

Guardian



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OUR FIGHT FOR FAIRNESS

A MIDST a month of province-wide job actions that forced employers and the government to give HEU members more than their insulting "final" offer, thousands of HEU members converged on B.C. Place April 10 in a rally which showed that HEU members were united in their determination to win a fair contract.

Full details inside

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Members made the difference in contract fight

HEU members are now considering the report of special conciliator Don Munroe, a report which the Provincial Executive has reluctantly agreed forms the basis of a settlement.

The Munroe report falls short of what we in HEU called for when we first tabled our Six Steps for Fairness early last year. But it represents important gains over what the Health Labour Relations Association (HLRA) tried to force on HEU members.

HLRA pulled out all the stops to defeat us. They used the anti-labour Bill 19 to delay job actions and impose a mediator on us.

They orchestrated a public relations campaign to try to blame HEU members for management-ordered bed closures and surgery cancellations when we took our job actions.

But HLRA failed. They failed to impose rollbacks and concessions on HEU members.



COMMENT

by CARMELA ALLEVATO

They failed to break our strike. They failed to impose binding arbitration on HEU.

HLRA's plans to impose a contract on HEU members ended with a settlement that HLRA has found hard to swallow. And worse, from the viewpoint of employers, HEU members won the respect of the public, the media and the government.

During our job actions in April, management was forced to perform our jobs. They learned — the hard way — about the value of our work.

Our job actions were designed to put pressure on managers while allowing patient care to continue. In spite

of the efforts of employers, the public saw that HEU's demands were just and that HEU put patients first.

We won a settlement that is superior to what employers were prepared to bargain. We have a pay equity plan that is a good foundation for our fight against wage discrimination. New language on workload and team nursing opens the door for improvements in these areas.

The Provincial Executive believes that this settlement is the best that HEU can win at this time. But we will get ready to resume our struggle for full pay equity and full workload protection in the next round of bargaining.

Now we are turning to the challenge of winning better wages and conditions for HEU members working in long term care. We are also dealing with the challenge of bed closures resulting from the royal commission report, and fighting federal government cutbacks to medicare.

We are ready for these challenges. The successful way HEU members carried out a creative and smart job action strategy gives me confidence that health care workers are ready to take on and win future challenges.



The Guardian welcomes letters to the editor. Please be brief. Write to 2006 W. 10th Ave., Vancouver V6J 4P5.

HSA applauds HEU job action, new contract

Congratulations to the members and leadership of HEU for the results of your struggle to achieve a fair collective agreement!

We share your concern about numerous aspects of the Munroe report. However, the report is a dramatic repudiation of the arrogant inflexibility of HLRA. The report completely vindicates your decision to reject the employers' "final offer" and to fight on for a better deal.

HSA appreciates the fact that your members sought to minimize the effect of job action on the members of other unions. At the same time, HSA is proud that our members were able to play a supporting role during your struggle.

In comparison to past years, and by any standard, the cooperation between the three unions has been remarkable. We look further to building on this solidarity in the future.

JACKIE HENWOOD,
President,
PETER CAMERON,
Executive Director,

Health Sciences Association

CUPE expresses thanks for picket line support

On behalf of the executive and members of CUPE local 2950, I want to express my deepest gratitude for the

support that the Hospital Employees' Union showed toward our members during the strike at UBC.

It was very encouraging to our members.

It was very encouraging to see the solidarity that does exist, especially during such a difficult time. Our strike was based on pay equity and there are great gains that we have made.

Again, I want to thank you for the time and effort that was given to make this an effective strike.

If we can be of any assistance to you in the future, please feel free to contact our office.

VIC WILSON,
President, CUPE 2950,
Vancouver

Cull pledges consultation on Shaughnessy

• HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato received this reply in response to her protest of proposed bed closures at Shaughnessy Hospital:

The acute care beds at Shaughnessy Hospital are outdated, not up to standard and cannot be renovated.

Accordingly, University Hospital has requested approval to redevelop the site. At this time, no decision has been made with regard to the future role and size of Shaughnessy Hospital.

The Ministry of Health is, however, undertaking a thorough analysis of the health care needs of the im-

mediate catchment area, and the services available within the broader area of Vancouver, with particular attention to the Report of the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs, which recommends a decrease in acute care services to 2.75 beds per thousand population.

I understand that similar reviews are also under way by the Greater Vancouver Regional Hospital District and the Council of University Teaching Hospitals.

The opportunity exists to more rationally plan the provision of acute care hospital care for Vancouver and the review process will ensure that input is received from those wanting to contribute.

I understand the importance the HEU places on the future of Shaughnessy Hospital.

The government realizes that changes to our health care system must be made in consultation with all those involved in the delivery of health care. I will be pursuing planned changes to our hospitals with both unions and employers.

ELIZABETH CULL,
Minister of Health,
Victoria

HEU ensured Vimy commemoration was successful

HEU members of the George Derby Local halted job action to ensure the Vimy ceremonies proceeded

without difficulty.

The event at George Derby Centre commemorating the 75th Anniversary of Vimy Ridge was immensely appreciated and enjoyed by all residents of the centre.

I should like to extend my appreciation for the efforts you made in ensuring that the veterans were assured the opportunity to commemorate the sacrifice of their comrades.

J.W. LIUTKUS,
Regional Director,
Veterans' Services,
Vancouver

Health care user supports HEU contract

What can I do to help you obtain a better settlement for hospital employees because you certainly have my approval and support.

Housekeepers, kitchen workers, health care workers, etc. etc., etc., do deserve excellent remuneration for all their dedication, perseverance and hard work.

If administrators and others can obtain big fat salaries, then you deserve it even more.

From all my experiences, I have learned that those in HEU do more for the patients than anyone else and they are greatly admired for that. But admiration isn't enough.

I am only one person and I don't know what to do to be more helpful, but I have

written the government on your behalf and I hope that will help.

AMY POLLEN,
New Westminster

PSAC pledged support for HEU job action

We want to take this opportunity to let you know that we fully support you in your fight for a just settlement. Many of your demands are the same or similar to our demands last year.

As well, you are receiving the same treatment from the B.C. provincial NDP government as we received from the Conservative federal government. We have expressed this concern to the provincial government.

Keep up the fight!
LONNIE PROPOS,
Public Service Alliance
of Canada,

Guardian

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

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What we're up to

People and events around the HEU. If you have news for us — a retirement, an election, a rally, a vote or whatever — please, let us know.

HEU history project needs your help

HEU has asked labour journalist Trish Webb, who assisted in the union's communications department during the strike, to prepare a history of HEU in time for the upcoming convention.

We need your memories, old photos, union buttons or anything else related to our union's history.

Copies of old local minutes may provide an insight into working conditions. Perhaps your facility has a photo archive.

Webb will be reviewing the union's archives, interviewing union veterans and tracking down HEU's history. If you have suggestions, please call her at 734-3431.

Union locals take time for health and safety

Despite the pressures of bargaining and job action, a number of HEU locals around the province took the time during April and May to prepare submissions to the Workers' Compensation Board.

The board held province-wide forums to determine which regulations need upgrading. Turnouts were heavy and HEU members were well-represented, with locals focusing on problems of workload.

HEU uncovers health bosses' golf clubs

HEU continues to review financial statements of B.C.'s hospitals with amazing results. HEU uncovered these facts from 1990/91 hospital statements:

- Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club payments from Vancouver General Hospital jumped to \$35,000, a 58 percent increase from the year before and more than double 1987/88 payments.
- St. Paul's got into the golf club act for the first time. Hospital payments to the prestigious Shaughnessy Club topped \$15,000, while more than \$9,000 — double the 1989/90 total — was paid to Vancouver Lawn, Tennis and Badminton Club, the hospital's former club of choice.
- Royal Columbian Hospital president James Fair likes golf clubs too! Fair is a member of the prestigious Vancouver Golf Club. Although he doesn't actually golf, Fair uses the club for entertainment purposes. The New Westminster Hospital's payments topped \$3,000 for the last two years.



HEU extended support to West Coast Domestic workers protesting at a Jan. 12 rally against government immigration policy changes that reduce their rights and makes it easier for their employers to exploit them.

HEU provides legal service to LPNs

Licensed practical nurses who have to appear before their licensing body can get legal representation from the union.

HEU will provide a lawyer to represent a practical nurse who has been denied a license or to LPNs who are called before the British Columbia Council of LPNs.

In one case, HEU represented a practical nurse who had been refused a licence because of previous criminal convictions. The case was heard by the British Columbia Human Rights Commission which ruled the criminal convictions were unrelated to the work of an LPN.

The practical nurse was issued a licence and awarded \$1,000 in compensation for loss of dignity and self-esteem.

May Bennett workers claim victory

Workers and staff at May Bennett Home in Kelowna have won their just rewards. They had to strike for a contract, then fight to save their facility from closure. They won both battles.

Since late last fall, the facility has been operating 24 beds, laid-off staff have their jobs back, and everyone has received retroactive pay they were owed.

The ruthlessly anti-union board of directors of the Central Okanagan Health Care Society threatened to close the facility after HEU won a

first contract Mar. 3, 1991.

But a group supporting the home rallied together and gained control of the society. They called a halt to the closure plan at the Oct. 16 board meeting and the whole board resigned less than two weeks later.

Wayne Tucker, chief executive officer of Kelowna General Hospital was appointed interim public administrator for COHCS.

HEU quickly pressed the new administrator to reinstate staff laid off after some beds closed and to give employees the pay increases they won in their collective agreement.

In January the union met with employer representatives and settled most outstanding grievances.

Don't wait to submit extended health receipts

HEU members can send in receipts for extended health care claims as soon as the \$25 calendar year deductible is reached. You don't have to wait for the end of the year to submit claims forms and receipts. In fact, sending in claims as they occur will speed up processing.

According to CU&C Health Services, delays happen at the beginning of each year because many members wait until after Dec. 31 to submit claims for an entire year. Members have until June 30 of each year to claim expenses from the previous year.

To get your refund more quickly, be sure to include paid receipts with completed claims forms.

Cont. on page 4



SHORTCHANGED AT UBC: Excluded from the master agreement, UBC workers rally in protest.

HEU members vote on final settlement proposal

A proposed settlement to the lengthy dispute between HEU and the Health Labour Relations Association has gone to a vote of union members with the reluctant endorsement of the HEU Provincial Executive.

Voting began May 25 on the settlement package, which was put together by special conciliator Don Munroe, and was continuing at press time.

Details of the Munroe package are on page eight.

Munroe was appointed April 24 by labour minister Moe Sihota after HEU rejected the Industrial Inquiry Commission report of Stephen Kelleher and resumed province-wide job actions that had begun on March 31, one year after the last contract with HLRA expired.

"This collective agreement falls far short of what our members need and deserve in a new collective agreement," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato. "But our executive concluded that this settlement, which is an improvement over what HLRA tried to impose, is the best we can achieve at this time."

HLRA, for its part, refused to endorse or reject the Munroe report in the days after it was released May 14. HLRA said it was concerned about the cost of the agreement and its effects on management rights.

HLRA's non-response to the Munroe report follows more than a year of stonewalling in which HLRA refused to bargain and tried to get HEU to swallow insulting offers, even after HEU members had rejected them.

At press time, HLRA announced it would recommend ratification because Victoria had promised to fund the contract in full.

During the April job actions in HLRA facilities, HLRA and its allied organization, the B.C. Health Association, tried and failed to paint HEU members as villains.

During this time, employers had the backing of many leading figures in the NDP government in Victoria.

"As we fought both employers and government, the energy, creativity, and solidarity of mem-

News

bers has truly been amazing," Allevato said.

"The workplace will never be the same. We'll put all our new experience to good use, because tomorrow we start to organize for the next round of bargaining."

The continued militancy of HEU members was put on show on May 20 when HEU members at the UBC site of University Hospital walked out to protest the fact that they have been left out of Munroe's settlement.

While Munroe extended the provisions of the HEU/HLRA master collective agreement to many other HLRA facilities, including all long term care facilities covered previously under the HEU/HLRA standard collective agreement, he declined to put UBC site, Kensington Hospital, Normandy Private Hospital and GVHS Fire and Security under the master agreement.

Mediator Vince Ready was appointed after the job action to determine whether the UBC site can be included in the HEU/HLRA master collective agreement.

HEU members at these facilities have separate agreements which are inferior to the master agreement in areas such as seniority, casual rights, classification, and layoff provisions.

Negotiations for HEU members working in facilities belonging to the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association (CCERA) and Pricare are set to resume in June with the assistance of mediator Don Munroe.

What we're up to

Cont. from page 3

No answer to Port Alice steward's lobby effort

HEU Port Alice local shop steward Rose Klein Beekman wrote to her NDP MLA Colin Gabelmann to ask him to press health employers to make a fair contract offer. Klein Beekman, a cook on casual at the small northern Vancouver Island facility where nine HEU members work, told Gabelmann that HLRA had nothing but contempt for HEU bargaining demands.

"HLRA says they are willing to talk — yet they sing the same old song," she wrote. "And again our bargaining demands to put us at the same level as other public sector workers fall on deaf ears. Perhaps HLRA needs a new piano player."

Health employers' current musical conductor is HLRA president Gordon Austin.

Long term care workers in thick of it

Though union job action has been targeted at HLRA facilities, HEU long term care workers have still been in the thick of our fight for fairness, holding rallies and offering support to locals on job action.



UNION SUPPORT: Health unions supported HEU's picket lines. Above, St. Paul's HSA members (left to right) Trini Hill, Barbara Lemky, Makan Rana and Tariq Ahmad. Left, BCNU member Grant Thomlinson.

One Langley-area long term care worker, who asked to remain anonymous, powerfully presented our case for a fair contract and the dignity of our work in a letter to the editor of a Langley newspaper. Here's what she wrote:

"Is it any one of your family members that spit in my face while I try to feed them, pinch my breasts or other parts of my body while I wash them, clean them up

after accidents, or toilet them?"

"While I care for them they bite, scratch and pinch. Perhaps it was your father or father-in-law that broke my nose this week.

"We care for people that families can't look after, 24 hours a day. I feel we earn our pay, benefits and holidays, and we do deserve more.

"I'm a Hospital Employees' Union member and proud of it."

Health unions urge overhaul of labour code

B.C.'s new labour law will have to deal with the growing numbers of women working in service industries, HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato told a government-appointed committee charged with reviewing the law.

HEU joined BCNU and the Health Sciences Association May 12 to make a joint submission of an 82-page brief on elements the unions want to see in the law that replaces the Social Credit government's infamous Bill 19.

Allevato appeared with B.C. Nurses' Union president Debra McPherson and Health Sciences Association executive director Peter Cameron.

The three unions called for sweeping changes to B.C. labour law.

Allevato said women are now the largest and fastest growing group of workers in the economy. Labour law must be seen as a tool of social policy and not just a way of promoting harmony or encouraging investment, she said.

Pay equity legislation is needed to end wage discrimination against



NEW LABOUR CODE: BCNU's Debra McPherson, HSA's Peter Cameron and HEU's Carmela Allevato made a joint submission to a committee considering changes to the labour code.

women, but such a law must cover all working women, unlike most pay equity laws in Canada.

Pay equity must also be promoted through sectoral bargaining in the public sector, and through labour law changes that will remove barriers to pay equity, such as the "ability to pay" provisions of Bill 19.

McPherson told the committee major changes are about to take place in health care because of the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs.

Health care workers will need protection of bargaining rights as hospital beds close and care is moved into community

and home care settings, she said.

Cameron said health care workers need the right to strike with essential services maintained, but the essential services process under Bill 19 must be changed.

During the recent HEU dispute, unions spent at least a half million dollars on legal fees for essential services proceedings in the Industrial Relations Council. As well, employers dragged out and abused essential services proceedings to deny union members their rights, he said.

Copies of the brief have been circulated to HEU locals.

Union demands WCB regs on workload

It's time for Workers' Compensation Board regulations to "enclose working women in the circle of workplace health and safety," says the HEU, by plunging into the area of patient care.

In a wide-ranging brief to a panel reviewing the WCB's regulations, union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato called for new regulations that reflect the reality of health care.

As it stands, she said, the greatest number of injuries are coming from accidents in patient care which the WCB ignores. The solution is simple: safe numbers of people to do the job.

"In the first three months of 1992, 191 enforcement orders were written in our 233 facilities," Allevato said. "Of those orders, 121 were in the maintenance and trades departments, 59 were in the laundry, dietary and laboratory areas, eight involved committee functions, but only three were written on patient care issues."

Allevato said that in the last decade, WCB claims for health care workers climbed in the 1980s at a higher rate than hours worked, that injuries are becoming more disabling, and that rates of back injuries are skyrocketing.

Health employers estimate that injury costs equal the cost of 3,000 caregivers in the B.C. health system, she said, but refuse to tackle the workload crisis head on.

An American study showed that nursing aides, orderlies and attendants were 22 times more likely to have a back injury claim than a cashier. Licensed practical nurses were 13 times more likely to have a back claim than a cashier, and registered nurses are five times more likely.

A study conducted at Gorge Road Hospital in Victoria showed that nursing aides were doing an average of 62 and a half lifts on each shift. With an average patient weight of 130 pounds, one shift's lifts add up to more than four tons.

The HEU called for new regulations for health providers, including:

- An end to lifting patients alone. Regulations should guarantee that health care workers should do patient lifts only in teams.

- Making lifting devices available and in working condition. There should be working lifting devices available throughout facilities, and staff should be trained in their use.

- Ensuring that sufficient staff is available. There should always be enough workers to do the jobs that must be done in health care.

- Contingency plans for short staffing. Plans for situations when staff shortages occur should be posted.

Allevato said violence is becoming a growing problem for health workers because of reductions in mental health facilities and growing numbers of persons with Alzheimer's Disease.

HEU finds patient care source of most claims

"Health care workers are being attacked, gouged, chased, cursed and threatened. The bruises and scars eventually heal on the outside, but the internal psychological damage can continue for years," she said.

To deal with patient violence, Allevato called for regulations that ensure that health care workers don't work alone, and provisions for training and intervention services for workers dealing with violent patients.

Regulations must also ensure that workplace design reflect the needs of workers.

In one case, a third of HEU members working in a large hospital laboratory suffered from tendonitis because of a poorly designed work station.

Allevato said regulatory limits for exposure to dangerous substances such as ethylene oxide (EtO) must be revamped.

And regulations must also deal with biological hazards, heat and cold, ventilation, video display terminals, immunization and pregnant workers.

HEU's submission came during province-wide hearings which will result in new WCB regulations.

Gordon MacPherson served two terms as president

Gordon MacPherson, who served two terms as HEU president, died March 8, 1992 after a long illness. He was 61.

MacPherson was an HEU member since 1965 and worked as a diener at Victoria General Hospital. He was a senior trustee on the Provincial Executive and served as HEU president for two terms from 1980 to 1984.

MacPherson headed the union during a stormy period which included HEU's participation in the

Solidarity Coalition fight against Social Credit restraint policies.

HEU president Bill Macdonald remembers MacPherson as a very open person.

"There was no hidden agenda with Gordie," he said. "He always let you know what he was trying to do. He had a good sense of humour, too."

MacPherson was diabetic and suffered several periods of illness during his second term as president. He will be greatly missed by his friends at HEU.

By STEPHEN HOWARD

THEY'RE still at it! While B.C.'s health care bosses close beds, cut budgets and preach wage restraint in bargaining, they continue to take big pay boosts well beyond what the average worker receives, two separate union investigations show.

In contract talks health employers claim that there's no money to improve their substandard offer to HEU members of 3.5 percent more for 1991/92 and just two percent more for 1992/93.

But, in the first investigation, the union obtained documents that show administrators have already taken increases that are double what's been offered to HEU at the bargaining table.

Four Health Labour Relations Association facilities have received approval from the provincial government's so-called Compensation Fairness Program for administrators' wage increases. Three of the approved boosts are for the same two-year period that a new contract would cover. These increases ranged from 9.6 percent to 12.4 percent as the chart below shows.

HLRA officials say they don't have the ability to pay a higher wage increase to health care workers. They've even gone so far as to calculate the job losses that would result from any improvement to their 3.5 percent and two percent offer.

But when it came to looking after themselves, ability to pay wasn't a problem. Senior administrators at the four facilities all swore statutory declarations that their hospital could afford the pay boosts.

Other documents show that the government-ordered salary freeze on top managers earning more than \$79,000 may only be just a thaw.

Three hospitals have received formal approval from the Compensation Fairness Commissioner to break the freeze. Pathologists and radiologists at Vancouver General, Children's and University hospitals who earn more than \$79,000 will get a healthy pay increase.

Royal Inland Hospital administrators in Kamloops went the creative route to beat the freeze.

They gave themselves "workload bonuses" of up to \$6,300. According to Alex Korman, a senior official of the Compensation Fairness Program, the "temporary" bonuses are not considered part of a "permanent compensation plan" and therefore skirt program guidelines.



They're still at it!

Health bosses took care of themselves during strike

Fortunately HEU was able to expose the secret bonus scheme in early April by obtaining a copy of a confidential letter sent by Royal Inland's president to eight other hospital presidents.

In the second investigation, completed in January, the union up-

dated earlier research and found more examples of the double standard in health care — big pay boosts for bosses and paltry ones for health care workers.

Between 1988 and 1991, health care bosses received three-year pay boosts of up to 69 percent (see chart).

Former VGH president James Flett earned the top 1990/91 salary, pulling in more than \$197,000, a \$68,000 increase since 1988. He also received \$54,000 in expense payments in 1990/91.

A number of HEU locals have also uncovered big pay boosts for administrators at their facilities.

HERE'S WHAT SOME BOSSES WILL GET

Facility	1991/92	1992/93	2-Year Compounded
Port McNeil & Dist.	3.93%	7.12%	11.3%
Vancouver General	6.85%	2.76%	10.0%
Tilbury Regional Hospital Laundry	5.20%	4.21%	9.6%
	1990/91	1991/92	
Holy Family Hospital (Vancouver)	8.89%	3.19%	12.4%

THE TOP 10 WAGE HIKES 1988 TO 1992

- 69%**
William Roger
VP Operations & Finance
Greater Victoria Hospital Society
1990/91 SALARY: \$138,345
- 65%**
Arthur Beadle
Ex-VP Employee Relations
Vancouver General Hospital
1990/91 SALARY: \$107,742
- 60%**
Ken Fyke
President
Greater Victoria Hospital Society
1990/91 SALARY: \$192,505
- 55%**
Fred Inglis
Comptroller
St. Paul's Hospital
1990/91 SALARY: \$84,675
- 53%**
James Flett
Ex-President
Vancouver General Hospital
1990/91 SALARY: \$197,318
- 50%**
Sheila Fitzgerald
Director of Personnel
Royal Columbian Hospital
1990/91 SALARY: 70,042
- 50%**
Grant Roberge
Director of Corporate Relations
Vancouver General Hospital
1990/91 SALARY: \$72,206
- 48%**
Kathy Kinloch
VP Nursing
Surrey Memorial
1990/91 SALARY: \$87,569
- 46%**
Fernande Harrison
VP Patient Care
Greater Victoria Hospital Society
1990/91 SALARY: \$119,242
- 45%**
Allan Husband
Executive Director
Prince George Regional
1990/91 SALARY: \$105,914

Source: Hospital Financial Information Act

LOOK BACK

HEU pay equity struggle began with action for LPNs

By TRISH WEBB

AN important milestone in HEU's long struggle for pay equity was achieved 19 years ago when the union scored a major victory for licensed practical nurses.

The union used its collective agreement to win an arbitration ruling to stop sex-based wage discrimination. The result was substantial wage increases for women paid less than men for similar work.

In April 1973, arbitrator D.R. Blair upheld the union's claim that 12 LPNs employed at Kimberley Hospital were victims of wage discrimination based on sex and directed that they be paid the same rate as orderlies.

Later that month practical nurses in the extended care unit of Trail received the same award and on May 10, Blair applied the same award to 140 LPNs at Royal Jubilee Hospital.

The women received a \$144.25 monthly pay hike retroactive to January 1973.

The ruling on LPNs paved the way for pay increases for HEU members in other categories. Housekeeping maids in Golden, Windermere and Creston won adjustments of \$88 a month to bring them up to the wage rates of men doing similar work.

By August, 8,400 members of HEU's 11,300 members were

eligible for anti-discrimination awards. The awards, retroactive to January 1973 were worth \$37.50 per month for nearly all 8,400 women affected by the ruling.

Although the agreement reached between HEU and the minister of health said "adjustment to the pay rates shall be in the hands of the employees not later than December 31, 1973" many members got nothing until 1975.

A change in government meant HEU had to negotiate with Socred health minister Bob McClelland. The two parties reached an agreement, but HLRA refused to allow payments until HEU members threatened a province-wide strike in March 1975.

It was an important step in a battle that continues to this day.

Bed closures sweep province

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MEETING THE MINISTER: Health minister Elizabeth Cull (right) meets Provincial Executive members (left to right) Joe Fraser, Cindy Russell, Sheryl Rankin and Bill Macdonald during March 10 lobby for a fair agreement. Cull promised consultation before implementation of Royal Commission recommendations.



HEU demands halt to layoffs, service cuts

THE HEU Provincial Executive has called on the B.C. government to postpone bed closures and budget cuts in B.C. hospitals until the end of the consultation process following the B.C. Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs.

Overall hospital spending was increased 5.5 percent in the provincial budget, but many hospitals, particularly those in northern B.C., have been receiving no budget increases, forcing them to announce bed closures and service reductions.

When the commission's report was tabled in November, health minister Elizabeth Cull promised a consultation process before the report's major recommendations were put in place.

HEU'S PROPOSALS TO PROTECT QUALITY CARE AND WORKERS' RIGHTS

1. Establish expanded community programs before beds are closed.
2. Establish labour force adjustment programs before layoffs occur.
3. Guarantee existing health workers will have first right to new jobs.
4. Move quickly to elect hospital boards to ensure real community input.

But by the time of the provincial budget in late March, Cull warned that there would be bed closures.

"The (commission) report recommendations suggested there should be up to 1,000 bed closures, but I don't know whether they will be that high," Cull said.

By then, Cull had appointed a 24-member advisory committee to consider the commission report and make its own recommendations by October 31.

In the meantime, bed closures are spreading around B.C. The budget warned that "there will be staff displacement from the hospitals affected and not all of the staff will be able to be hired on the community side due to different skill requirements."

And there is still no sign of the "labour adjustment strategy" promised in the royal commission report and the budget.

Hospitals received their budget allocations in April, and many received no increase for this year. Because of the impact of inflation, these zero increases meant that announcements of bed closures and layoffs followed the budget allocations, including:

- Prince George Regional Hospital: Closure of 61 of 295 beds and 100 layoffs, half of them HEU members.
- Prince Rupert Regional Hospital: Twenty-five of 77 acute care beds closed, and reduction of 37 full-time equivalent jobs.
- Mills Memorial Hospital, Terrace: Elimination of 10.6 full-time equivalent jobs by reorganizing pediatric and maternity units. Number of bed closures unstated.

At press time, several hospitals had reported zero budget increases but had not yet announced layoffs or closures, including Enderby and District Memorial Hospital, Queen Victoria Hospital in Revelstoke, Fort Nelson General Hospital, Fort St. John General Hospital, Dawson Creek and District Hospital, Pouce Coupe Community Hospital, Peace River Haven, Rotary Manor, Simon Fraser Lodge, Mackenzie and District Hospital, G.R. Baker Memorial Hospital in Quesnel, and Cariboo Park Lodge.

The HEU Provincial Executive is calling on Cull to restore full funding to hospitals until the advisory committee reports and a plan is in place to transfer care into the community. Such a plan should have provisions to protect workers.

HEU member sits on review committee

HEU's representative on a 24-member ministerial advisory committee that is considering the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs says she and other committee members will raise the issue of budget cuts in B.C. hospitals.

HEU fifth vice-president Melanie Iverson, an admitting clerk at Lady Minto Hospital on Saltspring Island, said members of the advisory committee believe that bed closures should not take place before community-based services are ready.

The committee was set up in March and is charged with making recommendations on the commission report to health minister Elizabeth Cull by Oct. 31. But the spring budget set the changes in motion with a wave of bed closures and lay-offs.

"There wasn't disagreement about the need to move beds out of acute care and into the



IVERSON

community," Iverson said, "but everyone says they don't want a repeat of what happened at Riverview, when patients were put into communities that weren't ready."

"Services should be in place in the community before any closures take place."

While the advisory committee will not consider every commission recommendation, it will look at the major areas for change identified in the commission.

Health ministry bureaucrats have a strong role in the advisory committee's work, and Iverson said she wonders how effective the committee will be.

"But it's important that HEU be represented, so we see how the Ministry of Health operates," she added.

Labour

UK workers organize to end discrimination against disabled

By TRISH WEBB

Some people just can't resist a picket line.

When HEU members at St. Paul's Hospital hit the bricks April 23, they got unexpected support from three British trade unionists.

Alun Davies, Rory Heap and Gloria Foran from the National Association of Government and Local Officers (NAGLO) were in town for Independence '92, convention of people with disabilities.

"When we found out there was a dispute that we could support we came over right away," Foran said.

They supported HEU's fight for a fair collective agreement with a just pay equity settlement because most HEU members are women. Like women, people with disabilities face social and economic discrimination.

Davies and Heap are visually impaired. They lead their union's disability committee, which directs policy on issues of concern to people with disabilities. Foran's job is to provide research and other supports to the disability committee.

"We see disability as a human rights issue rather than a welfare issue," Davies said.

"And trade unions have a history of social reform movements, so we see the trade union movement as not just interested in workers' issues but also as a mechanism of social change," he said.

Davies and Heap believe there are more people with disabilities than governments acknowledge. In Britain and Canada, the legal definitions of disability are much narrower than that of the World Health Organization.

Ninel Hoffman of B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities says her group helps people deal with three different definitions of disability: Workers' Compensation Board, Canada Pension Plan, Ministry of Social Services.

Fitting a definition determines which government agency provides financial support. HEU members who are hurt on the job may also meet criteria for long term disability payments.

Davies and Heap work to make sure their union responds to these situations in a way that helps the disabled worker.

They also direct their union's position on disabled rights issues.

"We are interested in rights, not charity," he said.

Britain does not have a charter of rights like Canada's. But even Canada's rights code is often unenforceable because discrimination can be hard to prove.



SOLIDARITY: Alun Davies and Rory Heap join Carmela Allevato on HEU picket line at St. Paul's Hospital.



REAL MONEY: This \$533,729.28 cheque is one B.C. Packers said it would never write - a Jan. 1992 down payment on a new pension fund for shoreworker members of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union. A tough strike in

1989 led to a commission which said the companies could afford a pension fund. Shore pension administrator Sandra Gertsch says the fund now stands at \$1.75 million, proof that it pays to take a strong stand.

CLC tackles constitution, economic crisis

Up to 2,000 trade unionists from across Canada are gathering in Vancouver in June for one of the most important Canadian Labour Congress conventions since the Second World War.

Issues on the crowded agenda include:

- development of a national strategy to defeat the Tory government and to stop the massive economic problems caused by the Free Trade Agreement;
- agreement on a labour position on the Canadian constitutional crisis which meets the needs of Quebec workers as well as those from the rest of Canada;
- agreement on a new constitution for the congress to ensure the maximum possible democracy and accountability in election of the CLC's top leaders; and
- election of a new president to replace outgoing president Shirley Carr.

The HEU is sending a full delegation to the convention, which runs from June 8 to June 12.

At press time, Canadian Auto-workers president Bob White appeared likely to be elected to replace Carr at the convention. White is committed to a tough fight against the Free Trade Agreement.

But none of the difficult issues before the convention will be settled without intense debate.

With Ontario unions facing the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs, the economic crisis is paramount.

For public sector unions, like HEU and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the fight to defend medicare is at the top of the agenda.

The Action Canada Network, of which HEU also is a member, is meeting in Vancouver on the eve of the convention. ACN is a national coalition of community, church and labour groups dedicated to defeating the Free Trade Agreement.

U.S. miners defend medical plan

About 120,000 retired coal miners in the United States face losing their health insurance unless the U.S. congress passes a bill that would restore funding to their threatened benefit fund.

Mining companies that employed

90,000 of the retired United Mine Workers members have either gone out of business or simply stopped paying into the benefit fund.

The 300 companies remaining in the fund are obliged to pay for all the retirees, and the union fears that

they will dissolve their bargaining agency, which would leave the retirees without health insurance and cause a wave of strikes in the U.S. coal industry.

Many of the retired miners are in poor health, suffering from black lung disease and other diseases related to their work.

Loss of medical insurance would be a shattering financial blow to these retirees and their families.

A bill is now before the U.S. congress which would tax all coal producers to pay for the abandoned retirees.

B.C. workers join CAW

The ranks of the Canadian Labour Congress and the B.C. Federation of Labour have been strengthened by the affiliation of a tough B.C.-based union including workers from occupations as distinctive as mining

and the hospitality industry.

Members of the Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers (CAIMAW) voted 82 percent to merge with the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW).

TABLE 1 - HOW THE OFFER IMPROVED

Year	March 4, 1992 Employers "Final Offer"	April 16, 1992 Kelleher Report	May 14, 1992 Munroe Report
1	\$77/mo. or 48¢/hr.	\$77/mo. or 48¢/hr.	\$85/mo. or 52¢/hr.
2	\$34/mo. or 21¢/hr.	\$45/mo. or 28¢/hr.	\$50/mo. or 31¢/hr. plus 1%
3	\$111/mo. or 69¢/hr. wage reopener without binding mediation	\$122/mo. or 76¢/hr. wage reopener	\$159/mo. or 98¢/hr. wage reopener with binding mediation

TABLE 2 - HOW PAY EQUITY OFFER IMPROVED

Year	Employers "Final Offer"	Munroe's Report
1	1.5% \$8.2 million	2.4% \$13 million
2	1.5% \$8.6 million	1.2% \$7 million
3	1.0% \$5.9 million	1.0% \$6 million
4	4% \$22.7 million	4.6% \$26 million

BCGEU comparability plus 1% of payroll per year MINIMUM (Oct. 1994 until pay equity is achieved)



SENDING A MESSAGE: High turnouts at final offer rejection votes helped the union press for a better deal.

It's not over yet

Long-term agreements next as HEU votes on HLRA contract

SPECIAL conciliator Don Munroe's recommendations for settlement of HEU's dispute with the Health Labour Relations Association fall far short of HEU's demands, but they are a big improvement over the offer that HLRA tried to impose on HEU members.

Here is a rundown of the Munroe proposals, which call for a three-year contract extending from April 1, 1991 to March 31, 1994.

WAGES

On April 1, 1991, all HEU members receive an across-the-board increase of \$85 a month or 52 cents an hour. On April 1, 1992, all HEU members get an across-the-board increase of \$50 a month or 31 cents an hour, plus a percentage increase of one percent.

For the year beginning April 1, 1993, there will be a wage reopener. Munroe has imposed a binding mediation process which will take place within a limited time period if a wage increase has not been negotiated by April 1, 1993.

PAY EQUITY

For 1991, \$75 a month or 46 cents an hour in pay equity adjustments will be paid on top of the wage increases to selected female-dominated classifications as proposed in HLRA's "final" offer.

As well, the bottom increment step is being eliminated in all classifications with increment steps, and everyone in those classifications will move up one increment step.

These two pay equity measures for 1991 will cost employers \$13 million. While this is significantly more than what HLRA offered, HEU had wanted pay equity adjustments to go to all members.

For 1992, \$7 million will be paid out in pay equity adjustments. These adjustments must be negotiated between the two sides, and the settlement proposal contains a clear process with deadlines for distribution of pay equity adjustments.

Beginning April 1, 1993, an amount of no less than one percent of the total wages of HEU members will be made available for pay equity adjustments each year until wage discrimination has been ended.

A clear process has been set out to develop a job value comparison plan for pay equity adjustments.

Although HLRA wanted a limited process that would end with this contract, Munroe called for annual adjustments beyond this contract.

As well, the proposed settlement re-establishes the important principle of wage comparability with the B.C. Government Employees' Union, which must be achieved by Oct. 1, 1994.

Parity is goal for long term care

HEU continues to press for parity with the master agreement and equal treatment as long term care bargaining resumed at press time.

The union bargained with the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association June 3 under the direction of mediator Don Munroe, who was appointed earlier in the year to help reach a settlement.

While HEU pushes for parity, bosses are still demanding major

concessions like the \$1,000 a year benefits rollback. Prior to the June 3 meeting, employers had promised to table what they called a framework for settlement based on the reports of Stephen Kelleher and Munroe from the HEU/HLRA dispute.

However, the union expects that CCERA will only use what it finds acceptable in the two separate reports and nothing else.

Additional bargaining dates with Pricare employers are being sought.

WORKLOAD

Munroe rejected HEU's demand for a 35-hour work week.

The proposals include a letter of intent to set up a province-wide union-management process to deal with workload problems.

As well, new language in article 58 of the contract forces employers to give a response to workload issues raised by the Occupational Health and Safety Committee. Another change to article 58 requires employers to make sure there are sufficient staff to deal with violent or aggressive patients.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Under the proposed terms of settlement, employers will provide Hepatitis B vaccine free of charge. Employers will also take precautions, including in-services, to limit the spread of infectious diseases.

Occupational Health and Safety Committees in the facilities will be strengthened.

NURSING TEAM

The Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs gave a clear direction to hospitals to use licensed practical nurses, and the Munroe report binds both sides to develop joint recommendations to the ministry of health on the nursing team.

CONTRACTING OUT

Munroe did not improve protection against contracting out, but he recommends a joint proposal to the ministry of health for retraining, education and job security for workers displaced by movement of health care into the community.

RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM

Munroe's report contains a voluntary return-to-work program for disabled and injured workers. This program will protect disabled and injured workers, while permitting them to get proper rehabilitation prior to returning to work.

RETIREMENT

Employers who voluntarily retire at age 55 will be able to get a cash payout of unused sick leave credits and severance allowance.

Part-time employees will now have the option of joining the superannuation pension plan.

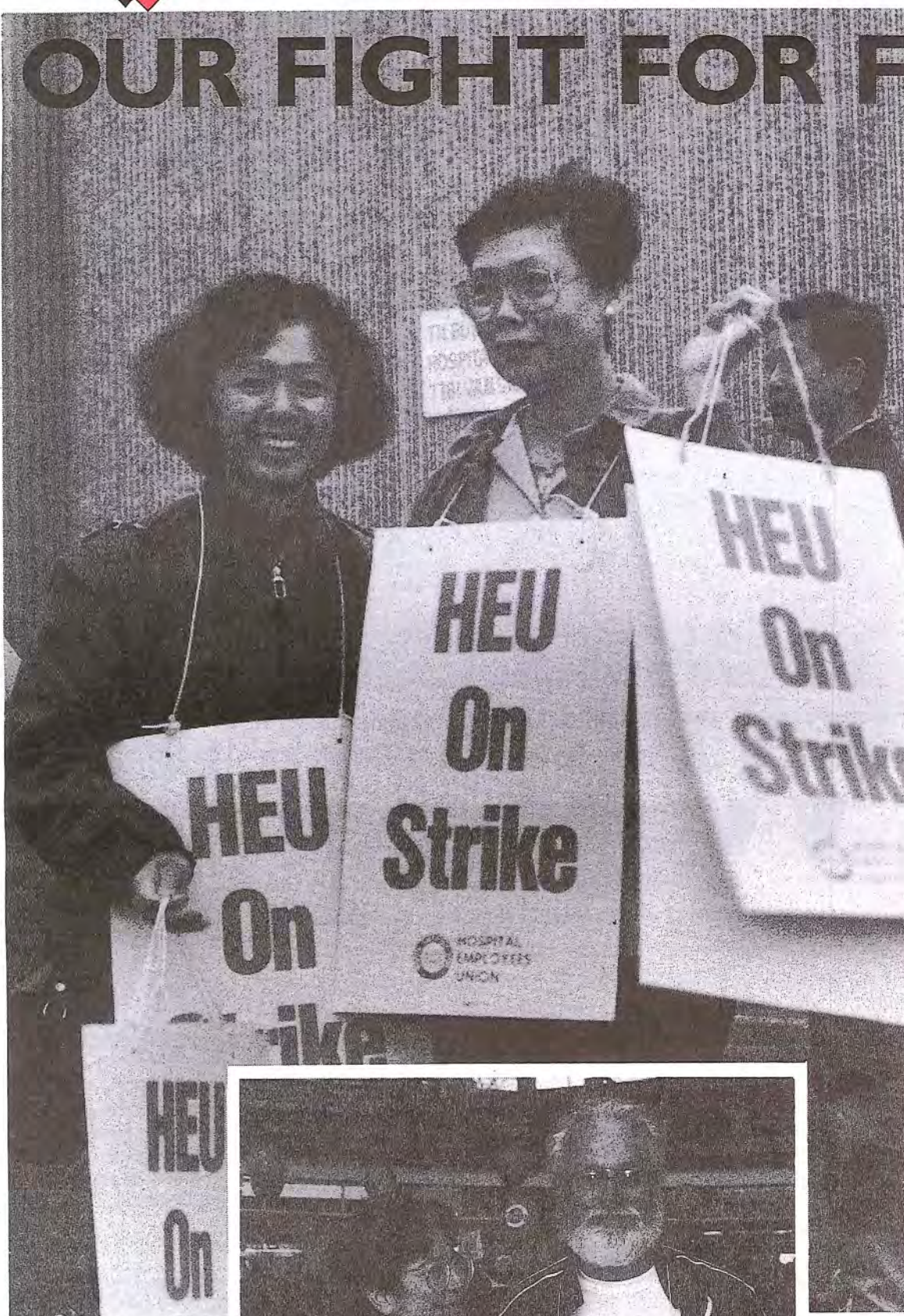
CASUALS

Casual workers who fill temporary job postings of longer than six months will receive reimbursement for medical, dental and extended health benefits. Part-time employees will be able to use sick leave credits while on casual assignment.

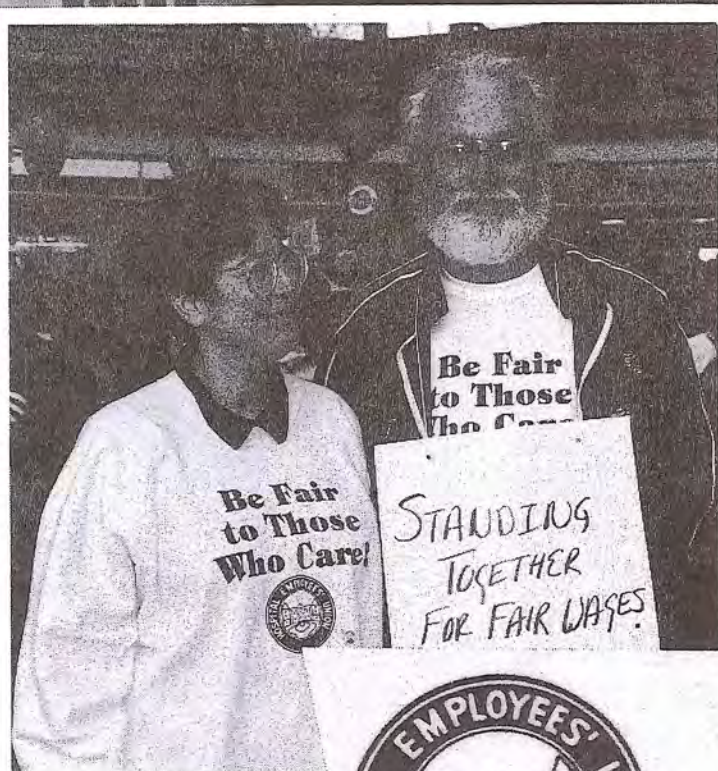


We said we're the heart of health care and our job action strategy proved it.

OUR FIGHT FOR FAIRNESS



FIRST PICKETS: Tilbury Regional laundry workers Olivia Lee and Kim Lee were among the first to don picket signs April 15 in HEU's fight for a new contract.



SPEAKING OUT FOR HEU: Union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato and president Bill MacDonald, along with the entire Provincial Executive, were out on the picket lines every time they were set up during the job action. The union's escalating strategy, which kept the all-out strike option as a last resort, confounded health employers and minimized impact on patients.



Be Fair To Those Who Care!

FLYING OUR FLAG: These pennants were a feature of dozens of HEU members' actions as the fight for a contract spread around the province.



PAY EQUITY: The issue which rallied public support. Province cartoon by Bob Krieger.

THE objectives were simple: pay equity, a fair wage, action on the workload crisis.

The strategy made sense: a grass-roots job action plan that put maximum pressure on the health care employers and minimum on the patients.

Twenty-nine thousand HEU members seeking a new contract with the Health Labour Relations Association combined the two this spring to fight an eight-week campaign for a fair contract that ruined health employers' plans for concessions and union-busting.

At *Guardian* press time, HEU members were voting on a government conciliators' report that fell short of the union's goals for justice.

But the job action mobilized and united HEU members as never before. They spoke with one voice, demanding the respect they deserve for the vital work they perform.

It was a fight that changed the union, empowering union members as never before. Here's the story of our fight for fairness.



TAKING IT TO THE STREET: Secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato speaks to striking workers at St. Paul's Hospital.

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"It was a perfect strategy. That was the strength of the job action."

**Debbie Kerr,
Fernie**



NORTHERN STRIKE: Mike Theriault, Holly Branisel, Margaret Zabielska and Debbie Blakely hold the line in Prince George.

"The number of people interested in the union has gone up dramatically. We had a shop stewards' meeting last week with 20 people and at least half were there for the first time. It's great to see the new blood."

**David Ridley,
Royal Jubilee**



WHEN HEU's bargaining committee headed to the table with the Health Labour Relations Association in Vancouver Nov. 4, 1991 there was reason for optimism. The election of a New Democratic Party government just three weeks before had swept away a discredited Social Credit regime and its wage control program. The new government said it was committed to pay equity, protection of quality health care services and free collective bargaining.

But what HEU members hoped would be a quick and productive set of negotiations turned into one of the toughest confrontations in the union's history.

The key to HEU's success was the tireless efforts of thousands of local executive members and activists who developed and implemented a job action strategy that left health employers demanding government intervention.

Election campaign signs were still being taken down when health employers made it clear that they rejected the union's goals of a fair wage increase, pay equity and action on workload.

Hospital bosses remained committed to sweeping contract concessions designed to accelerate the bed closures, lay-offs and contracting out begun under Social Credit. And they were convinced that HEU was too weak, divided and isolated to resist.

As far as Health Labour Relations Association was concerned, the election changed nothing. On Oct. 26, just nine days after the NDP victory, HLRA president Gordon Austin said, "I do not believe that an NDP government, when it looks at the economy in B.C., will be able to finance major wage increases for public sector employees."



STRAIGHT FACTS: James Godfrey uses failed Vancouver General news conference to tell HEU's story.



KOOTENAY WORKERS: Hardy View Lodge in Grand Forks voted 100 percent against final offer.



ESCALATION:
Abbotsford members
picket MSA Manor
April 23.



HELLO MIKE:
Harcourt's choice as
shown by Province
cartoonist Bob
Krieger.

Even though public sector wage settlements were running at seven percent, Austin threatened bed closures and lay-offs if health workers received more than two percent. And when HLRA's bargaining team met HEU Nov. 4, it refused to bargain, retreating even on issues where some progress had been made.

On Dec. 19 mediator Stephen Kelleher suspended talks in frustration. HEU's Provincial Executive, realizing job action might be necessary to force a settlement, decided early in January to conduct a province-wide strike vote. On Feb. 13, the HEU membership answered HLRA with a 78 percent strike vote.

But HLRA, determined not to bargain, applied to Industrial Relations Commissioner Ed Peck, for a new mediator. Peck's appointment of mediator Vince Ready rendered any HEU job action illegal until Ready reported out.

HEU served strike notice Feb. 21, but HLRA's plan to dictate settlement terms to HEU members was already in high gear.

Seven days after Ready was appointed, Austin announced he was preparing a "final offer." If HEU refused to vote on the offer, Austin warned, HLRA might force such a vote under Bill 19.

Early on the evening of March 4, Ready delivered the "final offer" to HEU's bargaining committee and HLRA walked away.

It was a show of contempt that HLRA would regret. "Our employers are saying that we are second class public sector workers," union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato said. "HEU will never accept this."

Provincial Executive members told a March 5 rally of more than 500 Lower Mainland local executive members that a strong rejection vote was critical to win a fair contract. And with Ready out of the picture, the door was open at last to job action.

The 78 percent vote to reject HLRA's final offer was a turning point in the dispute. Despite an all-out effort by health employers



HEART OF HEALTH CARE: They're under Pricare. A 98 percent NO vote but no job action allowed at Simon Fraser local.

"Job action was wonderful. It was very positive, cohesive action. We got lots of good feedback from BCNU members."

**Elaine Pigeau,
Terrace**

Police called, windows papered *Boss declares war on workers*

DURING the April job actions, relations with hospital bosses were strained in many places, but few HEU members can match the bizarre stories that came out of Mackenzie and District Hospital.

The highly-paid administrator in the 12-bed hospital threatened to tow the vehicles of HEU members involved in job actions.

Then he called the RCMP when off-duty local executive members were in the hospital giving out information on the dispute. The police refused to get involved.

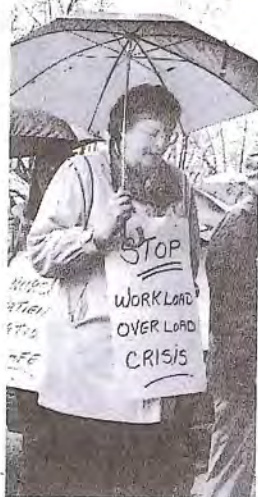
Management also suspended an essential services cook who refused to clean the previous day's dishes. The administrator locked HEU members out of the laundry and had the windows in the hospital laundry papered over.

As well, management followed HEU members working during the dispute, and issued rules forbidding HEU workers from talking to patients or fellow workers.

The 18 members of the Mackenzie local had tangled with their administrator in early March, when he tried and failed to lock out HEU members who wore "Workload Overload" stickers.



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FIGHTING FOR FAIRNESS: George Derby members march on Burnaby MLA Fred Randall's office.

"I must say I have never been as proud in 30 years in this union as I've been in the last 30 days."

**Kathleen Anderson,
Lions Gate Hospital**



to bully and intimidate HEU, the membership voted to reject in even greater numbers than they had voted to strike.

On March 31, one year after the expiry of the previous contract, HEU began a steadily escalating, rotating job action that ultimately brought the employers to their knees. That day and for the next three weeks, local executives took control of the hospitals. First one department would be shut down, then another. By refraining from picketing, HEU limited the impact of the job action to managers. Patients and members of other unions were affected as little as possible.

HLRA sought to counter HEU's job action with a coordinated media attack that claimed the job action was worse than a full-scale strike. A wave of bed closures locked patients out of hospitals and health minister Elizabeth Cull offered to fly cardiac and cancer patients out of the province (ultimately only two out of a potential 125 benefitted from this publicity stunt).

HLRA sought to counter HEU's job action with a coordinated media attack that claimed the job action was worse than a full-scale strike. A wave of bed closures locked patients out of hospitals and health minister Elizabeth Cull offered to fly cardiac and cancer patients out of the province (ultimately only two out of a potential 125 benefitted from this publicity stunt).

LABOUR SUPPORT: Rallying for health care, HSA president Jackie Henwood throws her union's support behind HEU.



SOLIDARITY: Poor offer sends MSA Manor members to soup kitchen at March 31 rally.

"Morale stayed high throughout job action."

**Dennis Storms,
Dawson Creek**

But media commentators conceded that HEU's strategy was masterful.

Labour support for the union, including from the B.C. Federation of Labour president Ken Georgetti, remained solid.

On April 9, aware the union could not be isolated, broken or outflanked, Austin turned to Victoria for help. In a revealing interview with a Vancouver reporter, Austin said HLRA would probably call for legislation limiting the right of health care workers to strike. The only solution to the dispute, he hinted, would be "some form of third-party intervention."





STANDING TOGETHER: A golden moment in the fight for fairness at Golden and District General Hospital.

**“People came out of the
woodwork to help. I was
nervous about asking
people to do signs for
our rally, but when I
did they were really
supportive.”**

**Donna Vye,
Comox**



HELLO MOE: Labour minister's attitude angers workers and cartoonist.

HEU members demonstrated their resolve April 10 in a massive demonstration in downtown Vancouver. More than 5,000 workers from around the Lower Mainland came off the job to march in two columns to the Plaza of Nations where they conducted an exuberant hour-long rally. An Industrial Inquiry Commission report was rejected by the union.

HEU continued stepping up the pressure. The first picket line of the dispute went up April 15 at the Tilbury laundry in Delta. Mount St. Joseph workers picketed the next day and by April 23, picket action had hit major facilities in every region of the province.

In desperation, HLRA demanded that the NDP legislate the union back to work and impose a settlement.

On April 22, the union's entire Provincial Executive travelled to a Victoria meeting with labour minister Moe Sihota.

Sihota finally emerged from the premier's office April 24 to announce the appointment of Don Munroe as a special conciliator to report on the dispute.

In the end it was the strength of the HEU membership, united in job action in every facility, which produced a new collective agreement. Along the way, the employer agenda was rolled back.

The new agreement was much less than HEU members hoped for and deserved, but it was far more than health employers intended to concede.



PICKET LINE: Mt. St. Joseph strikers drew support from members around Vancouver in second picket line of job actions.

HEU members stand up to media *Marches, letters meet biased stories*

HEU members got a quick education on how the media works when many newspapers and broadcasters highlighted complaints by patients and surgeons against HEU as hospitals closed beds to put pressure on the union.

HEU members wrote newspapers and phoned up hot line shows and TV stations to deal with stories and editorials on HEU

job actions that they thought were unfair.

Members of the Peace Arch local marched to the *Peace Arch News* office to air their concerns about coverage in the newspaper.

“The way you listen to the news, you’d think everyone was dying in there,” member Rick Russell told reporters.

Vancouver General Hospital members took to the streets to complain about a *Vancouver Sun* article in which a surgeon blamed HEU for cancelled operations.

HEU members at Surrey Memorial Hospital got a correction to a *Sun* article suggesting that residents at the Shirley Dean Pavilion were suffering because of HEU job actions.

As the job actions went on, HEU won positive publicity, with columnists calling the HEU job action strategy “masterful” and criticizing government responses.

ON THE HILL: Shorncliffe local members Jean Scholefield and Christine Luster ready to meet MPs.



HEU members are carrying the fight to save our medicare system into every community and all the way to Ottawa

Shorncliffe goes to Ottawa

When Jean Scholefield got a phone call asking her to appear before a parliamentary committee in Ottawa in less than 10 days, she thought there was some mistake.

But there was no mistake, and so Scholefield, a cook at the Shorncliffe long term care facility in Sechelt, flew to Ottawa with Christine Luster, a long term care aide.

The two HEU members made their first ever trip to Ottawa to speak on behalf of their local and health care workers across Canada about a bill before Parliament which will cut back federal funding to medicare, Bill C-20.

On the way, the two health care workers learned about the importance of speaking out as health providers, and they learned about Canada's political process.

HEU has been fighting to defend medicare since the union was formed. That struggle is becoming a national one now as HEU joins the Canadian Union of Public Employees to demand proper funding for our health care system.

Luster admitted later that appearing before the committee represented "a whole new level of stress." But the training she got in a course on chairing meetings, and the lessons Scholefield learned at last year's HEU summer leadership school, helped them pass the test.

Their trip started with a letter from the HEU provincial office requesting locals to write to the House

of Commons Standing Committee on Finance asking to appear on Bill C-20. Many HEU locals, including Shorncliffe, wrote to the committee in the weeks that followed.

Two months later, under pressure because of the requests from Canadians to be heard on Bill C-20, the finance committee agreed to hold hearings on the bill.

In early November, an official at the finance committee phoned Scholefield asking the Shorncliffe local to appear before the committee 10 days later.

Scholefield, still not believing that she should be going to Ottawa, got confirmation from provincial office that the invitation to go to Ottawa at government expense was serious. Scholefield, the local's secretary-treasurer, called Luster, the local chairperson.

"When Jean phoned me up and said we were invited to go to Ottawa, I didn't believe it," Luster said. Here's what happened on their trip:

Day one, 2 p.m.: Luster and Scholefield's flight leaves Vancouver International Airport for Ottawa. They started the day driving from their homes on the Sunshine Coast to Vancouver, where they got a briefing on Bill C-20 before going to the airport.

On the flight to Ottawa, Scholefield and Luster work on their speech to the finance committee, using information gathered from co-workers and from HEU.

Day two, 8:30 a.m.: After a night's sleep in a hotel near Parliament Hill, Luster and Scholefield have breakfast and discuss the upcoming day's work.

10 a.m.: A quick tour of Ottawa, including views of Parliament Hill, and the homes of Governor General Ray Hnatyshyn and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

Noon: Lunch in the Parliament Buildings followed by a meeting with Jim Karpoff, the New Democrat health critic in the House of Commons.

2 p.m.: In the public galleries of the House of Commons to watch statements by MPs and the daily question period.

Karpoff, the MP for Surrey North, stands up to salute the 30th anniversary of the first medicare system in Canada, which was brought in by the NDP in Saskatchewan.

By CHRIS GAINOR



HEALTH CRITIC: New Democrat MP Jim Karpoff meets with HEU delegation in Ottawa: (left to right) Christine Luster, Karpoff, HEU staffer Chris Gainor, Jean Scholefield.

"The federal government must cease its cutbacks to medicare and reassume its fair share of funding, or national medicare will not survive for another 30 years," Karpoff warned the house.

During question period, Liberal leader Jean Chretien, NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin and other MPs spar with cabinet ministers such as Joe Clark, Barbara McDougall and Don Mazankowski over the constitution, unemployment insurance premium increases, credit card interest rates, the level of the dollar, and human rights.

"I always thought it was a playpen, and it sure turned out to be a playpen," Luster commented as she emerged from question period.

3:30 p.m.: The hearing of the Standing Committee on Finance begins in the West Block of the Parliament Buildings. "From the moment I went into the hearing room, I was nervous," said Luster.



HEARING ROOM: Scholefield and Luster just after their address to House of Commons finance committee.

But it would be more than two hours until the HEU delegation would speak. First, there were presentations from the Canadian Health Coalition, the Health Care Advocates of B.C., the Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions, health consultant Dr. Michael Rachlis, the New Brunswick Nurses' Union and the Canadian Public Health Association.

6 p.m.: Luster and Scholefield go before the committee. Most of their presentation, which is read by

Scholefield, deals with the health needs and facilities on the Sunshine Coast.

The five Members of Parliament — two Conservatives, two Liberals and one New Democrat — listen attentively, especially when Scholefield mentions that Grace McInnis, the late B.C. New Democrat who 20 years ago was Canada's only woman MP, was a resident of Shorncliffe.

Ottawa's cuts to provincial health budgets are costing jobs and bed closures

"Long term care facilities operate on a skeleton staff now," she said. "Cutbacks to the system will cause a further deterioration in the care we give to our residents."

"Our health care system is a good one. It provides for every Canadian regardless of their income, and we would hate to see it destroyed by lack of funding."

Winnipeg Liberal MP David Walker asked the HEU delegation about the B.C. Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs, and Windsor New Democrat MP Steven Langdon asked about the cost of care for seniors.

Luster said many residents have fixed incomes and don't understand the impact of inflation. If there were user fees, she said, "we would see some militant seniors come forward."

She also told the MPs about how it cost her grandmother more than \$2,000 a month to live in a long term care facility in the United States.

Ontario Tory MP Pat Sobeski asked about who builds long term care facilities.

6:30 p.m.: The vice-chair of the committee, Quebec Tory Clement Couture, winds up the day's hearing after the final questions to the HEU delegation.

7 p.m.: Dinner at an Ottawa restaurant. "I think it was fantastic," Scholefield said. "What do we speak about next year?"

"I'm certainly glad that we got asked to come," Luster said. "It wasn't as frightening as I thought it would be."

"I think we were listened to because we were talking as health care workers."

HEU joins national campaign on medicare

Union supports protest organized across Canada by Canadian Union of Public Employees

HEU is joining with the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Canadian Labour Congress in a national campaign to save medicare from cutbacks imposed by the federal Tories.

The Keep Medicare Healthy campaign features pledge cards to help save medicare and a two-hour television special airing on Vision Network on cable TV on June 18 at 4:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. and June 19 at 7:30 a.m. and noon.

Canadians are being asked to sign cards supporting medicare and urging Brian Mulroney to stop his government's cutbacks. Cards have been sent to HEU locals.

"If the Tory agenda is allowed to proceed, our health care system will be unrecognizable within 15 years," said CUPE president Judy Darcy. "The federal government is suffocating medicare by underfunding it to death."

HEU is urging its members to join in the pledge card campaign, which began in late May. Local labour councils will hold sign-up campaigns for members of the general public.

The television special on medicare will feature well-known show business personalities.

This campaign, which is supported by the Action Canada Network and the Canadian Health Coalition, is the latest effort HEU is supporting in the fight to save medicare from Tory cutbacks.

The latest Tory law to cut medicare payments to the provinces was rammed through the House of Commons and the Senate after NDP members of parliament suc-



ceeded in forcing the government to hold special hearings on the bill.

Bill C-20, which extends the freeze on federal transfer funding for health care and post-secondary education, will lead to the end of direct federal funding for these programs.

When an earlier law, Bill C-69, was passed a year ago, many experts warned that the end of direct federal funding would jeopardize protection against extra billing and user fees contained in the Canada Health Act.

Although Bill C-20 is supposed to preserve the protections of the Canada Health Act, HEU and other groups that appeared before the House of Commons finance committee and warned that the bill still poses a threat to medicare throughout Canada.

The hearings by the finance committee resulted from the Canadian Health Coalition's "Demand to be Heard on Medicare" campaign, in which groups across Canada asked to speak to the finance committee about Bill C-20.

While the major goal of the Keep Medicare Healthy campaign is to halt federal cutbacks to health funding, the campaign also calls for a set of reforms to strengthen medicare.

The campaign wants to maintain five principles of Canadian medicare: universality, comprehensiveness, accessibility, portability, and public administration.

As well, the campaign stresses the need to protect and enhance the rights of workers during changes in health care delivery, such as the shift to home care and community care as envisioned by the B.C. Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs.



CONDITION CRITICAL: National campaign protests Ottawa's cuts in health spending.

Castleview local stands up for residents

HEU members at Castleview local in Castlegar have been forced to take action to protect special diets and cultural programs of importance to residents of Russian ancestry in their facility.

When residents of the

former Raspberry Lodge in Castlegar transferred to Castleview Care Centre over a year ago, the trouble began.

First the home menu was changed, sharply reducing the traditional Russian diet. Twenty-six of 38 home resi-

dents are Russian.

Then the administrator, Dianne Ramage, tampered with the traditional Russian music enjoyed by residents, limiting residents to three hours a week of music. Activity worker Sheila Dixon quit in frustration at

the anti-Russian policies and a sharp reduction in her hours.

But after union protests, management agreed to provide some Russian food, modifying the traditional diet by using low-fat substitutes for butter and cream,

so residents can enjoy their favourite foods at least once a week.

"The new diet seems to be acceptable to residents," said local chairperson Jean Hitchens. "The issue is pretty much resolved around here now."

Surrey local fights to save care unit

Union members and families of extended care patients are keeping up the fight to save the Shirley Dean Pavilion at Surrey Memorial Hospital.

Beginning with a rally outside Shirley Dean Feb. 14, HEU has worked hard to reverse a decision by the hospital's board of directors to close the facility.

Staff concerns over bed closures and lay-offs prompted a sit-in at Shirley Dean Feb. 25. Eight staff members walked off the day shift and demanded a meeting with hospital administrators. Surrey local union executives attended the sit-in along with three HEU staff.

Although the hospital tried to intimidate workers by disciplining them for their actions, HEU members continued to fight to keep the beds open.

A postcard campaign

gathered thousands of signatures from concerned citizens, relatives of residents and hospital workers. HEU members and concerned citizens presented a brief to Surrey council about the bed closures and asked for support.

So far the campaign is working. An article in *Surrey NOW* April 10 reported the hospital board would renovate Shirley Dean Pavilion and return it to an extended care facility. Surrey council has one member on the hospital board.

Shirley Dean is one of three extended care units at SMH. At full capacity it houses 74 residents and employs 35 workers. Dietary, finance and maintenance staff at the main hospital provide services to the facility.

Despite the hospital board's decision to reopen Shirley Dean for ex-



ACTION AGAINST CLOSURE: HEU Surrey local members gather around union staffers Shirley Mathieson and Steve Polak to review latest management position during a Feb. 26 protest against employer plans to close the Shirley Dean Extended Care Unit. The hospital eventually agreed to keep the beds open and to reinstate three workers fired for their role in the protest.

tended care, HEU suspects the necessary funding for beds will not be available once the renovations are finished.

"The people who used to live in Shirley Dean have been moved into private care facilities and the government is funding those beds," says HEU director Steven Polak.

"Is Surrey Memorial Hospital going to be able to get the funding to open the

74 beds in Shirley Dean Pavilion now that those people have been moved some where else? I doubt it."

Polak points to the empty towers at Vancouver General Hospital as an example of health care budgets that permit construction but don't serve any patients.

The union is holding talks with NDP MLAs in Surrey to gather support

for making sure the beds are re-opened for extended care residents.

"The last census showed that Surrey had a 30 per cent population increase in four years. There is no way they should close one bed in that hospital," Polak said.

There are 50 extended care patients in acute beds in Surrey Memorial Hospital and 200 more waiting to get in.

HEU delegate urges action on aboriginal rights

A full day after HEU Bella Coola delegate Doreen Clellamin finished her brief speech on aboriginal rights to the B.C. Federation of Labour delegates, trade unionists from around the province were still approaching her to express their gratitude and solidarity.

Clellamin, an alternate delegate, hadn't expected to be in Vancouver and she had not expected to speak Nov. 28 when the issue of aboriginal rights came to the floor.

But she went to the mic-

rophone anyway and her comments moved the 800 convention delegates very much.

As she returned to her seat, they gave her a standing ovation and several wept openly.

"I'm a practical nurse," she said later, "and I've been working as a nurse's aide for 26 years, the last 13 years in my home community of Bella Coola."

"The main thing I talked about was what happened to people who went to the residential schools."

"They were taken away



DOREEN CLELLAMIN, of HEU's Bella Coola local, won a standing ovation from B.C. Federation of Labour delegates.

and placed in schools for 12 or 13 years with no parental guidance, no family, no relatives, none of that background.

"That's why so many have drug, alcohol and suicide problems."

"Since I moved home in 1977, 50 people have committed suicide in my community, all age groups, but mostly young people."

"They didn't have the help of parents or grandparents."

The residential school system left a terrible legacy which must be overcome, she said.

That's why she wanted delegates to support a convention resolution calling for "solidarity with aboriginal people."

The resolution also calls on the provincial government to "provide speedy, fair and negotiated settlements of aboriginal disputes and land claims."

Native people are looking forward to those treaties, Clellamin says, and to the day when native trade unionists take their place on the convention podium as full participants.

Sally Ann closes MS group home

Salvation Army management at New Westminster's Buchanan Court cast a cloud over the Christmas season by closing the facility, home for 10 residents with multiple sclerosis.

HEU members pressed hard to keep the facility operating but management closed the home in November. The building was only five years old, but did not meet the fire code.

HEU members continue to work at Buchanan Lodge, a related facility, but still regret the closure as a senseless bureaucratic foul-up.

"The people who've had their lives scrambled by this bungling deserve some answers," wrote the Royal City Record, "as do the taxpayers who've footed the bill."

MAKING CHANGE

by LINDA MARCOTTE

THE phone rings. "Hello, End Legislated Poverty, this is Linda," I say. The caller is a reporter with the CBC in Edmonton, working on an article about welfare and single mothers. Can I find someone in Edmonton who would have the information he needs?

them to talk about poverty in their area.

We have to keep information about poverty and social justice issues current. We speak to groups and keep active in national groups like the National Anti-Poverty Organization and Action Canada Network. We are funded by unions, churches and law groups like the

Law Foundation and Legal Services Society, the United Way and others.

I often think I'm so privileged to be on staff here. Getting paid to do this work still amazes me. I've been a single parent since Steven and Melanie were one and three, and now they're teenagers. All those years, mostly on welfare.

I chose poverty on welfare over a slightly higher income working at a job outside. Melanie needed extra attention, having Down's Syndrome.

Looking back over those years, with bad or no housing (one summer we stayed with a friend), not enough money and overwhelming bone-tiredness, I wonder at myself — all the other work I did. I helped start a welfare rights group in Surrey, acted as an advocate for more than 30 people a month out of our home, and led the Poverty Game workshop dozens of times.

I was lucky, too. I didn't have any trouble with the law or have an addiction or health problems that would have forced me to deal with authority more than I did. While I was doing advocacy, I talked to many women whose choice of working on the street made sense after the hundredth harassment by workers at the welfare office. Stealing food is sometimes more dignified than waiting hours in a food bank lineup for stale buns and canned peas. Getting drunk or stoned is sometimes a vacation from an ugly reality.

I see myself come in here to the office or hear my voice on the other

end of the line every day. Keeping your family together and healthy is almost impossible, and is impossible sometimes. The single parents we see who have the edge to start fighting poverty usually live in public housing or housing co-ops, with the worry of high rents and crummy housing gone.

The memories I have of being on welfare are grim, pushing the two kids up this huge hill with five cases of empty beer bottles my new landlord had given me to cash in and get money for supper.

I can feel the rage and frustration as I write this, but the biggest memory, and the one that comes back to shake me, is shame. The hardest, most confusing time I spent here was trying to see myself as a worker deserving a pay cheque.

I feel the 10 years of welfare beat my pride and the trust I had in my thinking right out of me. To get it back was a fight. The support of friends was a big help. Another element to healing my self-esteem was seeing myself as part of the huge movement in Canada and around the world working to get justice for women, our children and poor people everywhere.

This is what I am lucky to see every day in other single parents. The first step is to get together with others to share stories and get support and practical help. Then I see women change and grow, doing things they never thought they had the courage to do, meeting politicians and telling them what they and their children need.

I see single parents go through the process of working together, figuring out what's wrong, why and what to do about it. It's exciting to watch.

There are powerful consequences: feeling better and stronger so you don't blame yourself for your poverty; learning skills like writing and reading; organizing and running meetings; making speeches; giving TV or radio interviews; keeping a group going — it's very empowering.

Sometimes I take lower income people to one of the schools in Vancouver that have lunch programs. In a bustle of 300 children eating (of the 1,500 Vancouver kids who are fed a nutritious, hot lunch every day, in a program that doesn't stigmatize the low income kids), I always feel so hopeful.

End Legislated Poverty, low income people did this. We brought people's attention to the problem of poverty and worked hard to get kids fed. I'm reminded of a quote from Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."



CHANGE-MAKERS: Linda Marcotte (left) with poverty-fighters Annie Llewellyn (centre) and Denise Nadeau at End Legislated Poverty.

I call Freda, a welfare advocate with the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA), one of 27 groups in our coalition. She tells me what I'm looking for, we chat, and I just have time to look up some names of single parents in Edmonton. Pat, one of our staff, helped form a group to work on getting lunch programs in the low income schools there. A quick call back to Edmonton and that task is done.

I'm excited. Just last week a single mother in Chilliwack phoned and wanted to start a group out there. The name she thought of was great: S.M.A.R.T. — Single Mothers Are Really Tough.

The evidence of the work that keeps us whirling is everywhere.

In this morning's mail are two letters from municipal councils who have passed our resolutions:

- minimum wages should be raised to at least the same percentage of the poverty line as it was in 1975. This would be over \$7.50 an hour;
- the welfare rates should be raised to the poverty line;
- the provincial government should let single mothers on welfare decide whether they want to stay home and be with their children full-time or work outside.

Several towns, cities and groups have passed these. People can use

Single parent Linda Marcotte has learned she can fight poverty. She changed her life. Now she wants to change the whole system.

Coffee Break



More winners of the bad boss awards

An American organization called 9 to 5: The National Association of Working Women, compiles the Bad Boss Awards. Some recent winners:

- A Chicago stock brokerage vice-president who asked his secretary to take his jacket home and wash it. When she refused, he said, "Why not? You don't have a college degree."
- One company president wouldn't give a worker a raise because if she made more money than her husband, who also worked at the firm, it would "cause friction in the family."

At least one Tory tells it like it is

Asked to define "competitiveness," Conservative MP Don Blenkarn replied: "The Canadian worker can either work harder for less pay or not work at all. It's pretty simple — that's what competitiveness means."

Our waiting lists not the longest

According to the British press, Mr. John Osselson was less than impressed recently when his aunt, Dr. Nora Saunders, a retired eye specialist, was advised by the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital that they were ready to perform her cataract operation.

Dr. Saunders, aged 80, died in 1981.

Our ranks are growing

The number of Canadians belonging to unions rose one percent last year to just over four million.

The proportion of non-agricultural workers in the country who belong to unions rose to 36.5 percent from 36.2 percent.

This is the first increase since 1984, when union

membership began a slight but steady downward trend.

In the United States, only about 17 percent of the labour force is unionized.

A song any union can sing to the boss

One newsletter published by the Public Service Alliance of Canada has this advice for members frustrated by being legislated back to work by their boss:

*Just head for the can, Sam,
just book off sick, Dick.
Just say you're in pain, Jane,
or take a long break, Jake.
Just chat on the phone, Joan,
and stay home in bed, Fred.
Just drop the machine, Jean,
or screw up the form, Norm.
Just don't behave,
'cause you ain't no slave.*

the Bone Crusher, Sampson the Strong Man and Ivan the Knife Thrower."

Health care costs can be contained

A private financial newsletter in the United States called *Bottom Line* has recently advised clients on some key steps to reducing their health care costs in that great land without medicare:

1. Don't get sick.
2. If you get sick, avoid for-profit hospitals and save 20 percent. Avoid teaching hospitals and save 50 percent.
3. Refuse to pay doctors' "admitting fees."
4. Bring your own food. Negotiate a discount or rebate on your daily costs.



Bosses are innovative with pink slips

A CUPE local has documented innovative new terms used by bosses to say "you're laid off." They include: job shedding, natural wastage, salary indisposition, outplacement, consider your future.

The same local has been telling the story of the circus owner who called his workers together after an unprofitable week. "I'm sorry," he said, "but there is only enough money to pay three of you this week — Benny

5. Bring any medication you can. Insist on generic drugs and save 30 to 70 percent.
 6. Bring your own cellular phone.
 7. Keep a detailed log of treatment.
- According to *Bottom Line*, a study of 40,000 U.S. hospital bills found errors in 97 percent, with overcharges exceeding undercharges by three to one. The average overcharge was \$1,254 per stay, equivalent to the average annual per capita health expenses of Americans.

SOURCES: CALM, Private Eye.

Tories kill hope of national daycare

They promised it in 1984. They promised it again after being re-elected in 1988. But last February the Tories killed the hope of a national child care program.

Instead, they increased tax deductions for child care expenses, a move that doesn't create more day care spaces, and benefits rich Canadians more than poor.

In making his announcement health minister Benoit Bouchard said that daycare "is not seen any more by Canadians as the first priority for children." He says the top concern now is for abused children and family violence.

But just two days after Bouchard bragged about "killing" daycare, his own department released a \$3 million study showing how bad the situation is for working parents.

It said 1.9 million Canadian kids require daycare, but don't have access to it. Only a fraction, 263,000 children, were in licensed daycare spaces in 1988. The rest were being looked after, "by relatives, by the lady down the street, by older siblings, by any number of arrangements patched together."

The government's one move on daycare was to increase the tax deduction for child care expenses from \$4,000 to \$5,000. This may put a bit of money into the hands of working parents. But even on this point, it provides a greater benefit for rich Canadians than for poor.

That's because a tax deduction

SINGLE PARENTS AND WORKING FAMILIES BOTH NEED DAY CARE.



reduces taxable income. Rich people pay a higher tax rate, so they save more tax from a deduction. A single mum making \$25,000 will receive a child care subsidy of about \$1,340 under the new plan. However, a two-income professional family making \$150,000 will save \$2,450!

Bouchard also said it was a question of funding child abuse programs or child care, and he chose the former. But critics say affordable child care is crucial for women trying to escape a violent situation.

"Child care is not a luxury," said advocate Glenda Simms, "It's a part of the needs of a changing society where women are taking their place in the work force."

Deadlines coming for HEU convention plans

If you have a resolution or proposal for constitutional change you want discussed at the upcoming convention don't delay! Deadlines are looming for submissions to the 18th Biennial HEU Convention Oct. 5 to 9.

Proposed resolutions must be ratified by a majority vote at a regular meeting of the sponsoring local and signed by the local chairperson and secretary-treasurer. Proposed resolutions must be received by provincial office before Aug. 30.

Constitutional amendments require ratification by a majority vote at a regular meeting of the sponsoring local. They must be signed by the chairperson and secretary-treasurer of the local and received by provincial office no later than Sept. 5.

Locals must also elect delegates to

convention and submit credential form and registration fee to provincial office by Aug. 2. Each local will already have received a list prepared by the financial secretary showing the average membership for the local and number of delegates eligible to attend convention.

Delegates will receive a letter from the financial secretary regarding claiming expenses for lost wages, travel and accommodation.

The convention begins October 5th with delegate registration the previous evening. Proceedings are scheduled to end October 9. Delegates will gather at the Richmond Inn to determine the union's direction and policy and elect members of the Provincial Executive for two-year terms of office.

HEU offers bursary aid

HEU is offering 13 bursaries for post-secondary study to members, their children and spouses for the 1992-1993 academic year.

The bursaries, with a total value of almost \$6,000, can be used at any post-secondary institution. They will be awarded to students who need financial assistance and demonstrate satisfactory academic standing.

Applications must be received by

HEU provincial office marked "bursaries" no later than Aug. 14, 1992.

To obtain application forms and request further information, write or call HEU provincial office: 2006 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 4P5, telephone 734-3431, local 230.

Bursaries are administered by the Bursaries Committee under the direction of the Provincial Executive.



HEU people

Era ends with Gwen Parrish retirement at VGH

An era came to a close at Vancouver General Hospital in May, when HEU activist Gwen Parrish officially retired after 30 years of work and union involvement.

An activist since day one, Parrish served first as trustee, then as local secretary-treasurer for 28 years. She was also a long-time member of HEU's Provincial Executive. Quiet and soft-spoken, Parrish was a strong individual, a perfectionist who didn't suffer fools easily.

Last November the VGH local hosted a special retirement dinner for Parrish, where she was presented a commemorative plaque and given other gifts, including a new set of luggage.

Since the party, Parrish has put the luggage to good use while on a lengthy holiday in Asia and Australia.

Edith Kassiones retires at Ponderosa Lodge

Ponderosa Lodge local activist Edith Kassiones is leaving her job with her sense of humour still intact.

Kassiones, who retired in March after working 10 years as a cook, writes to say that she's "anxiously awaiting a

call from Hollywood, CBC, NBC, ABC or some 115 year old senior billionaire in need of a beneficiary."

Chairperson of her local for the last two years, Kassiones also served as vice-chairperson, assistant secretary, trustee, conductor and warden. She says she's enjoyed her work at the lodge, and sends her thanks and appreciation to the Provincial Executive, staff and other local activists she has met.



Audrey Saigeon gets commemorative pin from Kamloops local secretary-treasurer Ken Preiss.



Gwen Parrish gets lots of local support from her VGH friends at her retirement party. (Left to right) Judith O'Donovan, Gwen, Joe Fraser, Lila Murao, Linda Whittaker and Linda Celentano.

Kamloops LPN Audrey Saigeon ends long career

Royal Inland Hospital LPN Audrey Saigeon left behind a lot of friends when she retired March 12, after 32 years of work at the hospital.

An HEU shop steward in the mid 1980s, Saigeon has been a health care

worker since 1948.

Active in a number of community organizations, her future plans include catching up on all the things she's missed over the years, like reading, getting her recipes in order, travelling and square dancing.

Little Mountain Place member will fish and travel

Fishing and travelling were Robert Medved's plans when he retired May 31 after five years as a janitor in the maintenance department at Little Mountain Place in Vancouver.

Who knows, Medved might be mooching off the bow right now!

Norman Dyble bids farewell to Olive Devaud

Maintenance worker Norman Dyble received a fond farewell from all his HEU sisters and brothers at the Olive Devaud Residence in Powell River when he retired last November.

On disability since 1988, Dyble was a union activist who served in a number of local leadership positions, including four

years as chairperson.

"If it wasn't for the union," he writes, "we would still be working for two-bit wages."

He plans to travel as long as his money and his health last.

Loodgarria, Hermano, retire at Windermere Lodge

Windermere Retirement Lodge housekeeper Bie Loodgarria and care attendant Josefa Hermano both retired Jan. 2.

Well liked by fellow staff and residents, Loodgarria plans to take a long vacation and relax, while Hermano



Edith Kassiones (left) leads the chanting at the 1991 summer school rally against bed closures, held at the Social Credit convention.

wants to do volunteer work at the lodge, located in Vancouver.

Jackman Manor retirees to spend time with families

Two Jackman Manor local members also retired last year.

June King, a care aide at the Aldergrove facility since 1982 and a former local trustee, plans to travel and spend more time with her daughter in Britain.

Housekeeping aide Hanne Paul plans to spend more time with her family too.

Rose Haugseng was activist at 100 Mile House

"The staff was terrific and I enjoyed working with them very much," says Rose Haugseng, who retired Oct. 31 after 15 years in the housekeeping department at 100 Mile and District Hospital.

Haugseng worked hard for HEU, serving on her local's safety committee and as conductor and trustee on the local executive.

She was active in the community as treasurer of the Lutheran Church. She plans to travel, golf and fish.

PUZZLE

The Environment Crossword

Across

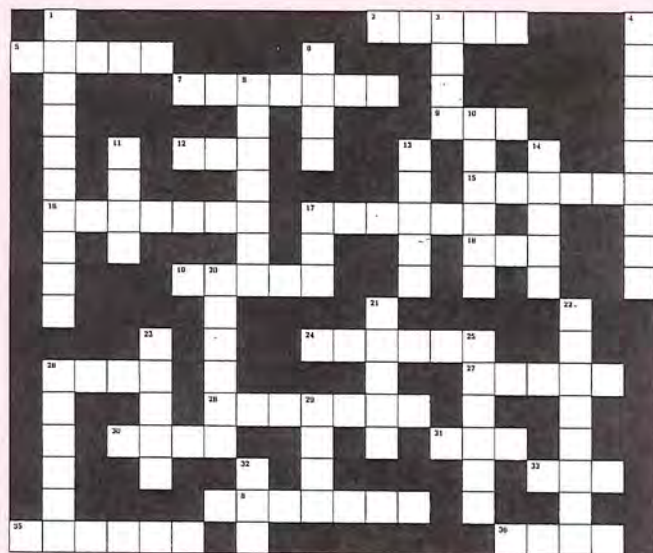
2. The car accounts for _____% of the energy Canadians use for transportation
5. The colour of recycled coffee filters
7. The average Canadian household creates a tonne of this each year
9. The branch of biology devoted to organisms and the environment is _____logy
12. These chemicals are destroying the ozone layer (abbrev.)
15. The most fuel-efficient vehicles for travelling between cities

16. Grown without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides
17. The most fuel-efficient car on the road is a Chevrolet
18. Public transit accounts for _____ of the energy Canadians use for transportation
19. This colour now means environment-friendly
24. Canadians are the world's highest per capita users of _____
26. A green alternative to regular scouring powders is ordinary baking _____
27. The earth's sunscreen
28. Alternative way to dispose of kitchen and yard wastes
30. The colour of recycling
31. All energy comes from it
33. World supplies of this popular fuel will be depleted in 35 years
35. This could be the fourth R of waste management
36. Save packaging; buy in _____

Down

1. Excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere causes the _____ effect

3. The average Canadian uses _____ thousand litres of water a day
4. A complete system of plants, animals and the environment
6. It takes 1,500 litres of oil to make one of these; each one uses 10,000 litres of gas in its lifetime
8. The third R of waste management
10. Diapers made of this are making a comeback
11. Alternative to paper towels
13. Taking the ink out of used paper
14. A leaky tap wastes more than 25 litres of _____ a day
17. It provides earth with the equivalent of 500,000 billion barrels of oil each day
20. The first R of waste management
21. The second R of waste management
22. Modern term for garbage dump
23. You can reduce 25% of an older home's heat loss with a few tubes of _____



25. Reuse: give your old _____ containers to a local school or daycare
26. Raw _____ has made Halifax harbour one of the most polluted bodies of water in Canada

29. Commuters can save gas and energy by forming a car _____
32. The blue _____ program is North America's largest and most successful recycling effort



Management wages soar

HEU heard lots of speeches about a lack of money for hospitals. But the administrators who made those speeches found money for themselves.

PAGE 5



New bed closures

In spite of promises to consult with health care workers, the provincial government is proceeding with Royal Commission recommendations.

PAGE 6

THE
HEART OF
HEALTH
CARE!

Fight for fairness

HEU's struggle to win a fair contract culminated with job actions through April, followed by a proposed settlement from special conciliator Don Munroe.

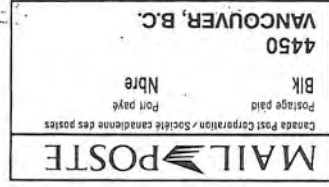
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Saving medicare

The federal Tories are starving provincial medicare programs. Labour's fight against these cutbacks extends from Ottawa to a small HEU local in Sechelt.

PAGE 14



Return address:
The Guardian,
2006 West 10th Ave.,
Vancouver, V6J 4P5

KEEP MEDICARE HEALTHY IT MIGHT NOT BE THERE WHEN YOU NEED IT

ALL of us are concerned about our health. We know that the health care system is there when we need it and we want to keep it that way.

We want the five principles of medicare — universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration — left intact and strengthened.

We want federal funding levels restored. But we also want to work together to make the system even more effective.

We want provincial governments to abandon user fees and other unfair ways of paying for health care. We must start exploring workable alternatives that don't threaten our health.

To keep medicare healthy, we need to:

1. Stop the fee-for-service treadmill.
2. Give non-physician staff a larger role in patient care.
3. Eliminate health care for profit.
4. Elect hospital boards and democratic health care institutions.
5. Reduce dependency on prescription drugs and make them more affordable.
6. Guarantee that health care is of the highest quality, whether it's provided in the home, the community or in an institution.
7. Encourage preventive care.

We need medicare. It is a sacred trust, the most important component of our social safety net. It makes us a unique country.

Help us save it and make it better for everyone!



Coalition to Keep Medicare Healthy



**DON'T FORGET TO WATCH THE
MEDICARE SHOW ON VISION TV
JUNE 18 — 4:30 & 9:30 P.M. (PACIFIC TIME)
JUNE 19 — 7:30 A.M. & NOON (PACIFIC TIME)**