

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES'

FEDERAL UNION

— 180 —

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OUR ACTIVITIES

By W. M. Black.

It has long been the intention of the General Office to publish some form of monthly bulletin which would keep the various sections informed of the activities of the General Office and the many sub-locals within our organization. If the idea meets with the approval of our membership; and the different groups send in news items of interest, we could turn out a mimeographed booklet which would be instructive and informative.

The growth of our organization has been remarkable and the contribution made by the parent body on behalf of Hospital workers has been tremendous. We have been instrumental in raising salary standards. We have pioneered Pension and Superannuation schemes, accumulative sick leave, holiday allowances and other perquisites. Until now we have failed to put our accomplishments on paper and have missed this opportunity of educating our new members to the benefits of our Union and keeping the older members informed as to the progress being made. We only regret that space will not permit at this time, the printing of all enquiries coming into this office from governmental agencies and from other Hospitals.

It is very evident to the writer that our organization is being pushed more and more into the provincial field. This has been brought about by the advent of the B. C. Hospital Insurance Act. The B. C. Hospital Commission issues instructions to various Boards of Directors, that costs must be kept down. When we negotiate salaries and standard perquisites, the cry of the Directors is "Will the Commission pay the increased charges?"

One of our main tasks is to see that a standardization of working conditions and wages is brought about in every Hospital in British Columbia. Where there is one institution that is low paid, with poor working conditions, that institution is dangerous to your standard of living. We predict the day will arrive when we will negotiate master contracts in certain areas, which would be beneficial to our people and making our job of negotiating much easier. However that is for the future.

The last three months have been extremely busy. With all out contracts falling due January first, it has meant frantic bargaining, trying to be in a dozen places at one time. However we can report Progress.

AT VANCOUVER GENERAL

Although the agreement for the year 1950 has been settled at the Vancouver General Hospital, we are still confronted with many anomolous situations. In an organization as large as the Vancouver General you will always have a number of grievances. This we try to hold down to a bare minimum, ahndling grievances as promptly as possible. This we have managed to do with reasonable success. It should be noted by our members at V.G.H., in fact by any of our units; if there is a violation of our Contract it should be reported to our Offices forthwith.

Our Nursing Division at the Vancouver General Hospital held a recent meeting which was reasonably well attended. The Nurses are doing their utmost to build up and improve their section of our Organization.

AT NANAIMO

On Friday March 2, 1950, negotiations were opened on behalf of the Nanaimo General Hospital. We received an offer from that institution, they were prepared to sign a contract similar to that in effect at the King's Daughters Hospital at Duncan, B. C.. But, the fly in the ointment was the fact that the Duncan contract is up for re-negotiations at the end of this month. If we signed such a contract with Nanaimo now, it would be logical for the Duncan Board of Directors to adopt the attitude that the same contract could continue for 1950-51. Our answer to Nanaimo was no. We will take it to Conciliation if necessary.

AT ROYAL COLUMBIAN

Bargaining has been proceeding at the Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster. Though this contract is not finalized, we do see "daylight" ahead. We can predict that salaries at the Royal Columbian will be standardized in relation to the Vancouver General Hospital. They will have a Union Shop and the inauguration of a pension plan.

AT CHILLIWACK

Your President, Mr. C. Jonkinson, and the writer paid a visit on Friday March 10th to our Chilliwack Unit. Mr. Dean the energetic chairman of the Chilliwack local had organized Valleyhaven, the Old People's Home, situated on the Chilliwack Hospital grounds. He organized ten of the employees. Two days later, the ten employees received notices terminating their employment because of their Union activities.

We were informed by long distance telephone of the situation. We immediately appealed to the Board of Labor Relations as, in our opinion, this was an unfair labor practice. The Board, then contacted Chilliwack. The Municipal Council there held a special meeting and sought legal advice on the matter. They were informed that they had broken the law in discharging these people, and the next day they were re-instated in their jobs. We have proceeded through all the steps of certification for this group and expect a formal recognition from the Department of Labour at any moment. When this is received, we shall proceed to bargain for the employees at Valleyhaven and give them the union protection which is very evident they need.

AT DUNCAN

We have opened negotiations for the Nursing Division at Duncan, B. C.. We have managed to reduce their hours of work from forty-eight (48) to Forty-four (44) hours per week. Their salaries have been brought within Two Dollars (\$2.00) of those paid the Vancouver General nursing staff. Other concessions are involved, such as the price of meals, rent for accommodations and sick leave. These matters have still to be ironed out.

AT NORTH VANCOUVER

We are in the midst of bargaining with the North Vancouver General Hospital. This has been going very slowly. North Vancouver a matter of months ago switched Administrators, and we are meeting with a lot of procrastination in our negotiating. However, if some move is not made there by the Board, it is our intention to go to Conciliation.

WE WELCOME

We would like to welcome into our fold the Powell River General Hospital. We have received certification for that group and just as soon as they have completed the rough draft of their agreement, we shall proceed to negotiate on their behalf.

The employees at the Ladysmith Hospital are making a determined effort to organize and when they have obtained the necessary fifty-one percent (51%) we shall proceed to obtain certification for them.

The contract for the West Coast Hospital at Port Alberni was signed earlier in the year. When Port Alberni is reading this communication, they needn't feel neglected. The next time we are on the Island, we shall make a call at Port Alberni and also at Ladysmith.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

We would like to draw to the attention of our smaller units the strict importance of holding monthly meetings and monthly executive meetings. Copies of the minutes of these meetings should be forwarded to the general office. This is the only way in which we can be kept informed of local activities and of grievances and trouble in the different districts.

We would also like to stress the importance of social activities and get-togethers. This is vital to any organization. There is more to trade unionism than just raising wages or bettering working conditions. Development of mutual confidence and trust is of vital importance.

The Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster hold definite social functions in the form of whist drives. They are also forming an orchestra for their own dances. This is being done under the direction of their hard working Secretary, Bill Payne. These social functions are operated at cost. In other words they pay for themselves without coming out of general revenue. This might be an idea for our other Units.

THE CREDIT UNION

The Vancouver City Hall Employees and the Vancouver Section of the Hospital Employees' Federal Union, Local 180, have formed a joint Credit Union. This has not as yet spread beyond Vancouver, but we hope to see the idea develop and branch out into our outside groups. The details have not as yet been worked out, however when they are each Unit will be informed.

A Credit Union in conjunction with a Trade Union can be of vital importance to a worker economically. It can assist him in obtaining household goods at a cheaper rate, in obtaining cheaper car insurance, or insurance of all kinds. It will help him finance a home, or an automobile, etc.. In many ways it can be of great benefit. More details of this phase of our activities will be forthcoming in the near future.

OUR CONSTITUTION

The Vancouver General Hospital Contract and our Union Constitution are in the hands of the Printers. They should be received shortly. As rapidly as time permits we will have other contracts mimeographed in our office, and sufficient copies run off to over the membership.

FOR OUR UNITS

A word of advice to the Executive members of our various Units, and of their responsibilities.

1. Executive and Grievance Committee should handle minor grievances within a department, in a manner to the satisfaction of the aggrieved employee.
2. They should know their Hospital from top to bottom, and check abuses before they become chronic.
3. They should know an employees' rights under their Agreement, and be available to catch infractions the moment they occur.
4. Keep a written record of all grievances and their disposition, as protection against re-occurrence.
5. Strive for the elimination of health and safety hazards within the Institution.
6. Announce all Union Meetings.
7. Check all rumors by knowing and passing out reliable information regarding Union activities.
8. Attend all meetings regularly so as to be a good source of information.
9. They should immediately contact the Business Agent of the Union in a major dispute affecting the members of their Unit.
10. Be patient with any sincere employee who does not understand Unionism.

We often inform people how to build an organization we think it might be an idea to mention how to kill a Union.

The following is an Article reprinted from the Provincial Employees' Magazine, which we think is very Good.

How to Kill Your Union

Get sore if you are not appointed on a Committee, but if you are do not attend Committee meetings.

If you're asked by the chairman to give your opinion regarding some important matters, tell him you have nothing to say. After the meeting, tell everyone how things ought to be handled.

Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary; but when other members roll up their sleeves and willingly, unselfishly, use their ability to help matters along, howl that the organization is run by a clique.

Hold back your dues as long as possible, or don't pay at all.

When a dinner is given, tell everybody money is being wasted on "Blowouts" which make a big noise and accomplish nothing.

Don't bother about getting new members, let the Secretary do it.

Don't ask for a dinner ticket until all are sold.

Then swear you have been cheated out of yours.

If asked to sit at the speaker's table, modestly refuse.

If you are not asked, resign from the Union.

Don't tell the organization how it can help you, but if it doesn't help you resign.

If you receive service without joining, don't think of joining.

If the Union does not correct abuses in your neighbor's business howl that nothing is done.

If it calls attention to your own, resign from the Union.

Keep your eyes open for something wrong, and when you find it, resign.

At every opportunity threaten to resign and then get your friends to.

When you attend a meeting, vote to do something, and then go home and do the opposite.

Agree with everything said at the meeting and disagree with it outside.

When asked for information don't give it.

Curse the Union for the incompleteness of its formation.

Get all the Association gives you, but don't give it anything.

WHEN EVERYTHING ELSE FAILS, CUSS THE BUSINESS AGENT.

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If you like our first attempt, let us know. Send us news items concerning your Unit, and the effort will be continued.