

TOUGH BUDGET

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

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Guardian⁵⁰

VOL 12 NO. 2 THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION APRIL/MAY 1994



ROYAL SUPPORT

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

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ON THE DARK SIDE OF REFORM

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

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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 its second half-century. We are working 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



HEU members will vote on any new affiliation plan

HEU reaffiliated 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 and against privatization, layoffs, contracting-out.

That decision has been proven correct. We're a bigger, strong 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.

services which are available to its affiliated organizations.

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've worked outside the Canadian Labour Congress before and we'll do so again 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 every community take on important leadership roles in the labour movement.

letters

THE GUARDIAN WELCOMES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. PLEASE BE BRIEF. WRITE TO 2006 WEST 10TH AVE., VANCOUVER V6J 4P5.

Thanks, from the Hawthorn local

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

The social held on our behalf in November, 1993 (sponsored by May Bennett local) was a wonderful way of expressing the solidarity within HEU.

We, the membership of Hawthorn Park local, Kelowna, express our gratitude for the support extended to us in our endeavours in obtaining a first contract.

ELAINE PROULX,
chairperson,
Hawthorn Park local,
Kelowna

LPN calls for upgrading programs

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

At Kootenay 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

of the Beginning 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 KLDH to include: glucometer blood testing; IV therapy, discontinuing IVs and Heplocks; troubleshooting IV pumps; changing bags on non-medicated solutions; removing sutures and staples; shortening drains; tube feedings, monitor and run feeds, and remove when 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 Henning 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,
Kootenay Lake local,
Nelson

• LPNs can write to Ramsey and Henning at the following addresses:

Paul Ramsey
Minister of Health
Room 310 – Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Andrea Henning
Provincial Nurse Advisor
Ministry of Health
1515 Blanshard Street
Victoria, B.C. V8W 3C8

Send copies to:

B.C. Council of LPN's
205 – 4430 Halifax Street
Burnaby, B.C.
V5C 5R4

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 Sikh has 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 to the laws, 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 Mota Singh Jheeta, wearing a turban has been mandatory in Sikh religious scriptures since 1699.

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, uncut hair, and the ceremonial dagger.

Guardian

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

EDITOR
Geoff Meggs
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Chris Gairnor,
Stephen Howard
DESKTOP PRODUCTION
Carol Bjarnason
DESIGN CONSULTATION
Kris Klaasen
PRODUCTION & PRINTING
Broadway Printers

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Carmela Allevato
Mary LaPlante
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Vancouver Island

Pam Gidney
First Alternate
Provincial Executive

UNION OFFICES

Provincial Office
2006 West 10th Ave.
Vancouver V6J 4P5
734-3431

Okanagan Office
100, 160 Dougall Rd. S.
Kelowna V1X 3J4
765-8838

Kootenay Office
745 Baker St.
Nelson V1L 4J5
354-4466

Vancouver Island Office
415 Gorge Road East
Victoria V8T 2W1
480-0533

Northern Office
1197 Third Ave.
Prince George V2L 3E4
564-2102

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What we're up to

Yucalta local aids locked out miners

HEU's Yucalta local in Campbell River knows the meaning of solidarity between working people.

The small local recently donated \$500 to help members of the Canadian Auto Workers local 3019 who've been locked out by Westmin

mines, their employer, for almost a year.

With strong support from other unions like HEU, the CAW

members are staying strong and they will last one day more than the company, writes Yucalta local secretary Brenda Pollon.



HEU Yucalta local chairperson Joan Eccles, left, presents a \$500 cheque to Ron Weatherall president of CAW local 3019. The CAW members in Campbell River have been locked out for a year by Westmin Mines in a bid for sweeping concessions.

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 interpretations of the provincial labour code.

HSA'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 reverse an earlier decision to move Kitimat Hospi-

tal's orthopaedic surgery program to Prince Rupert.

The community and HEU Kitimat local members were concerned that the move would be the beginning of the end for acute care services at their hospital. They were fearful that only diagnostic and treatment services would be provided, forcing residents to travel to Terrace 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 orthopedic service in Prince Rupert.

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Outlook hopeful for HEU-CUPE merger talks

by Geoff Meggs

NEGOTIATIONS between HEU and the Canadian Union of Public Employees to guarantee HEU a 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 Muzin, financial secretary Mary LaPlante and Allevato, have been meet-

ing 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 28, that 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 negotiations 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



A PROPOSAL FOR UNITY was a key element of CUPE president Judy Darcy's speech to HEU's 1992 Convention. Recent talks between HEU and CUPE about HEU's affiliation to the national union are progressing well.

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 perceived threats to the union's autonomy and independence. In 1984, 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.

That agreement has been extended several times, but no longer meets 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 Canadian 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 health services and jobs in the course of health care reform.

The Employment Security Agreement negotiated in B.C. by HEU, BCNU and HSA is considered a model contract by unions confronting devastating layoffs and chaos in other provinces.

Convened by the Canadian Union of Public Employees along with the Canada 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 downsize.

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 convened by CUPE includes the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union, the Service Employees International Union, and others, including New York's Local 1199 as an observer.



The Salvation Army is out at Grace Hospital. HEU local leaders Teri Traverse, second from right, and John McKenzie told politicians like NDP cabinet minister Joy MacPhail, left, that the time is right for Victoria to make big changes at the renamed B.C. Women's Hospital.

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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 Hospi-

tal, and will specialize in meeting the care needs of women across the province. Victoria is set to appoint a new hospital board.

So, local HEU members took advantage of this opportunity for change by lobbying Vancouver-area NDP MLAs at a March 11 meeting.

Local leaders Teri Traverse, John McKenzie and Ken Wright had a frank and friendly discus-

sion with the five MLAs, including cabinet ministers Glen Clark, Joy MacPhail and Darlene Marzari.

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 Ida Ferraro could not attend the MLAs

meeting. Her leave request was refused by the boss.

Another welcome to more new members

HEU officially welcome five new locals in March as 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 Quesnel 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 Wintrestle, a privately-operated, government-funded long term care and adult day care program facility in Surrey;
- 12 members who work for the Lillooet Home Support Society.

Union organizers are following up on a number of tips recently passed on by HEU members. Keep them coming!

Union prepared for national labour convention

HEU's 44 delegates to the May Canadian Labour Congress convention in Toronto will go well prepared with a number of convention resolutions calling for action on health care and social issues.

The union's key focus is the attack on quality health care services that's taking place right across Canada. Other issues

Austin charges accurate, probe says

By Stephen Howard

The *Guardian* was right on the mark with its expose of the perks scandal involving ex-health employers 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 levelled in October by *The Guardian* and *The Vancouver 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 chalked 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 police investigations of matters involving other former HLRA officials. These include:

- the severance package of former vice-president Robert Weston;
- computer equipment and consulting fees paid to former director of finance Jo Valasik;
- \$10,000 in undocumented expense payments to Austin authorized by then board chair and current St. Paul's Hospital boss Ron Mulchey.

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's 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 longer-term recommendations, including the implementation of a strategic planning process, remain under review.



WATCH OUT BOSS! These members of HEU, BCNU and HSA 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.

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.

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

dealt with in the resolutions include free trade, job creation, pay equity, child care, and the Kemano 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 group

The B.C. Federation of Labour has a plan to help keep union members plugged in 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 Dorval, 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 "critical role" in providing care for seniors closer to home.

The bad news is that while 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?



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 Moser.

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

There have been no talks since HEABC 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 in bargaining are classification issues and benefits.

"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 Allevato.



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.

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 major ruling from the LRB in December which set ground rules for settling first contracts.

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

HEU 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 LRB.

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 honks 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 carnation 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 Allevato 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 19th 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 550 to 600 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 Socreds. The Employment Security Agreement has increased administrative and activist 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"

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.

This year will be pivotal in determining our relationship with the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Our convention delegates



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

Shifting into new directions

by Chris Gainor

Over the past year, HEU members such as Alison Hutchison in Nelson 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 Hutchison, 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 Hutchison, 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 a lot of the time, but it is important."

Dorais, a maintenance worker at Kiwanis 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 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 who's in charge," Dorais said.

"It has been a slow process."

AFTER



THE SHIFT

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 pensions 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 pious Preston Manning, who's stumped the country with a hard line restraint message that's gained the Reform Party a lot of support.



"There's a long list of private sector bosses who've belt-tightened their way to big salaries"

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 \$115,100 he already gets from the public purse as an MP.

Then more revelations that Reform had forked 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.

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 million annually – a sum that would take the average HEU member 100 years of labour to earn. One of his Cadillac benefits was a \$1 million interest free loan – worth another \$60,000 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 \$425,000 to \$860,000.

There's a long list of private sector bosses who've belt tightened 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 a 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.

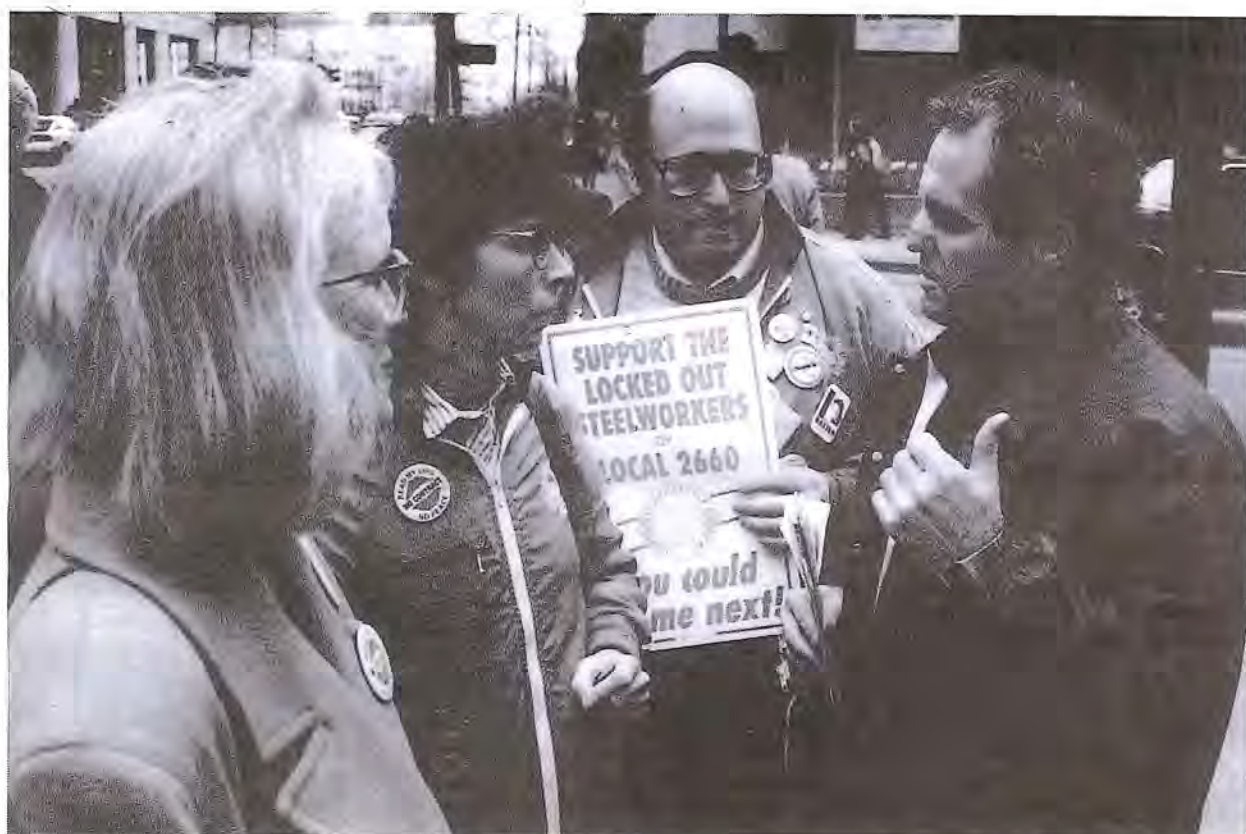
- Targeting its own employees with a further wage freeze instead of saving funds through reduced contracting-out shows a disrespect for collective bargaining.

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

- Throwing 16,000 Canadians out of work through cuts to defence spending and base closures will devastate the affected communities with spin-off job losses.

• CALM

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



SUPPORTING STEELWORKERS HEU members turned out in force at a March rally at the downtown Vancouver office of a Japanese mining conglomerate to condemn its illegal lockout of 614 members of the Steelworkers Union at a Minnesota mine. The com-

pany has committed 20 separate violations of U.S. labour code. B.C. Steelworkers leader Ken Neumann, right, discusses the dispute with HEU Provincial Executive members Fred Muzin, Mary LaPlante and Della McLeod.

Stephen Howard photo

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 destroy the province's labour code.

It was a move that was quickly denounced by B.C. Federation of Labour president Ken Georgetti as "ideologically" motivated.

Harkening back to the dark days of Sordid 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 Liberal Party to allowing employers to interfere in union certifications by ending the provisions of automatic certification when 55 per cent of workers sign union cards.

Georgetti slammed Campbell for advocacy 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 our folks," 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 scabs employed by Rogers during the lockout have been sent packing.

"Our union extends our very heartfelt thanks to HEU and its members for 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 compassionless response to a post card in support of the Rogers workers sent by an HEU member, North Vancouver Reform M.P. Ted White showed just how little his party 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 McCarthyite fashion noted that he "would be making an entry to record the lobbying by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers."



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



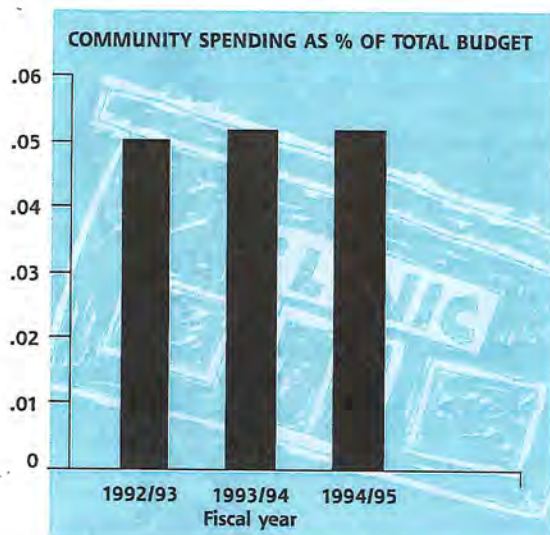
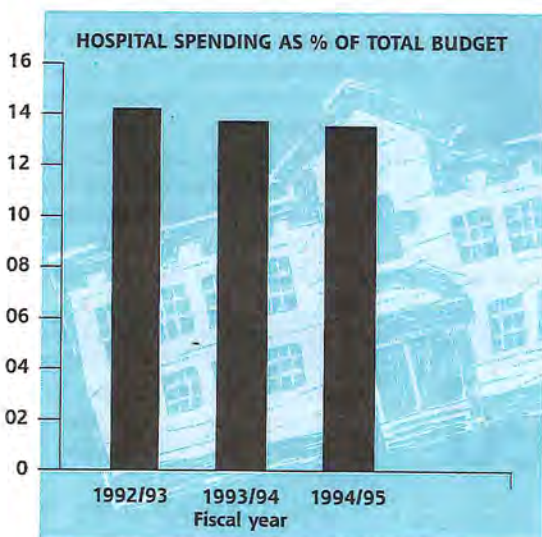
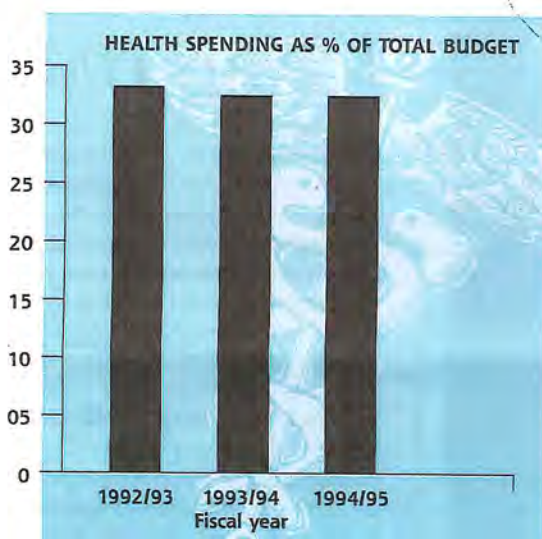
DOCTORS' SHARE OF PROVINCIAL SPENDING HAS RISEN NEARLY 3 PER CENT

A At least 1,000 HEU members would face displacement or lay-off as a result of this year's hard-nosed deficit-cutting 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



1,000 HEU layoffs averted



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 casuals," 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 should 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 be-

fore 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 effective management and administration, and introducing efficiencies which

"This budget is a very strong challenge to the health care system."

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



Finance minister Elizabeth Cull



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.

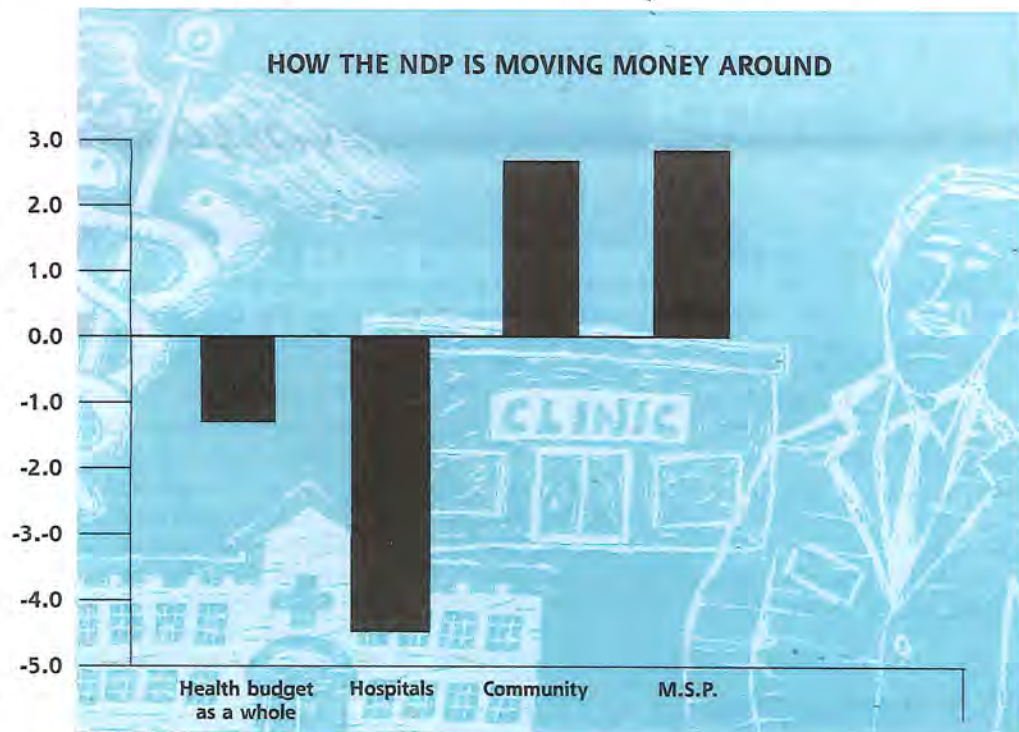
That decision ignored the unanimous advice of health unions and the labour movement. All argued that a direct role for health workers was vital. Conflict of interest should be handled through guidelines, not a ban on groups of people.

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.

The decision ignored the unanimous advice of health unions

by job accord as budget tightens



HEALTH SPENDING IS a declining share of provincial expenditure, down one per cent since 1991. Hospitals have a much sharper cut. Their share of health spending is down more than four per cent, but doctors and community services are getting a larger share.

see services transferred to communities and not see them cut, said the government will have to be more generous with funding for the community sector. And she warned that administrators in the system will have to change their way of thinking if medicare is to be preserved.

"Health care workers are doing their best to keep the system going in tough times," she said. "But administrators have been more interested in cutting the system than reforming it, and that has to change."

The NDP government's tight money policy in health care is tied to its plan to continue to reduce the deficit without increasing taxes this year or next year. From a \$2.4 billion deficit the NDP government inherited two years ago, the deficit has been slashed to \$898 million this year. ■

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 "sufficient 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 manage and co-ordinate downsizing of acute care services with the expansion of community-based alternatives;
- increase ministry support for job sharing and re-training programs;
- revise 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 Michaleen Elabdi

ALBERTA health care unions are reeling from job losses, wage cuts and contracting out, and they're struggling to fight back in the wake of massive spending cuts imposed by the Ralph Klein government.

For health care workers in Alberta it's 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 comfortable majority mandate in the June 1993 provincial election, Klein's Conservatives have fearlessly brought down a three-year deficit elimination plan that's an 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 resigned 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 ban 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 bracing 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 active treatment hospitals into long-term or psychiatric centres.

"It's a real attack on health care work-

"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.

ers," says Hanson. "Regionalization will force workers to move from one institution to another, close hospitals and centralize laundry, lab and food services."

As administrators attempt to get the best bang for their labour dollar, interesting new wrinkles are appearing in job descriptions. At Wes Bennett's local, where 10 per cent of full time positions have been eliminated, the boss is demanding a new job classification for the St. Theresa housekeepers. It will require them to do housekeeping tasks and perform nursing duties such as answering patient call bells, lifting and feeding patients.

The scheme has alarmed local members and prompted the United Nurses of Alberta to publicly denounce the proposal as unsafe.

CUPE's Hanson says the Alberta deficit slashing experiment is being closely watched by CUPE divisions throughout Canada.

"It's a test case for the right wing that could filter across to other provinces."

But Hanson is hopeful that union vigilance to awaken the public to the devastating nature of the cuts will turn back the tide of deficit-cutting hysteria by the time Albertans return to the polls.

"We have to struggle on to stop the Ku Klux Klein reign of government privatization and get Ralph to blink."

•Elabdi is an Edmonton journalist.

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 layoff 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 HLAA included several errors. The overall conclusion wasn't far off, but the details were wrong.)

HLAA activity since August 1993	to Jan. 31	to March 25
• Displaced workers placed in comparable job	136	203
• Workers taking early retirement	291	291
• Workers taking voluntary layoff	8	20
• Workers trained for new jobs		16
• Workers placed in jobs outside their current region		20
• Shaughnessy workers awaiting placement	294	213
• HEU positions protected through 36-hour week (estimated)		430*
• Total estimated HEU positions protected		700-900*

*Estimated by HEU.

Sweeping changes proposed to protect unorganized workers

by Chris Gainer

A one-member commission appointed by the NDP government has proposed

sweeping changes to the Employment Standards Act, including expansion of coverage to farmworkers, domestic

workers, homeworkers, fishers and professionals.

The report, by University of B.C. professor Mark Thompson, contains many improvements to the law that protects unorganized workers that reflect suggestions made by organized labour, including HEU.

Although labour minister Dan Miller said the Employment Standards Act will not be changed until next year's sitting of the legislature, many changes recommended by Thompson will be made this year through changes in the law's regulations.

Thompson said the minimum wage should be adjusted every two years on the recommendation of a committee representing unions, business and government. The lower minimum wage for young workers should be abolished.

Five days unpaid family leave and three days unpaid bereavement leave should be included in a new Act, Thompson said, and part time workers should get the same benefits as full time employees on a prorated basis.

New hours of work provisions should allow compressed work weeks, and banking of overtime when both the employer and employees agree.

Thompson's report is the first comprehensive review of Employment Standards in B.C. in 20 years.

The Act affects unionized workers in areas not covered by individual collective agreements.

B.C. Federation of Labour president Ken Georgetti said he was astonished by the hostile reaction of business leaders to what he called modest and overdue changes.

"Do these business people have any idea what it's like for workers to try to survive on \$6 an hour?" Georgetti said. "To raise a family on \$48 a day?"

He said Thompson did not adequately address the issue of enforcing employment standards in the workplace, noting that the Employment Standards Branch is overworked dealing with 19,000 complaints a year.

Crisanta Sampang, coordinator of the West Coast Domestic Workers Association, said she is pleased many of the recommendations domestic workers made to Thompson are included in his report.

Proposed changes at a glance

Here are some of the key recommendations from the first review of the B.C.'s Employment Standards Act in 20 years.

- 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, fishers and professionals;

- benefits for part time workers;

- provisions for unpaid family and bereavement leave;

- new regulations covering hours of work and overtime.

And Charan 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."

Gill said he was very concerned that the farm labour contract system, which he called "evil," is not being eliminated.

Miche Hill of Women for Better Wages

"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 to the law, including a shorter work week with no loss of pay.



Penticton's Burgess wins convention logo contest

The union's 50th anniversary logo contest has been won by Penticton local chairperson Susan Burgess, whose hearts of gold design was chosen from among 45 entries submitted by 21 union members from across the province.

Burgess' design, which appears above, will be used specifically for the upcoming HEU convention and will be featured on a special lapel pin, on the convention banner and stationary, and other related material.

The successful design was selected by the Provincial Executive, which publicized the contest earlier this year.

Submissions from Nisha Buksh, (Vancouver General local) and Trish McLean, (St. Paul's) were also shortlisted by a special subcommittee.

Burgess will soon receive her prize —

an HEU sweatshirt — while all members submitting designs will receive the special convention pin.

Union president Fred Muzin also thanked the other members who entered the contest. They are Michael Arnison (Arbutus), Brian Bradley (Beacon Hill Villa), Minnie Dennis (Penticton), Kathy Dinning (Evergreen), Colleen Eyjolfson (Terrace), Victor Garcia (Cancer Control), Mary Lee Jetko (Mount St. Mary's), Berniece Kelf (Summerland), Roger Kishi (St. Paul's), Beverly Kreller (Hope), Wendy Lawton (Cranbrook), Heather MacLaren (Jackman Manor), Michael Madrone (Vancouver General), Leslie Madunic (Shaughnessy-George Derby), Terry Perks (Mount Tolmie), Milagros Ong, Ken Priess (Kamloops), and Michael Treherne (Royal Arch).

Future pay equity boosts set in ruling

Pay equity adjustments for 1994 and 1995 have been decided after a set of rulings from arbitrator Stephen Kelleher set out who should receive the adjustments.

Kelleher's rulings, which were made under Step 6 of the Job Value Comparison Plan in Article 69 of the Master

Collective Agreement, said that 1994 and 1995 adjustments should be paid to HEU members with a wage gap of 10 per cent or more.

The wage gap is the difference between members' current wage rate and their target under the pay system set up in December, 1993, under Step 5 of the plan.

Kelleher ruled that the bottom step for remaining jobs with three increment steps will be eliminated on April 1, 1994.

Kelleher rejected HEU's demand that 1996 and 1997 wage adjustments implement the balance of the pay system. Instead, Kelleher said, "Adjustments in

1996 and 1997 beyond one per cent (of payroll) will have to be achieved at the bargaining table."

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato said the 1994 and 1995 pay equity adjustments are a step on the road to pay equity, but a great deal of work must still be done.

"Pay equity will be a major issue when we return to the bargaining table in 1996," Allevato said.

"The rankings in the pay system are the employer's rankings, not HEU's rankings.

"We also still have to fight for a gender neutral base rate and an industry wide wage adjustment," she added.

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 benchmarks, 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 Background sent to locals in late February. As well, the new pay system set up under Step 5 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 Oaxtapec, 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. Discussions 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 summarized 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 Oaxtapec, 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 cafeterias 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 "unofficial unions" often face blacklisting or arbitrary firings.

Advancements have been made through the efforts of the Authentic 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



BUILDING ALLIANCES HEU's Hargreaves, at left, at the conference with Eunice Jimenez from El Salvador's health ministry workers association, and Vancouver's Kim Bolan from the Newspaper Guild.

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 eight year old suffered burns to her feet from the toxic waste running freely in the street outside the factory.

The 67 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 anencephaly, 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.

BALANCING IT ALL

The shiftworker: We're different!

by Barb Burke

As shiftworkers, we are a completely different group from day workers. We think and live differently, and the lifestyles we are forced to live means we get little sleep or exercise, and we eat poorly. Add home and family obligations and union activity on to this — how can we possibly be healthy?

First of all, let's examine our sleep patterns. Proper rest is the key.

There are four sleep phases. One and two are drifting or dozing. Here we appear to all the world to be asleep, but heaven help the person who changes our TV channel — we instantly snap to attention.

Phase three is a gear-down sleep, to help us achieve phase four, the core sleep, when we get our true rest.

Core sleep — about 3.5 to four hours in length — is where healing and growth happen. Our systems slow down completely to allow our bodies to rejuvenate. Not achieving core sleep makes us feel exhausted and ill.

Our bodies then begin a slow process of gearing up back through phases three, two and one.

For shiftworkers, no matter how hard we try we cannot achieve proper sleep patterns because our systems work against us.

The body's temperature begins to drop about 10:30 p.m. and doesn't rise again until 4 a.m. As our body temperature falls, our systems slow down to get ready for cell rejuvenation. We lose visual, short term memory and motor cortex senses. If we are at work when this happens our chances of injury increase. It is simply not biologically possible for us to perform with the same alertness as our day worker colleagues.

As shiftworkers, we need to take more responsibility in how we look after ourselves and make better choices to ensure we stay healthy.

• A shiftworker, Burke is HEU's Okanagan regional vice president.



CAMPAIGN ACTION
The Simon Fraser Lodge local is using this sticker to highlight their workload overload efforts.

Workload campaign brings victories

HEU's campaign to win action on workload overload has racked up a string of victories at the 16 facilities participating in the first phase.

"It's been inspiring and exciting to hear about the successes the first group of locals have achieved in just two months since the campaign began," said Karen Dean, the union's director of education.

Each year thousands of HEU members are affected by workload-related problems through physical injury, mental fatigue and stress. Workload overload is one of the key factors that make health care facilities the most dangerous workplaces in B.C. according to the Workers' Compensation Board.

That's why the union's Provincial Executive approved the campaign.

While the 16 locals that started phase one of the campaign continue with their efforts, 16 additional locals from across the province have started mapping out achievable solutions to targeted problems in their facilities.

"The beauty of this campaign is that it's really simple," says Dean. "Small problems are easier to solve and mem-

bers are enthusiastic to participate because it's connected right to their workplace.

"When we win — and we have been — it also gives local members a lot of momentum."

In Victoria, Deb Hill's Gorge Road local won two victories at their facility even before the last issue of *The Guardian*, in which her local's campaign was featured, came off the press.

First they succeeded in getting their employer to approve the \$7,000 purchase of a mechanical lift for one extended care floor that will make caring for their residents both safer and easier.

They also succeeded in reducing the rotation schedule from six months in one section to just one month.

The old schedule was "strenuous and absolutely horrible," Hills said.

"The employer was concerned about continuity of care. But we argued that the stress factor from caring for residents in the same section for so long was affecting the quality of care."

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

HEALTH &



SAFETY

Island review could set effective health reform directions

A comprehensive review of health care services on Northern Vancouver Island has given the region's health care providers a blueprint 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 review 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 carefully analyzed," 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 act quickly to identify the necessary funding.

The report urges reorganization in some areas and conversion of some small hospitals to diagnostic and treatment centres.

Reaction to the review team's 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."

Alert Bay local leader Lianne Granger said the recommendation to change their small hospital into a diagnostic and treatment centre was not being well received in her community. For Island residents, the closure of the six acute care beds mean a ferry trip to Port McNeil for hospital services, she said.

To offset the closures, the review recommended two additional long-term care beds be added to the eight now at the facility, which should preserve the jobs of HEU members.

In Courtenay-Comox, "a lot of people are discouraged," by the review's final report says Halle MacMullen, vice-chairperson of the Comox local.

After some initial conflict with their employer over the campaign sticker workers were wearing on the job, things are moving ahead at Simon Fraser Lodge in Prince George, says local chairperson Cyndi Stephens.

The local's target problem is the laundry, where understaffing means there's always a two week backlog of dirty linen — and a horrible odour.

Stephens and her local campaign crew are talking with the boss about how a modest increase in laundry room hours would solve the problem.

They've also shown him other ways to cut waste too.

Buying a heavy duty commercial laundry machine for jobs that didn't have to be done in their 50-pound monster would be much more efficient in terms of time and money, Stephens said.

Results from other locals have also been encouraging:

- The Kiwanis Lynn local in North Vancouver has made headway on their laundry workload problem;

- Surrey Memorial's campaign succeeded in winning the extension of three part time positions to three full time positions for the extended care unit bath teams;

- Kelowna General local won full sick leave and vacation staff replacement plus a new part time position in their laundry.

- The Willowhaven local succeed in getting three casuals hired to improve patient care at their Nelson long-term care facility.

- The Lions Gate local in North Vancouver gained additional casual staff in their kitchen. Unfortunately, shortly after a snap decision was made at the top administrative level to close down the entire kitchen facility in favour of a chill and serve food service deal with Burnaby.

There will be an update on the locals participating in phase two of the campaign in the next issue of *The Guardian*, while 16 more locals quick off phase three of the campaign in early May.

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

with their BCNU and HSA counterparts to deal with the fallout, she acknowledges that "there's going to be hard feelings, no matter what, in certain centres."

One novel recommendation from the review team was the call for a provincial tax credit to recognize the additional travel costs for health care services borne by British Columbians.

APRIL 25/26

HEU table officers meeting, Northern region, Prince George.

APRIL 25 - 28

HEU introductory shop stewards course, Kootenay region, Cranbrook.

APRIL 28

Day of mourning to commemorate workers killed and injured on the job, organized by the Canadian Labour Congress.

APRIL 28/29

HEU table officers meeting, Northern region, Prince Rupert.

MAY 1

May Day, the international workers' holiday.

MAY 4/5

HEU table officers meeting, Kootenay region, Castlegar.

MAY 10/11

HEU table officers meeting, Kootenay region, Cranbrook.

MAY 16 - 20

Canadian Labour Congress convention, Toronto.

MAY 29 - JUNE 7

HEU Summer School, Vancouver (two sessions).

June 18 - 22

B.C. Federation of Labour Women's Summer Institute, Vancouver.

OCTOBER 23 - 28

HEU convention and 50th anniversary celebration, Richmond Inn.



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

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 contract settlement with the government and health bosses.

Born in The Pas in northern Manitoba, MacLellan was a teenager when his family moved to Kelowna in 1952. 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 they set off for the Woodfibre mill on the Sunshine Coast in 1965, 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 environment movement and native and community groups. His commitment to justice for Canada's First Nations was recognized in a special award from the Nuu Chah Nulth peoples in 1992.

His personal battle with cancer forced him to step down from the labour move-



HARTMAN

ment in 1992. He died in March at age 55, survived by his wife Marg, daughters Lori and Diana and four grandchildren.

"Norm was committed to the needs of working people and dedicated to a progressive agenda for social change," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato. "We will miss him."

Grace Hartman, a former national president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, was a true labour pioneer. As a clerk-typist for the township of North York in the mid-fifties, she was outraged over workplace discrimination against women. It sparked an interest in unions that led to a 30-year career as a labour activist, 16 of those as president of the country's largest union.

"Because of her, thousands of working women began to believe they could make a difference," said CUPE president Judy Darcy when Grace Hartman died in December at the age of 75.

CLC 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 1981, 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," said White.

During the Ontario hospital strike for more pay and bargaining rights Hartman said she would go to jail if she had to because, "if we lie 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 trails she blazed for women...not with rhetoric or fiery speeches, 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."

Coffee break



All stories guaranteed factual.
Sources this issue: CALM,
Globe and Mail.

Bosses 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 that's not enough, the bosses received 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 360,000 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 Ilkeston, 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 speeders roaring 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."

Let them work...but make supper too

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 1990s 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 half leave all such tasks 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 case of men wanting the financial advantages of a working wife than...equality of the sexes."

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.

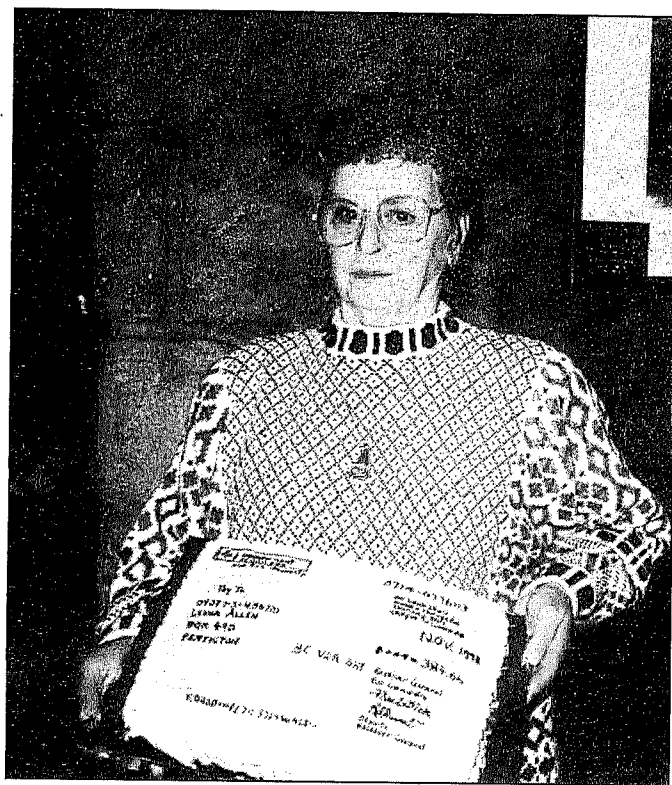
His "longstanding commitment and dedication to HEU and the cause of working



MACLEOD

people has helped create a brighter future for all," said union president Fred Muzin 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



CASH IT OR EAT IT? Lee Allan's colleagues at Summerland General Hospital presented the recently retired housekeeper with a special retirement cake iced 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 Muzin, "and your determination to improve justice and dignity for the membership has been outstanding."

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

Housekeeper Marchi calls it quits

Italia Marchi, who began working at Rocky 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' Ponderosa 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 was not for the union benefits." She plans to get back into oil and water colour painting and to take courses at the local college.

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

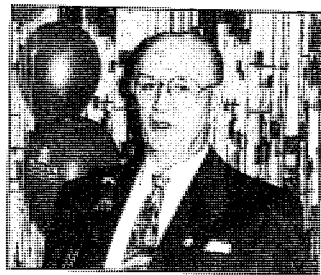
George Derby duo seek retirement bliss

LPNs Mary Muntean and Ena Norman are getting set to call it quits from Burnaby's George Derby Centre.

Muntean, 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.

Norman, who started at the centre in 1985, has a great sense of humour and will be missed by staff. She plans to travel 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 local'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 outnumbered 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.

PUZZLE

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

S J B O

S E A G W

S B I F E E N T

N O B B I U S S E G

W O C E E S A G



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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.



PAGE 4

First contracts

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



PAGE 5

Tough budget

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



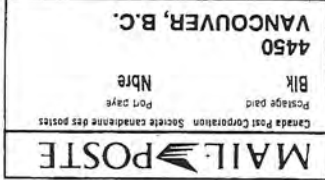
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Under seige

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



PAGE 10



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The Guardian
2006 West 10th Ave.
Vancouver, B.C.
V6J 4P5