TOUGH BUDGET

Victoria's budget is hard on hospitals, but the Employment Security Agreement protects workers.

GUARDIAN

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ROIAL SUPPORT

HEU Royal City Manor members got strong support at a recent rally in the battle for first contracts for new locals.

ON THE DARK SIDE OF REFORM

Ralph Klein wants to balance Alberta's budget on the backs of health care workers.
COMMENT

Strong ties to CUPE could open many doors for B.C. health workers

by Carmela Allevato

ONE OF THE most important decisions of HEU’s last convention — to seek permanent membership status in Canada’s labour movement — is moving closer to reality.

In a series of meetings during the past 12 months, officers of the HEU and the Canadian Union of Public Employees have been working hard to find a way for HEU to realize its goal through a renewed relationship with CUPE, which is Canada’s largest union with 400,000 members.

If successful, the talks will place HEU members in an ideal position to move forward as the union begins a second half-century, and move forward on a formula which is based on HEU’s determination to retain its autonomy, unique identity and independence.

At the same time, HEU members would have access to important new services from the national union, including access to CUPE’s National Defence Fund.

CUPE also offers a wide range of research, education and support services which are available to its affiliated organizations.

If HEU’s position is that there can be no increased financial burden on HEU members as a result of a new relationship, there certainly will be no dues increase.

And the 1990 convention decided that any new relationship must be ratified by a membership vote.

HEU has always directed its own affairs and that won’t change. We’re working outside the Canadian Labour Congress before and well do so if that’s what the membership decides is the best course.

But the talks with CUPE are the conclusion of a 10-year process that has seen HEU members in each community take on important leadership roles in the labour movement.

HEU reconstituted to the Canadian Labour Congress through a temporary arrangement with the Canadian Union of Public Employees in 1984. We had left 14 years before.

HEU members had decided in convention that it was time to develop closer ties with other unions fighting the same kinds of battles for Medicare and jobs against privatization, layoffs, contracting out.

That decision has been proven correct. We’re a bigger, stronger union now than we were 10 years ago. We’re working hard with health unions across Canada to defend services and jobs during a time of severe cutbacks.

Now both HEU and CUPE believe it’s time to consider even stronger ties to make both organizations more effective. It’s a logical partnership. CUPE represents health workers like us in every province in Canada.

If these talks are successful — and HEU members ratify the result — the only difference HEU members will notice is a union even better equipped to meet their daily needs.

Guardian

"It’s humble dedication to all those who are in love." —Anonymous

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Thanks, from the Hawthorn local

Thank you to all the members of the Hawthorn local in Kelowna and all the other HEU locals that so generously contributed to the purchase of HEU jackets for our members.

The social held on our behalf in November, 1993 (sponsored by Mary Bennett local) was a wonderful way of expressing the solidarity within HEU. While, the membership of Hawthorn Park local, Kelowna, expresses our gratitude for the support extended to us in our endeavours in obtaining our first contract.

ELAINE PROULX

Chairperson

Hawthorn Park local,

Kelowna

LPN calls for upgrading programs

Recently, I became aware that HEU members now make up 70 percent of the displaced workers registered on the Health Labour Adjustment Agency program.

At Koocyma Lake District Hospital in Nelson, the displaced employees are LPNs — 3.5 positions. How many LPNs have been displaced across B.C. compared to RNs? In some hospitals, upgrading programs are being instituted for LPNs because of increased acuity in patient care and higher turnover of patients due to bed closures.

LPNs need to be upgraded. In many hospitals, the job description has been so restricted that LPNs are not even performing skills outlined in the Competencies Required at the beginning of the LPN. This is not only a waste of money in training programs but a waste of valuable manpower.

I have submitted a proposal for upgrading skills at KLH that includes: blood glucose monitoring, IV therapy, changing IV lines and patients; troubleshooting blood pressure pumps; changing bags on nonmedicated solutions; removing sutures and staples; shortening drainage tubes; feeding tubes; feeding and run feeds, and removing no longer necessary.

I encourage all LPNs to demand that they at least work to their full job description as described in the Competencies Required for the beginning LPN (available from the Council of LPNs).

I also encourage LPNs to write to Paul Ramsey and Andrea Hemming to examine nursing services in B.C., review LPN training programs, and to support upgrading programs for LPNs.

JOAN HARVEY

secretary treasurer

LPN committee chairperson

Koocyma Lake, Nelson

Send copies to:

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V3N 5R5

Trying tolerance

Before any action or endorsement on the turban issue with the Canadian Legion let’s get our facts correct.

The turban is not a religious symbol; its original purpose was to protect, then it became “involved” as a religious symbol.

There are seven items the Sikhs have to have as religious symbols and the turban is not one of them. If immigrants want to be treated as equals then they have to change the laws, the customs and rules of this country. We should not have to change to suit them.

JAMES LATHAM

Surrey Memorial Hospital

• Brother Latham is incorrect.

According to Sikh community leader and multi-cultural activist Moti Singh Jhirh, wearing a turban has been mandatory in Sikh religious scriptures since 1909. The scriptures hold that without a turban a Sikh’s appearance is incomplete.

In addition, there are five items that all baptized Sikhs must wear: special knickers, an arm bracelet worn on the right wrist, a wooden comb, unshorn hair, and the ceremonial dagger.
What we’re up to

Yukon local aids locked out miners

HEU’s Yukon local in Campbell River issues the meaning of solidarity between working people.

The small local recently donated $500 to help members of the Canadian Auto Workers local 2019 who’ve been locked out by Westmin.

mines, their employer, for almost a year.

With strong support from other unions like HEU, the CWA members are staying strong and they will last one day more than the company, writes Yukon local secretary Brenda Pollock.

Allevato appointed to labour board

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato has been appointed as a member of the Labour Relations Board by labour minister Dan Miller in a March 3 announcement.

It’s a part-time position that will give Allevato a role in labour board rulings and interpretation of the provincial labour code.

HEU’s Lisa Hanson was also appointed, as was a representative of the Health Employers Association of B.C.

Kitimat campaign saves orthopaedic surgery program

Strong community opposition and a successful campaign in which HEU played a part has forced health minister Paul Ramsey to reserve an earlier decision to move Kitimat Hospital’s orthopaedic surgery program to Prince Rupert.

The community and HEU Kitimat local members were concerned that the move would be detrimental to the start of the program for acute care services at their hospital. They were fearful that diagnostic and treatment services would be provided, forcing residents to travel to Prince Rupert or Vancouver for hospital care.

It brings to an end 15 months of uncertainty since the government’s 1993 Northwest Health Services review made the move recommendation.

The key surgical program will stay at the hospital at least until the area’s regional health board is up and running. Prince Rupert may not lose out either. Ramsey is negotiating with local hospital officials for a second orthopaedic service in Prince Rupert.

Outlook hopeful for HEU-CUPE merger talks

by Geoff Meggs

NEGOTIATIONS between HEU and the Canadian Union of Public Employees to guarantee HEU’s permanent place in the Canadian labour movement are progressing well, says HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

“We’ve been affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress and the B.C. Federation of Labour through a special relationship with CUPE since 1984,” Allevato said. “Both sides agree it’s time to try to strengthen those ties.”

“We’ve been developing much closer links with other health care workers across Canada through CUPE. To defend medicare and our contracts, we’re going to need to work together with unions right across the country and this agreement, if ratified, could help that happen.”

A special resolution to HEU’s 1992 convention directed the executive to seek permanent status in the House of Labour because membership “has provided great benefit to our membership through contacts and joint campaigns with other unions.”

A committee of HEU’s Provincial Executive, including union president Fred Mintu, financial secretary Mary Laplante and Allevato, have been meeting with a top-ranking CUPE committee, headed by CUPE president Judy Darcy, since last fall.

Allevato said HEU’s committee was very hopeful after a full day of meetings in Ottawa March 26, and a tentative agreement will be ready for review well before HEU’s 50th Anniversary convention in Richmond in October.

Any change in the terms and conditions of HEU’s affiliation to the labour movement will be subject to ratification by the HEU membership in special or local meetings.

HEU’s policy is that it will retain autonomy over its constitution and by-laws as well as its administration in any affiliation agreement. Convention also directed that HEU not expend any greater money or resources to secure permanent status.

Allevato said negotiators are focusing on a formula which would maintain HEU’s identity, constitution and structure intact.

At the same time, HEU would become a full member organization of CUPE, with access to that union’s national resources, including its defence fund.

HEU would gain direct input for the first time in the national leadership of Canada’s largest public sector union, which already represents almost 130,000 other health care workers from coast to coast.

HEU was a founding member of CUPE in 1963, but left in 1970 as a result of a perceived threat to the union’s autonomy and independence. In 1994, HEU’s members decided it was time to rejoin the mainstream labour movement.

A special two-year agreement with CUPE made it possible. HEU became a major player in the B.C. Federation of Labour and scores of local activists plunged into labour council activity as a result.

The agreement has been extremely beneficial, but now leaders must meet the needs of CUPE or of HEU.

HEU opened the current talks with the development of a national action agenda for health care workers. CUPE has since led the way to increased co-ordination of campaigns and activities among Canada’s health workers, particularly the 1992 national day of action to defend medicare.

Health workers across the country have looked to HEU for advice and information on employment security ever since the landmark agreement negotiated in B.C. in 1993.

Unions to respond to Chrétien’s health forum

An informal coalition of Canada’s major health unions is gathering in Ottawa April 22 to develop a national strategy to protect public health care and jobs in the course of health care reform.

The Employment Security Agreement negotiated in B.C. by CUPE, BCGEU and HSU is considered a model contract by unions confronting devastating layoffs and closures in other provinces.

Convened by the Canadian Union of Public Employees along with the Canadian Health Coalition, the meeting is designed to develop an immediate response to prime minister Jean Chrétien’s proposed national forum on health care reform.

The health unions are working to make sure health workers and their jobs are protected as governments seek to cut costs and downtsize.

They’re backing a draft set of principles for health care reform which call on government to encourage prevention, preserve medicare and guarantee that health workers don’t bear the burden of change.

The national program also calls on government to put new health services in place before shutting down existing ones.

HEU is a member of the CHC which also includes nurses’ unions and a wide range of community groups. The labour group convening CUPE includes the Ontario Public Service Employees’ Union, the Service Employees International Union, and others, including New York’s Local 1199 as an observer.

March/April 1994 • Guardian 3
Austin charges accurate, probe says

By Stephen Howard

The Guardian was right on the mark with its expose of the perils scandal involving ex-health employer boss Gordon Austin says a special provincial government probe into financial wrongdoing at the former Health Labour Relations Association.

The report on the investigation ordered by the Ministry of Health last fall confirms charges of widespread impropriety in regards to October by The Guardian and The Canadian Sun that forced the HLRA board to fire Austin.

The report done by Finance Ministry confirms that:

- Austin abused his expense account for restaurant meals;
- the tax-payer funded HLRA paid out thousands in car lease and related costs on Austin's behalf;
- tens of thousands of dollars of computer equipment paid for by HLRA was in Austin's home, some of which was not consistent with HLRA applications;
- in other words expensive high tech toys for him to play with;
- Austin charged up $17,000 of personal expenses on his HLRA credit card, an admitted "transgression" that other HLRA bosses were also guilty of, the report says.

All of these issues are still under investigation by the RCMP.

The probe brought to light new revelations about the million dollar five-year contract Austin signed in 1992, which contained a lavish $500,000 severance payout, even though he was close to retirement.

The report asks "why the HLRA board of directors would enter into a five-year contract with Mr. Austin at the same time they were paying consultants to train a staff member to succeed Mr. Austin in two to three years."

One possible implication of this is that Austin could have pocketed the $500,000 severance once his agreed upon successor was in place.

The RCMP is also investigating the deal.

In addition the report also reveals positive investigations of matters involving other former HLRA officials. These include:
- the severance package of former vice-president Robert Watson;
- the compensation paid to his former director of finance Jo Valsek;
- $10,000 in undocumented expense payments to Austin authorized by then board chair and current St. Paul's Hospital boss Ron Mulder.

Based on the probe results, Victoria has slapped a freeze on senior public sector administrators pay, pending a review of compensation and benefits. A copy of the probe report was given to HEU by health minister Paul Ramsey who had promised full public disclosure of the investigation.

Study recommends ways to improve member services

HEU is increasing servicing, organizing and support staff as it moves to implement recommendations of a recent review on administration and staffing.

The comprehensive study of the union structure by consultant David Fairey of the Trade Union Research Bureau was completed in February.

After a detailed review of the report, the Provincial Executive has posted eight new permanent staff positions. The new jobs include a new organizer, several new staff representatives, an occupational health and safety representative and several new positions for support staff.

These positions, which could be accommodated within the approved budget for the current fiscal year, account for only part of the new staff resources Fairey recommended.

The Provincial Executive has also agreed to implement recommendations to overhaul the make-up and reporting structure of the union's senior staff.

But long-term recommendations, including the implementation of a strategic planning process, remain under review.

By the time the seminars finish late in April, almost 700 activists from the three unions will be ready to put their training into action in workplace. It's the first time that the three unions have held joint training programs for activists.

WATCH OUT BOSSI! These members of HEU, BCNU and HEA took part in one of a series of special tri-union seminars held across the province to develop common strategies to ensure that health bosses fully comply with the terms of the Employment Security Agreement.

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Continued from page 2

Grace local lobbies for change at "new" women's hospital

Big changes are in store at the former Grace Hospital after the Salvation Army, which had run the facility for decades, handed over control to the provincial government earlier this year.

"The hospital has been renamed B.C. Women's Hospital, and will specialize in meeting the care needs of women across the province, Victoria is set to appoint a new hospital board," Chief Dr. Teri Trounce, told politicians like NDP cabinet minister Joy MacPhail and Liberal Minister of Community Services.

The local leaders pressed for a new and progressive administration and major changes in how the facility is run, increased funding and staffing for new services, and a commitment for consultation with health unions.

Local chairperson Lisa Ferraro could not attend the MLA meeting. Her leave request was refused by the boss.

Another welcome to more new members

HEU officially welcomes five new locals in March at organizing efforts continue to bring decent wages, safe working conditions and union security to workers in community health services.

Here are the new locals:

- transportation workers at the Queenel and District Community Aid Society, who provide transit services for the handicapped;
- 20 members at Garden Manor, a 29 bed for-profit long-term care facility in Delta;
- 60 members at the Independent Living Housing Association of Greater Victoria, who provide a range of mental health programs and residential services in the Victoria area.

- 28 new members at Winn, a privately-held, government-funded long-term care and adult day care program facility in Surrey;
- 12 members who work for the Lilac Home Support Society.

Union organizers are following up on a number of tips recently passed on by HEU members. Keep them coming!
**WHAT WE'RE UP TO**

deal with in the resolutions include a free trade, job creation, pay equity, child care, and the Kamloops completion project. The Vancouver General local submitted a resolution calling on the CLC to join in the campaign to halt the U.S. economic embargo of Cuba, while the "Evergreen" local submitted a motion calling for increased funding for the CLC's Labour College of Canada. The Guardian will have a full report on the convention next issue.

Labour starts retirees

The B.C. Federation of Labour has a plan to help keep union members plugged to the movement after they retire.

In most unions, once a member retires from the job they retire from the union as well. It means that unions lose the expertise and knowledge of these senior members while the members give up political and social activity that's been an important part of their lives.

So the federation has set up a new organization called B.C. Forum that will sign up retired unionists as members and provide a number of advocacy and consumer services and discounts designed for them.

HEU is well represented on the new organization's board. Alberta Donal, a longtime activist and 12-year Provincial Executive member who retired in 1990, has been appointed to serve on behalf of the union.

Come Share workers

valuable, says ministry, but...

There's some good news and some bad news for HEU's Come Share local members who've been on strike for a fair first contract since late last year.

The good news is that the Ministry of Health acknowledges that adult day care workers play a "crucial role" in providing care for seniors closer to home.

The bad news is that the government values the work, it says it doesn't have the short term financial resources to provide fair wages to the workers.

Cutting the deficit at the expense of pay equity for Come Share workers was the message sent on behalf of health minister Paul Ramsey by a senior bureaucrat in a March 21 letter to the union.

Golden Hospital food service worker Lorna Joy says hospitals talk about total quality management, then give the orders not to press or fold hospital wear like uniforms to save money. Not much quality here, eh?

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**April 30 the deadline for CCERA talks**

HEU and the B.C. Nurses' Union are returning to the bargaining table with employers to resume talks for a new contract to cover health care workers in long-term care facilities covered under the CCERA Standard Collective Agreement.

A working group is meeting April 14 to set the agenda for bargaining, and two weeks have been set aside from April 18 to April 30 to complete a new collective agreement.

The new dates were set March 30 in a meeting between the bargaining committees of BCNU and HEU, and Health Employers' Association of B.C. acting president Gary Moss.

HEU and BCNU are seeking to extend the Employment Security Agreement to union members workers in facilities covered under the CCERA and Pricewater agreements. The existing collective agreement for these workers expired March 31, 1994.

There have been no talks since HEARC negotiators walked away from the bargaining table in December.

HEU and BCNU want to extend the benefits of the Employment Security Agreement to long-term care workers, making sure that the jobs of these workers are protected. Other issues to be discussed are bargaining procedures and issues.

"All health care workers in B.C. should be covered by the terms of the Employment Security Agreement so that it will work effectively," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allemoni.

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**ROYAL SUPPORT** More than 100 trade unionists turned out at a March 28 rally to support members of HEU's Royal City Manor local in their bid to win a first contract at the New Westminster facility.

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**Yarrow vote could set first contract pattern**

HEU members at Yarrow Lodge near Chilliwack are voting at press time on a first contract that emerged from a mediation process through the Labour Relations Board.

Along with Bevan Lodge in Abbotsford, Yarrow was the subject of a report being heard from the LR in December which set ground rules for settling first contracts.

The Yarrow Lodge is still involved in mediation efforts, as are many of the new HEU locals organized in the past year.

It is hoping that the "Yarrow settlement will herald settlements for other locals involved in first contract disputes. One which is still not settled is at the Come Share Adult Day Care Centres in Surrey and White Rock, where 14 HEU members have been on strike since Nov 5 last year. HEU and the employer are meeting under the mediation provisions of the Labour Code.

As well, HEU members at Royal City Manor in New Westminster have fought off efforts by their employer to break their union. HEU activists have been fired, and these actions are the subject of hearings at the LR. Under the pressure of these actions, Royal City Manor has returned to the bargaining table.

More than 100 people attended a rally at Royal City Manor March 28. Speakers from HEU, BCNU, the B.C. Federation of Labour, and the New Westminster Labour Council gave their support to local members, as a chorus of supporting hands sounded from cars passing by. Members from the Steelworkers and Postal Workers unions also added their support.

Meanwhile at Hawthorn Park in Kelowna, union members from across the Okanagan held a support rally at the long-term care facility. The show of support started early in the day March 31 - Health Workers Solidarity Day - when a carload was delivered to each member on the job.

The Hawthorn local returns to bargaining with their hard-nosed U.S.-based employer April 14 and 15.

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allemoni said getting first contracts for new HEU locals is a high priority of the union.
PRESIDENT'S DESK

HEU's upcoming convention must look to the future
by Fred Muzin

THIS month, our locals will be receiving the convention call for our 199th biennial convention, scheduled for Richmond from Oct. 24 to 28. Our union and health care have undergone enormous changes over the past two years. Now it's time to carefully review HEU's constitution and by-laws, and our policies to discuss changes that are needed to prepare for the future.

It's very important that as many members as possible are involved in this dialogue by attending their monthly local meetings and adopting positions for debate at our convention. That's the only way to ensure that our union remains democratic and strong.

Our 50th anniversary session will be our largest ever, with 350 to 500 delegates. This figure has been increasing as a result of new locals that we continue to organize and welcome into HEU. We must review how we determine our number of delegates and consider the cost impact on the union's budget.

The displacement of many of our sisters and brothers because of health care restructuring -- the closure of Shaughnessy being the most dramatic example -- raises the issue of members transferred between facilities, or who are temporarily seconded awaiting permanent placement. Delegates should determine how these people attain eligibility to stand for election to an HEU-office or act as a delegate of the union. The constitution never anticipated New Directions and its impact.

The recently completed Administrative and Staffing Review has been circulated to the locals. It raises important concerns about how HEU is structured and operates on a daily basis. This has evolved over the years. For instance, under the current provincial government, there is a lot more consultation than we ever experienced under the Socrates. The Employment Security Agreement has increased administrative and activation workloads. As our locals become more independent, our constitutional provisions must reflect this new reality.

"It's very important that as many members as possible are involved in this dialogue"

This year will be pivotal in determining our relationship with the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Our convention delegates must be up to date on these negotiations and be prepared to discuss how we continue to be involved in the House of Labour.

The complexity of the responsibilities of our local officers is changing. As a result, the demand for paid leave of absence time to accomplish these duties is stronger. The employer must pay for much of this time. We must make choices regarding any union authorized time, being conscious of our priorities and an acceptable dues formula.

We accomplish a lot of work at an HEU convention, but we also remember to have fun. Our golden anniversary celebration will be very special -- a chance to network with activists from all over B.C., to learn about our history, and to plan for our dynamic future.

SLOW PROCESS That's how HEU activists Chris Dorais and Alison Hutchinson describe their involvement in the interim community health councils.

Shifting into new directions
by Chris Gaimor

Over the past year, HEU members such as Alison Hutchinson in New Westminster and Chris Dorais in North Vancouver have been spending long evenings in steering committees making changes to our health care system.

The steering committees were organized all over B.C. last year under the New Directions in Health initiative to set up Community Health Councils and Regional Health Boards, which will replace hospital and facility boards to run health services.

"For the first little while, it was very frustrating because we didn't have much information about what we were supposed to do," said Hutchinson, who was elected as a consumer representative on the Nelson Area Health and Social Services Planning Council. "The process in Nelson has been complicated by a lack of information about where boundaries were going and what facilities are available, said Hutchinson, a food service worker at Kootenay Lake District Hospital.

"I think the biggest winners out of this process so far have been the consultants," she said. "It felt like a waste of time for a lot of the time, but it is important."

Dorais, a mailroom worker at Kiwassa Lynn Manor in North Vancouver, has been one of the labour representatives on the North Shore Regional Health Steering Committee. He has also found that the process has been slow, but he's been able to raise the concerns of health workers at steering committee meetings.

While health minister Paul Ramsey encouraged health workers to take part in the steering committees, he has decided that we workers will not be eligible to serve on Community Health Councils or Regional Health Boards.

But Ramsey also said that joint union-management committees will be set up as part of the board structures to ensure that service providers have input into decisions.

Dorais said he wants to keep working on his steering committee to see how the union-management committees will work.

"All I see right now is a change in which in charge," Dorais said. "It has been a slow process."

NOTEBOOK

Do as we say, not as we do
by Stephen Howard

When it comes to public sector workers like HEU members earning a decent living, right-wing politicians and business leaders are nothing but hypocrites.

These people have a thing about picking on public employees. They say our pay and benefits are excessive, our sick seniority too rich, and our contract settlements ignore the realities of difficult economic times and the need to be "competitive."

We have it cushy compared to the private sector, they say. We need a strong dose of reality. Like wage cuts, layoffs and "belt-tightening."

"While the private sector is subject to competitive market forces which put realism and discipline into wage demands," a business organization claimed, "few such controls appear to be at work in the public sector."

But recent events have turned these attacks into nothing but hogwash.

First, on the political front, there was a pious Preston Manning, who stamped the country with a hard line restraint message that's gained the Reform Party a lot of support.

But, alas, Preston doesn't practise what he preaches. First came the news of the $31,000 he receives from the Reform Party for perks like clothes, a car and family travel. That's on top of the $15,100 he already gets from the public purse as an MP.

Then more revelations that Reform had fiddled out thousands more to top up his retirement savings plan. Then came news that Manning, who grew rich as an oil industry consultant, had received $10,000 in cash and furniture from his former industry cronies.

But the sorry saga of hypocrisy doesn't stop here. Recent media reports have exposed just how much "realism and discipline" is practised by private sector bosses when it comes to their pay.

But thanks to new provincial government stock market regulations, the pay and perks of the top bosses of companies that trade on the exchanges are now public information.

Take the top boss at Canadian Tire who makes $3.5 million annually -- a sum that would take the average HEU member 152 years of labour to earn. One of his cadillac benefits was a $1 million interest free loan -- worth another $50,000 more.

Closer to home, the boss of a B.C.-based funeral home conglomerate has seen his pay increase by a very disciplined 100 per cent in just two years -- from $435,000 to $860,000.

There's a long list of private sector bosses who've belt tightening their way to big salaries, lavish benefits and lucrative perks -- even at companies that lost money.

Do as we say, not as we do. How greedy can you get?
LABOUR

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD

Liberal budget doesn’t deliver promised jobs

...The Liberal government is not off to a good start, said Canadian Labour Congress president Bob White as the recent federal budget was delivered.

"Instead of living up to the promise it was elected on – to create jobs – this government is increasing poverty by reducing the deficit on the backs of the unemployed.

"Even before it begins consulting on social programs, it forces a massive cut on unemployment insurance,” said White. "And before any negotiations with government workers, a wage freeze is imposed.

"Putting people on social assistance doesn’t create jobs," he said. "Cutting UI benefits greatly outweighs the increased revenue gained from reforms to the tax system.

"The government is taking two steps back and one step forward.”

Beyond the budget rhetoric, White said there’s much deeper and darker meaning for Canadians. In particular:

• The budget sets no job-creation targets. The one-in-five workers who are now unemployed or working part-time because they can’t find full-time work are left on the sidelines.

• The writing is on the wall for the much-touted social policy review. The clear priority on deficit reduction undermines our social programs still further.

• Targeting its own employees with a further wage freeze instead of saving funds through reduced contracting-out shows a distinct lack of collective bargaining.

• Continuing cuts to payments to provinces – for social assistance, hospitals and universities – weakens the federal commitment to these important programs.

• Throwing 10,000 Canadians out of work through cuts to defence spending and base closures will devastate the affected communities with spin-off job losses.

• CALM

Campbell would trash labour code

Novice B.C. Liberal leader Gordon Campbell showed just how far right he’s prepared to lead his party when he announced in March that he would make fundamental changes that would denigrate the province’s labour code. It was a move that was quickly denounced by B.C. Federation of Labour president Ken Georgiades as “ideologically motivated.”

Hackening back to the dark days of Second labour relations, Campbell pledged to make major changes to the new labour code, which was adopted in 1992 by Victoria based on near-unanimous recommendations of a panel that included union and employer representatives.

He promised to eliminate the ban on employers using scabs during labour disputes. He also committed the Liber-

al Party to allowing employers to interfere in union elections by ending the provisions of automatic certification when 55 per cent of workers sign union cards.

Georgiades slammed Campbell for advocating such wholesale changes. “I am absolutely amazed that the leader of the Opposition would have such an ideological agenda already,” he told the media.

“Gordon Campbell is very much in the back pockets of business in B.C.”

Rogers cable battle settled

Working TV program is back on the air

Rogers cable workers in the Lower Mainland are finally back on the job after being locked out in a nine-month fight to fend off sweeping concession demands from one of Canada’s largest and most profitable companies.

The 170 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 213 ratified a new four-year contract in a March 24 vote.

With the dispute settled, the union-sponsored Working TV program is back on the air in the Lower Mainland.

The schedule for May is on the back cover of The Guardian.

"It was a war about jurisdiction, not money,” said union spokesperson and business agent Mike Flynn.

Flynn said the settlement was “a tough pill to swallow for all of us,” but the union managed to hold forth on most key issues like keeping foremen in the bargaining unit and on contracting-out issues.

The deal provides for modest wage increases and a signing bonus, and the scales employed by Rogers during the lockout have been sent packing.

Our union extends our very heartfelt thanks to HEU and its members during their support during our fight,” said Flynn.

Rogers workers in Victoria are still on the picket line, and a settlement in their dispute is complicated by how Rogers will swallow up a competing cable company that will result from the pending Rogers takeover of Maclean-Hunter.

While Flynn’s members enjoyed strong support from HEU and other unions, a Reform Party Member of Parliament showed no sympathy for their plight.

In a compassionate response to a post card in support of the Rogers workers sent by an HEU member, North Vancouver Reform MP Ted White showed just how little he pays cares for working people and their unions.

White accused the HEU member of lobbying on behalf of an "organized group.

He noted that he maintained a "Special Interest Group Log Book" and in McCafferty fashion noted that he "would be making an entry to record the lobbying by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.”

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WINNERS AND LOSERS IN B.C.'S BUDGETS

HEALTH'S SHARE OF TOTAL PROVINCIAL SPENDING IS DOWN 1.2 PER CENT

THE SHARE OF SPENDING ALLOCATED TO HOSPITALS IS DOWN 4.4 PER CENT

THE SHARE OF SPENDING FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH HAS RISEN ABOUT 2 PER CENT

DOCTORS' SHARE OF PROVINCIAL SPENDING HAS RISEN NEARLY 3 PER CENT

At least 1,000 HEU members would face displacement or layoff as a result of this year's provincial budget without the protection of the Employment Security Agreement.

An HEU analysis of NDP finance minister Elizabeth Cull's March 22 budget indicates that the equivalent of 2,000 full-time health workers from all three major health unions could face elimination in the absence of the Employment Security Agreement. About half of those jobs would have been held by HEU members.

That's because the province's hospitals would need at least $100 million more than Cull has allowed to maintain existing services and meet previously negotiated collective agreements. Under the ESA, however, workers facing displacement could be offered early retirement, a comparable job within their region, or other voluntary options.

Hospitals did get a small increase, but it's the smallest in years. The 1.2 per cent-funding increase for hospitals contained in the NDP government's third budget becomes a reduction of more than three per cent when the two per cent increase in inflation and the nearly three per cent increase in population are taken into account.

"Under Social Credit, this kind of budget would have translated into elimination of 1,000 HEU jobs, affecting as many as 3,000 HEU members by the time bumping affected contracts," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

"Much tougher budget cuts are causing chaos in Alberta and elsewhere, but the ESA negotiated by the NDP government, the health unions and health employers ensure that services are transferred to the community sector and workers go with them."

"This budget is a very severe challenge to the health care system, particularly the hospital sector," said Allevato. "It is absolutely essential that hospital administrators sit down with health workers before making any claims about the impact of this budget," she said, adding that co-operation is needed to make the Employment Security Agreement work in health care.

Health minister Paul Ramsey said the small $33 million increase for hospitals represents a continuation of the government's determination to shift services to the community. Ramsey also said an extra $15 million has been allocated to fund more early retirements of health care workers, assisting between 400 and 500 people to take early retirement.

"We will also be working closely with hospitals to find innovative ways to reduce costs through more efficient management and administration, and introducing efficiencies which will not harm direct patient care," Ramsey said.

The minister announced a Closer to Home initiative which will replace traditional hospital services with replacement services such as outpatient clinics, home intravenous programs and home-based palliative care.

The $41.7 million or 3.4 per cent increase to community programs barely keeps pace with inflation after two years in which community programs received very substantial increases.

In defending the 3.3 per cent increase in the $6.4 billion health budget, finance minister Cull said the health boost is significantly higher than those in other provinces.

"For example, Alberta's budget contains a 10 per cent cut in health expenditures," Cull said.

She said money will be saved in B.C.'s new regionalized health structure through more efficient management arrangements that save money on purchasing, administration, payroll and pay for administrators.

"A recent audit identified potential savings of up to $50 million from better hospital purchasing practices alone," Cull said.

Allevato, who said British Columbians want to
HEALTH MINISTER Paul Ramsey takes time out to meet with members of HEU, BCNU and HSA during a March visit to Surrey Memorial Hospital.

Ramsey cracks whip on reform, imposes deadlines

Health minister Paul Ramsey has added tougher deadlines to his government's tight money policy to drive forward health care reform.

In a wide-ranging policy speech March 1 in Richmond, Ramsey announced that boundaries for the province's new regional health boards must be in place by June and the boards themselves in operation by October.

But HEU members can relax. No one with "a pecuniary or professional interest in the health services managed by a community health council or regional health board" will be eligible to serve because of "perceived conflict of interest."

That means that doctors, nurses, administrators, HEU members and many other key players in the health field will be unable to serve on the new governing bodies of B.C.'s health care system.

The decision ignored the unanimous advice of health unions and the labour movement. All argued that a direct role for health workers was vital. Conflict of interest should be handled through guidelines, not a ban on groups of people.

Ramsey announced a series of related measures designed to force the pace of health restructuring. They include:

• release of guidelines setting out the criteria for boundaries;
• population and scope of services for regions and boards;
• a ruling giving regional boards the power to "merge, restructure or redesign administrative and support services;"
• deadlines for the transfer of funds and power to community health councils;
• a March 1995 deadline for the designation of community health councils; and
• a March 1996 deadline for election of some members of community health councils.

Health unions caution NDP on budget

The entire health reform process could be jeopardized, B.C.'s health unions have warned the NDP government, unless Victoria demonstrates that "insufficient funding is being provided to establish quality, public health services in the community sector."

In a wide-ranging brief circulated to senior cabinet ministers in the days before release of the 1994 budget, HEU, the BCNU and HSA reaffirmed their support for the New Directions strategy but warned of serious problems ahead. To maintain public confidence, the unions said, the government should:

• close the gap between downsizing the acute care sector and the establishment of services closer to home;
• establish a watchdog committee including the health unions to monitor and review the downsizing of acute care services with the expansion of community-based alternatives;
• increase ministry support for job sharing and retraining programs;
• review guidelines excluding health care workers from health councils and regional boards; and
• take a much stronger stand against privatization of services.

In separate submissions, HEU and BCNU called on the government to press forward with extension of the Employment Security Agreement to their members in community nursing and in long-term care.
Under Siege

On the dark side of health care reform, Ralph Klein’s agenda threatens to cut 12,000 jobs

by Michelle Elabd

Alberta health care unions are reeling from job losses, wage cuts and contracting out, and they’re fighting to hang on in the wake of massive spending cuts imposed by the Ralph Klein government.

For health care workers in Alberta (in a time of turmoil and uncertainty), unlike B.C., where an employment security agreement protects their counterparts during times of change, Alberta workers don’t know what their futures will hold.

“The emotional stress is incredible,” says Wes Bennett, president of CUPE Local 1055 and a maintenance worker at St. Theresa Hospital in St. Paul, northeast of Edmonton. “People don’t know their future.”

“I’m angry with Mr. Klein,” Bennett says. “If a surgeon would remove an arm he would do it at once, not one finger at a time.”

Armed with a confrontational majority mandate in the June 1993 provincial election, Klein’s Conservatives have fearlessly brought down a three-year deficit elimination plan that on all out assault on the public sector. It’s a page right out of the Reform Party campaign platform.

Close to $900 million will be cut from the health care budget by 1997. Since Jan. 1 $40 million has already been chopped from wages and benefits of health care workers, a five per cent rollback affecting approximately 75,000 employees.

Provincial Labour minister Stockwell Day estimated last fall that 12,000 health care positions will be eliminated by the time the budget is balanced. Initially many unions took a strong stand against the voluntary five per cent rollback requested by Klein last November. But the ultimatum was moot when the premier opted to chop money to institutions instead. It was an adept political move that simply offloaded the cuts directly to municipalities and health and education sector employers. Klein simply stood back and recommended union members accept the five per cent solution in contract negotiations.

In the face of mounting layoffs and more threatened to follow, health care unions began to accept the five per cent wage cut at the bargaining table in an effort to prevent further job losses and win some form of job security.

The Alberta division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) was one union whose members resisted themselves to the five per cent decree in December. Representing 30,000 public employees, among them 8,000 dietitians, housekeepers, janitors and clerks in the health care sector, CUPE accepted the five per cent rollback in exchange for a deal on contracting out services until July 1995.

Ed Hanson, CUPE Alberta division president, says: The compromise has saved more than 4,000 jobs. Locals that did not accept the wage concessions are now battling efforts by institutions to contract out services. A recent casualty, says Hanson, is the loss of 100 hospital housekeeping jobs in Lethbridge to a multinational corporation.

“We have to do what we can to protect what we have. Members continue to be fearful of losing jobs, they’re becoming themselves for what’s ahead.” The imminent regionalization process – consolidating individual hospital boards into regional super boards – is set to be completed by June by comparison, B.C.’s New Directions plan allows three years for the process to be completed to allow for adequate community input and control.

Alberta health care workers are fearful of how regionalization will affect their facilities and their jobs. Media leaks from the Alberta regional health care council have sent shock waves with word of potential hospital closures in Edmonton and Calgary and the conversion of acute treatment hospitals into long-term or psychiatric centres.

“It’s a real attack on health care work-

B.C. EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION IN ACTION

While Alberta health care workers are fighting to save their jobs, B.C. workers have job security.

Here’s the revised tally to March 25 of the Health Labour Adjustment Agency’s efforts to protect health workers from layoffs using the tools created by the Employment Security Agreement, along with corrected figures to Jan. 31.

(Last month’s Guardian tally of workers assisted by the HLA included several errors. The overall conclusion wasn’t far off, but the details were wrong)

- Displaced workers placed in comparable job
- 136
- Workers taking early retirement
- 291
- Workers taking voluntary layoff
- 8
- Workers trained for new jobs
- 16
- Workers placed in jobs outside their current region
- 20
- Shaggyshag workers awaiting placement
- 204
- HEU positions protected through 36-hour week (estimated)
- 213
- Total estimated HEU positions protected
- 430*
- Disbursed by HEU

*Estimated by HEU

"Members continue to be fearful of losing jobs"

FIGHTING BACK Albertans opposed to Klein’s right-wing agenda have organized rallies like this recent Edmonton protest at the provincial legislature.

Elabd is an Edmonton Journalist.
Sweeping changes proposed to protect unorganized workers

by Chris Gaino

Proposed changes at a glance

- minimum wage increased every two years;
- ending the lower minimum wage discrimination against young people;
- expanding the Act to fully cover farm and domestic workers, homeworkers, fishermen and professionals;
- benefits for part time workers;
- provisions for unpaid family and bereavement leave;
- new regulations covering hours of work and overtime.

And Charam Gill, president of the Canadian Farmworkers' Union, said the report is historic. "For the first time in history, farm workers and domestic workers will get parity with other workers."

"For the first time in history farmworkers and domestic workers will get parity with other workers" said escalating penalties for employers who violate the act should be clearly spelled out in new legislation.

HEU sent a brief to Thompson which recommended improvements in the law, including a shorter work week with no loss of pay.

The 1994 pay equity adjustment of $49 a month took effect April 1, 1994, while the 1995 adjustment of $36 a month will be paid out starting April 1, 1995.

The adjustments go to selected benchmark, and in most cases, they do not represent the full adjustment needed to reach the target set in the Job Value Comparison Plan.

Full details on the adjustments for 1994 and 1995 are outlined in a backgrounder sent to locals in late February.

As well, the new pay system set up under Step 2 of the plan is explained in a pamphlet available from locals. Pay Equity, Recognizing the Value of Our Work.
Struggling together against free trade

Unionists from across the hemisphere met in Mexico to map out a plan to save public services like medicare. HEU was there.

by Linda Hargreaves

OVER SIXTY representatives of unions and non-government organizations in North, South and Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean attended a forum in Oaxaca, Mexico, near Mexico City, in March to discuss economic and social changes and common struggles in the new post-NAFTA era. I attended as a delegate from the HEU’s International Solidarity Committee.

One focus of the conference was on assessing the impact of economic restructuring on the public sector. Decisions centered around changes in health care, social services and the increasing burden on women. Many similarities were identified — increased unemployment, more part-time work, cuts in research and education — with the conclusion that reduced government spending on social services was universal.

In Canada we are fortunate to have the strength of unions to battle these problems. Countries such as El Salvador do not allow the public sector to unionize, only associations are permitted.

In the exchange of experiences in negotiating terms of restructuring, our Employment Security Agreement was viewed as a great achievement.

The forum concluded with a declaration which summed up all the discussions and presentations that took place. In this statement delegates agreed that the extension of the neo-liberal economic model through free trade causes systemic violation of human rights, greater exploitation of women, increased unemployment, concentration of wealth, cuts in social spending, and environmental deterioration.

This economic integration process can be viewed as a challenge to build alliances at the sectoral and national level leading to the formation of a continental network to fight for justice.

Friendships and alliances were formed at the conference and this solidarity was particularly evident when, on returning to Mexico City from Oaxaca, our bus ran out of gas in a tunnel. Brothers and sisters from all different countries jumped out and together pulled the bus to a safer location.

The second part of my trip was an exposure tour to the factories — called maquilas — in the free trade zone in Ciudad Juarez on the Mexico-U.S. border. Approximately 130,000 men and women work in the 300 maquilas in Juarez. Many big name corporations are visible — General Motors, Ford, Honeywell, General Electric.

TOXIC SHOCK In Juarez, in northern Mexico, community action shut down this bicycle factory where toxic spills have poisoned the neighbourhood.

The well-maintained exteriors and beautifully landscaped grounds present a deceiving picture of these factories. Inside hundreds of workers labour for 10 hours a day for a wage that translates to about $50 U.S. per week. Overtime is mandatory, food in the cafeteria is often substandard, and health and safety standards are nonexistent. Women make up the largest percentage of the workforce. Juarez has only four government-run day care centres to meet the needs of workers in the maquilas.

Union organizing is very difficult as the workers’ experience is only with the very corrupt company unions which are part of the official pro-government trade union central. Organizers from “illegal” unions often face harassment or arbitrary firings.

Advancements have been made through the efforts of the Athenic Labour Front, an independent union known as the FAT. Most of the organizing has been around environmental issues and the treatment of workers. Organized workers are educating other workers on their labour rights. Workers are learning they can get their demands for bonuses paid or food cooked properly by applying pressure tactics such as slowing down production or taking machines apart.

Our tour concluded a visit to the Presto-Lock factory. This New Jersey-owned company, which makes bicycle locks used by many Canadians, drew worldwide attention when an 80 year-old suffered burns to her feet from the toxic waste running freely in the street outside the factory.

The 57 families in the neighbourhood united with the FAT and through demonstrations, sit-ins, and government pressure were successful in having the factory permanently closed.

The people in the neighbourhood told us many horror stories — women suffering multiple miscarriages, three cases of anorexia, and blood disorders diagnosed in workers. The soil surrounding the factory was proven to be contaminated by cyanide to a depth of one metre. As shocking as these stories were, we still realized the closure of the factory was a tremendous victory for a small group over a large company.

Hargreaves is the Vancouver Island regional vice-president on HEU’s Provincial Executive.
A comprehensive review of health care services on Northern Vancouver Island has given the region's health care providers a better feel for effective reform of community health services.

HEU was represented on the Upper Vancouver Island External Review Team by union staff representative Dave Williams, who endorsed the recommendations of the team's report, which was released March 11 by health minister Paul Ramsey.

A key recommendation of the team, said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato, was the call for measures to evaluate the effectiveness of community services.

"The effectiveness of acute care hospital services is a major concern," she said, "and British Columbians are expecting equally careful use of tax dollars in the community sector."

The public has a right to firm guarantees that the quality and standards of community-based care are at least equal to the acute care setting. That's the only way we can be sure to protect our Medicare system during the shift of resources closer to home," Ramsey quickly pledged to act on a number of review recommendations, including fast-tracking the creation of a regional health board for the North Island. On other issues, like the recommended expansion of long-term care facilities, Ramsey promised to act quickly to identify the necessary funding.

The report urges regionalization in some areas and conversion of some small hospitals to diagnostic and treatment centers.

Reaction to the review team report from HEU locals was mixed.

For Campbell River local secretary-treasurer Heidi McLaren, the review was a "long, cumbersome process," but it provided a good opportunity for community input and helped cement community support for the hospital.

Her facility was badly underfunded last year, McLaren said, and the review's recommendation of additional one-time only funding "will help us meet the shortfall for 1993/94.""The employer was concerned about continuity of care. But we argued that the stress factor from caring for residents in the same facility is so long- long was affecting the quality of care."

One other positive outcome, says McLaren, is that new members have joined the local occupational health and safety committee.

Island review could set effective health reform directions

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HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH &

"British Columbians are expecting careful use of tax dollars in the community sector"

out with their BCNU and HSA counterparts, and deal with the "bitch." She acknowledges that "there going to be hard feelings, no matter what, in certain cases."

One novel recommendation from the review team was the call for a provincial travel tax to recognize the additional travel costs for health care services borne by British Columbians.
Union leaders MacLellan, Hartman pass away

TWO RESPECTED leaders of the Canadian labour movement, Norm MacLellan and Grace Hartman, died recently. MacLellan, a former Canadian Paperworkers Union regional vice-president and an officer of the B.C. Federation of Labour, played a key role in helping HEU reach the 1992 central settlement with the government and health bosses. Born in the Pim in northern Manitoba, MacLellan was a teenager when his family moved to Selkirk in 1932. Soon after, with a family of his own, MacLellan moved to Kitimat to work at Alcan where he apprenticed as a pipefitter. By the time he set off the Woodfibre mill on the Sunshine Coast in 1955, MacLellan was a dedicated trade union activist and socialist. In the pulp and paper industry MacLellan rose quickly to the leadership ranks of the CPU and was elected to the union's top B.C. leadership position in 1989. One key element of MacLellan’s leadership was his desire to make links between the CPU and environmental movement and native and community groups. His commitment to justice for Canada’s First Nations was recognized in a special award from the Nux Chah-Nulth peoples in 1992. His personal battle with cancer forced him to step down from the labour move-

HEU’S FRIEND Norm MacLellan with union secretary-business manager Carmela Alleato in 1992, shortly after he had played a key role in helping HEU win a contract settlement.

HEU’s president Bob White said that before Hartman, public-sector unions were not as active, or growing as much, as other unions in the Canadian labour movement. Her 45-day jail sentence in 1983, for defying an Ontario Supreme Court back-to-work order, was very significant and courageous and a major decision by a public sector union leader to really be part of the labour movement.”

During the Ontario hospital strike at Nova Scotia, Hartman said she would go to jail if she had to because “if we lay down at this point, they will exploit us in ways that we haven’t even thought about.” She also led the fight against federal government wage controls and freezes in the 1970s. “Grace’s greatest achievements are the mails she bailed for women...not with rhetoric or flow charts, but with quiet determination and firm resolve,” said Judy Darcy. “She fought for things like pay equity and affirmative action literally decades before they became mainstream.”

Let them work...but make supper sooner

Fewer than one-quarter of British men believe a woman’s place is in the home. But on the other hand, half of married men do no housework, says a recent report. The British survey of changing roles in the 1980s found that 83 per cent of men believe married women have the right to work. But only two per cent take total responsibility for cooking shopping or laundry, and have been assigned that task to their wives. “It’s tempting to conclude,” says Angela Hughes of the company that conducted the study, “that it may be more of a race of men wanting the financial advantages of a working wife...equality of the sexes.”

Coffee break

Bossses take bonuses after wage cuts forced on workers

Five top bosses at a major U.S. airline must have been laughing all the way to the bank to cash $4 million in bonus cheques shortly after they threatened to close up shop if unionized company workers didn’t agree to $1.2 billion in pay cuts.

The five well-rewarded bosses at Northwest Airlines pulled in more than $5 million in pay and perks. The airline president received a near-

million dollar reward.

As if it’s not enough, the bosses rewarded shares in the company that could be worth more than $500 million.

Needless to say, airline union leaders were steamed.

“Our members saved the airline from its own mismanagement and they end up getting bonuses out of it,” said one angry leader. Another said it was a typical flaw of America’s capitalist system.

9 to 5 is no longer the working norm

Working nine to five, Monday to Friday, is no longer the norm for millions of Canadians, according to a statistics Canada study of work trends. About a million Canadian wage earners toil on Saturdays, half a million on Sundays, and almost three million work shifts.

The survey confirms what many working Canadians already know: irregular schedules are turning work and family responsibilities into a delicate balancing act.

The report also states that 380,000 of the more than 10 million surveyed — about four per cent — are holding down a second job. For one-third of them, “the main reason for moonlighting was to meet regular household expenses.”

False cop blows the cars down

A 31-year-old unemployed man in Wotton, England, has found his hair dryer useful for reducing traffic noise.

His solution: to dress in a dark suit and peaked cap and stand at the curb with his wife’s hair dryer pointing at approaching cars.

Police have issued six warnings to Howard Tyler for impersonating an officer after he became angry at speeding motorists past his house.

“Drivers naturally thought it was a radar gun and slammed on their brakes,” police said. Tyler says, “If a man isn’t free to use his own appliances in the open air, then I call it fascism.”
HEU people

Veteran HEU activist Phil MacLeod takes ESA early retirement

Well known to many union members, Brother Phil MacLeod from the Queen's Park Local in New Westminster has taken early retirement, finishing up at the hospital in February after a long and distinguished career.

His "longstanding commitment and dedication to HEU and the cause of working people has helped create a brighter future for all," said union president Fred Mozin at MacLeod's Feb. 22 retirement party.

During his long union involvement, MacLeod was a Provincial Executive member from 1980 to 1986, as well as serving on numerous

MACLEOD

CASH IT OR EAT IT? Lee Allan's colleagues at Summervale General Hospital presented the recently retired housekeeper with a special retirement cake made like a pension cheque.

Provincial Bargaining Committees. He also held several different local positions, and ran repeatedly for elected office in his community. "I have personally had the privilege of working closely with you," said Mozin, "and your determination to improve justice and dignity for the members has been outstanding."

MacLeod was awarded a special HEU certificate in recognition of his outstanding service.

Housekeeper Marchi calls it quits

Italian Marchi, who began working at Renal Mountain Lodge in Cranbrook in 1982, retired Jan. 10. Marchi says she enjoyed her work and will miss the staff and residents. She plans to "enjoy life and boss her retired husband around."

MARCHI

Bowling, gardening on Hallam’s agenda

Dietary aide Alice Hallam retired from Kamloops’ Pendrell Lodge at the end of February, after 14 years as an HEU member.

The one-time local warden plans to visit her children and grandchildren who live out of town. She’s also set to join a seniors’ bowling league, garden and do more crafts.

Shepherd set to travel

Dietary aide Jean Shepherd retired March 30 after 13 years on the job at St. Mary’s Hospital in Sechelt. Shepherd, who served as local trustee, will be missed by all staff. Her plans include travelling, gardening and home repair.

Jones, Kelly retire at Royal Inland

Dietary aide Ruth Jones and painter Brian Kelly both retired at the end of January at the Kamloops’ hospital.

Jones, who started in 1979, says she wouldn’t have worked at the hospital if it wasn’t for the union benefits. She plans to get back into watercolour painting and take courses at the local college.

Kelly, who started in 1977, plans to travel and fish.

George Derby duo set retirement bliss

LPN Mary Munro and Eria Normars are getting set to call it quits from Burnaby’s George Derby Centre.

Munro, who retires May 31 after nearly four years a regular part timer, says she happy with the prospect of not having to go to work.

First on her list of things to do is return to the Prairies for a school reunion in July. Then she plans to do what she enjoys most: square dancing, crafts and spending time with her family.

Normars, who started at the centre in 1980, has a great sense of humour and will be missed by all staff. She plans to travel to B.C. and Alberta, spend time with her grandchildren and "look for a new man in my life."

GREENHALGH

Queen Alexandra’s Greenhalgh takes early retirement

After 35 years, Queen Alexandra’s Bill Greenhalgh took advantage of the early retirement option in the Employment Security Agreement and retired Jan. 28.

“I enjoyed working at Queen Alexandra, the good time far outweighed the bad,” said Greenhalgh, a cleaner at the Victoria facility.

His retirement plans include garden work, joining a local seniors’ hiking group, and fixing up his trailer and travelling all over Vancouver Island. But first on the agenda, he says, is “to sleep, eat, and then more sleep.”

According to local leaders, Greenhalgh will be missed. He was the one you went to see when you were trying to locate something in storage.

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Puzzle

Unscramble the words to discover what things are the first to go in corporate restructuring, and what stays.

S J B O

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S B I F E E N T

W O C E E S A G

Wait a minute... This box stays!
We're back on the tube!

Cooking for Reform
Video copies of this hilarious Working TV comedy piece by Stephen Hill on health care reform can be borrowed from your HEU regional office.

Right on the money!
A report from the government probe into the Gordon Austin perks scandal confirms The Guardian's charges against the ex-HLRA boss.

First contracts
A ratification vote by Yarrow local members could herald settlements for other new HEU locals.

Tough budget
Victoria's budget is hard on hospitals, but the Employment Security Agreement protects workers.

Under seige
Alberta health workers are under the gun from Ralph Klein's budget balancing reform scheme.