand look at how the Union works at the regional level and through servicing, Journalist Bob Blakey made an extended trip through the Okanagan with Staff Representative Henry (Tell It Like It Is) Perkin. The following is an account of that trip:)

The Okanagan air was crisp, threatening an early snowfall. Inside a meeting room at Vernon Jubilee Hospital, H.E.U. Staff Representative Henry Perkins was facing off against two Administrators, with a third due to arrive.

Perkin, two officers of the local Unit, Vernon Administrator Jack Bainbridge and Salmon Arm Administrator John Benham turned as Colin Elliott entered. Elliott, Administrator at Kelowna General Hospital and recently-elected president of the B.C. Hospitals' Association, was rubbing his chilled hands. He explained that the top to his sports car was down throughout the drive from Kelowna.

The meeting was called to discuss a solution to disputed hiring of Local Initiatives Program workers at Okanagan hospitals for low pay. The Union was calling for back pay to the beginning of 1973, to supplement the wages the LIP workers had received.

"All right," said Perkins, "are you willing to negotiate this or do you want to go to Arbitration? I don't want to waste time getting into a lengthy discussion if you don't want to negotiate."

**A Bit of Wit**

A direct answer was avoided, but discussion did follow, colored by Elliott's "witty remarks," as Perkins calls them. The administrator left the room briefly after Perkin suggested payment of the Cleaner rate for the LIP crew. Elliott returned and vowed not to budge on his stand against back payments.

"Don't be bloody silly," said Henry, "I've come here to accommodate you. We could settle it here."

"And I've driven 36 miles in an open car and almost froze to death," grinned Elliott.

"I've got to check with the (hospital) board tonight. I'll let you know tomorrow what they've said," Bainbridge told Perkin. End of meeting.

It was one of a dozen or so meetings Perkin held on the week-long servicing trip through the Okanagan in November, some with Administrators, others with the Units of the region's hospitals. In this case an agreement wasn't reached immediately, but other encounters brought more positive results, with employees being raised to higher rates after some coaxing by Perkin.

The trip began in Vancouver on a sunny Sunday. We reached Penticton by car in the early evening and checked into our motel rooms before the first meeting with officers of the Unit there. They predicted a lively meeting with the Unit the

kin and I drove to the Summerland Hospital for an evening meeting with the membership.

Perkin explained the \$37.50 adjustment that was being paid to alleviate discrimination between male and female employees, then told of the impending Arbitration Hearing into the Union's attempt to raise wages for Student Practical Nurses performing work in hospitals.

**Much Detail**

It was a longer membership meeting than usual because of Henry's presence. "They always have a lot of questions," he said later. "You can't get round to these places as much as you'd like to, so you have to fill them in on everything when it's possible."

The meetings were equally lively in the other hospitals—Kelowna and Oliver. Members were anxious to hear Perkin's opinions on the possibility of a strike to back up current contract demands.

"That will be up to you, not us," he told them.

The trip ended with the two-day Arbitration in Vernon into Student Practical Nurses' wages, with Perkin assisting in the compiling of the Union's case.

Reflecting on his "battles" with hospital Administrators, Henry considered servicing a stimulating part of his job.

"I get along well with most of them, he said. "We fight like hell but go for a coffee afterwards."

"Even that wit Elliott."

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**"DON'T BE**

**BLOODY**

**SILLY . . ."**

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following night, and it was. After seeing Penticton Regional Hospital Administrator Don Gray earlier, Perkin spoke to the member's on the Union's progress throughout the year and expectations for the provincial bargaining which was about to resume. Of the Union's demands, Perkin asked: "Should we go after all of them?"

"Every one of them," a woman replied. A majority of the membership agreed.

Explaining his plans to go to Vernon, Perkin told the Penticton members their Administrator, Gray, was "a gentleman." Without offering an opinion on Elliott, he said he was "geared for a fight" in Vernon at the meeting Elliott would attend.

Nearby Summerland was on the agenda for Tuesday, where — after talking to Administrator Barry Ormston—Per-



HENRY PERKIN  
... calling the shot

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## CALL FOR MEDIATOR

As the *Guardian* went to press, an application had been made for the services of a Mediation Officer to assist negotiators in their attempt to achieve a first agreement between H.E.U. and recently organized Chetwynd General Hospital.

Significant progress was reported, except in the area of Licensed Practical Nurses and Housekeeping personnel. The Union is seeking equal pay for equal work, comparing the women employees concerned with their male counterparts.

Three significant changes to Union proposals for Northern Allowance were not acceptable to the employers' representatives.



*Little things mean a lot when you view your world from a wheelchair, as 8-year-old Cathy does. Enjoying this moment with her is Assistant Director of Nursing Molly Campbell.*

She entered the room as a handicapped child in a wheelchair. And now, moments later, she appears to have been transformed by the magic of Christmas into a little princess in a royal carriage.

It is a magic composed of laughing eyes and strong spirit, of enthusiasm and childish wonder. No wheelchair can remain a plain wheelchair under its spell.

"Santa's coming from the North Pole," declares this 8-year-old princess named Cathy, looking back at you from her royal carriage.

It must be so, because everywhere you look Santa's Helpers are hard at work. They are dressed a little differently — as hospital employees, as a matter of fact. But that's because this place of Christmas magic is the Queen Alexandra Solarium for Crippled Children in Greater Victoria.

Over there at the Nursing Station Nurse Aides Norah Thors and Elizabeth West are busy coloring and cutting gay Christmas decorations. Stacking goodies in another room are Nurse Aides Linda Sinclair and Kathy Milner.

Everything has to be in readiness for Santa's double duty. The old fellow is to make appearances Dec. 23 for the big Christmas Concert and Party and two

days later, on Christmas Day. The party includes music by the "Hometowners" and distribution of gifts by Santa, all of this coming after the Solarium Junior League has decorated the hospital.

Christmas Day starts early — 6 a.m., with distribution of stockings while the children are still fast asleep with visions of sugar plums (or whatever the 1973 version is) dancing in their heads. After that there are religious services, gifts at the children's tree and, of course, that big event of the day — Christmas dinner.

These Christmas festivities and all the necessary preparations just serve to emphasize what Administrator John Holdstock already knows about his staff — that it is made up of devoted employees who find their work with crippled children rewarding.

It is one hospital where the relationship between the Hospital Employees' Union and administration has remained sound.

"This is the type of place where everyone gets involved in what is happening," says Holdstock. "The staff and the patients are the family."

He hesitates at this point, flashes a smile, and in a tone somewhat less than serious, adds: "And I'm the father. A bad

tempered father. But we get along."

Getting along means working as a team with up to 80 patients who range in age from infancy to about 15 (one is 20) and experiencing the great joy of watching one after another reach normal or near normal status.

With today's advancement in treatment, the "complete recovery" of patients runs as high as 45 per cent, Holdstock says. Then there are those he says "recover to the point where they can disregard their disability." This gives an overall return to normal and near normal rate of about 90 per cent.

The Solarium has come a long way since its birth in 1926. Holdstock joined it at its Mill Bay location in 1951 and helped raise the \$1.5 million that was needed for the present building in 1958.

"A lot of the employees who were with me in Mill Bay moved down the Island to the present site when we opened here. And they're still here," he explains.

Much of the special equipment, such as supports and leg braces, is created right in the Solarium's own shop and there is a heavy demand for it elsewhere in the province. Holdstock, who does much of the designing himself, has been working lately with a special German

# THE SOLARIUM STORY:

# ***A PLACE WHERE THE STAFF AND PATIENTS ARE "THE FAMILY"***



Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus (imitation in this case) and he fits right into the plans as Solarium Unit members Nurse Aides Linda Sinclair (left) and Kathy Milner get things ready for Christmas party.

plastic as a replacement for the traditional metal that is used in the manufacture of such items.

But he likes to talk of other features in the Solarium, such as the regular school classes for the young patients.

With less to distract them, the youngsters generally do better than those in regular schools. On the average, they are a year ahead of the others.

Little Cathy, who talks of Santa and the North Pole, is a good example of the bright student.

She is outgoing and bubbling over with anticipation of Christmas. And you can't fool her on matters of geography. You suggest to her that her home town of Yellowknife is up in Santa's land, and she replies:

"Oh no, Santa is from way up at the North Pole."

And, as everyone knows, that's a long way past Yellowknife.

She is wheeled out of the occupational therapy room, bright and smiling, and as she goes you shout: "Merry Christmas, Cathy."

"Merry Christmas," she calls from her royal carriage. "Merry Christmas to all."



It's a little like being back in school for other Unit members, Nurse Aides Norah Thors (left) and Elizabeth West, as they do coloring and cut-outs to serve as Christmas decorations. A happy time for employees and patients.

# 'T WAS A SEASON TO BE JOLLY'

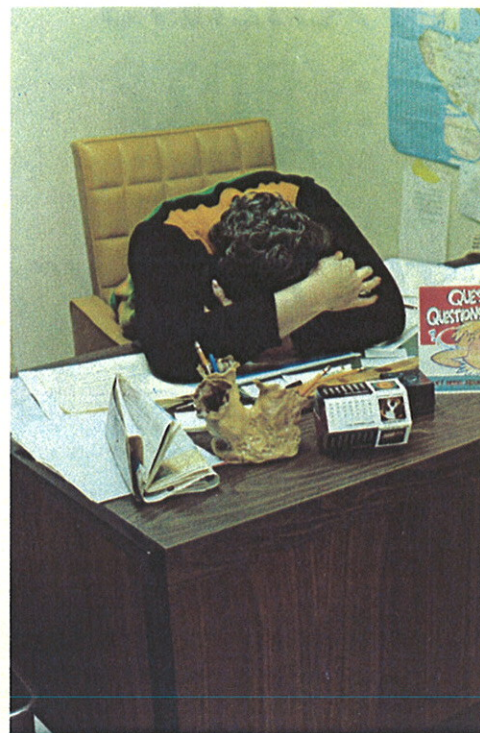


If a tree could grow in Brooklyn, as the story said, then surely one could at least stand in the Provincial Office. Lo and behold it did, and was decorated by Peggy Young, Winnifred Kemp, Carolyn Chapman, Irene Harlton and Trish Smith. (Contrary to rumor, Henry Perkin was not selected for the angel on top.)

THEY WORKED . . .



AND WAITED . . .



THEN WON . . .



At top, Mona Leaker (left), Kathy Bakker, Bernice Gehring and Gwen Parrish plan strategy for next step in organizing drive. When job was done, Bernice awaited results in her own special way — head down, eyes closed and heart "full of hope." The victory wave tells the final story. "We've got Grace," someone shouted. And they had.