

Hospital Guardian

Local 180

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' FEDER. L UNION

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PUBLISHERS NEWSLETTER

Wage Freeze Makes Hospital Workers Burn.

The smouldering embers of discontent and anger among the hospital workers of B.C. because of the wage freeze order of the Provincial Minister of Health, Honourable Eric Martin, are fast developing into the proportions of a conflagration.

This is understandable when one considers that the hospital wages are frozen to the 1955 level while all around us other groups, including the members of the Legislature, are receiving increases.

Many workers are leaving the hospitals for positions paying better wages thus creating shortages of staff which are detrimental to efficiency of service and the interests of the patients. The added burdens caused by these staff shortages are, in their turn, creating further dissatisfaction.

Those employees who are not able to move because of considerations of family, home or debt are not going to take it sitting down. This is evidenced by the increasing attendance at membership meetings, by the stronger tones of directives from the Hospital Employees' Union, by the pamphlet issued by Local 180 for distribution among the Legislative members and by the letters appearing in the local newspapers.

The hospital workers are going to utilize many more avenues of expression as their anger becomes less containable and we know that we shall find many allies to rally to our cause.

Press & Education Committee
E.R. Thomas, Chairman.

V.G.H. UNIT REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS - 3rd WEDNESDAY EACH MONTH.

In conjunction with this issue of the Guardian, and in conjunction with the B.C. Federation of Labour sponsored Political Education Seminar being convened in Victoria on the 10th, 11th and 12th of March, your Union has produced a Legislative Bulletin which has outlined clearly, for all trade unionists attending the seminar and for all members of the Legislature, our position on the Government's various freeze orders.

We are exposing, and we will continue to expose, the brutal, ruthless, anti-labour practices being pursued by the Minister of Health and Welfare. We are objecting to the work load that is being forced on our people. Mr. Martin and Mr. Cox, his able assistant, are believers in the totalitarian philosophy of perpetuating the big lie. Using the Premier's own language, we are getting tired of the "carping criticism" being aimed at hospital workers by the Honourable Minister of Health and Welfare.

As a proper trade union, we are prepared to fight for our rights, as we know that right is on our side. But we are not unmindful that other groups who are supposed to have an interest in hospital employees, like the Registered Nurses' Association, the Operating Engineers and the B.C. Hospital Association, have crawled away into the bushes. They are conspicuous by their absence.

If the B.C.hospitals do not like the "tight money" policy of the Government, if they dislike being the unpaid watchdogs, administering Mr. Martin's directives, with no autonomy, let them do something now, because we serve warning that we are not buying the old story of inability to pay. Let's close our ranks, tighten our policy. There are many procedures that are still at our disposal, and we won't fail to use them.

To our members, and particularly those who live in Burrard who are employed at V.G.H., remember that Eric Martin, the Honourable Minister, and Bert Price are the men representing the Burrard constituency. While they are carping about hospital workers being the best paid in Canada, let us not forget, they are the best paid members of the Legislature in Canada, and we make a substantial contribution to their salaries. If you don't like what the members of the Legislature are doing, let's tell them. What is good for the goose is good for the gander.

DO UNTO OTHERS ...

Operating Engineers dug down last month for \$2219 and provided another chest respirator for the polio pavilion at the Pearson hospital.

Engineer's President Charles Wren said: "We were told that the Polio Fund was doing a tremendous job and when the proposition was brought before a general meeting, it was passed without a dissenting vote."

The fact that the new respirator is portable means that polio patients will be able to get home for the week-ends, a real boost to morale.

CLC BOARD MEETS.

The first meeting of the Canadian Labor Congress' general board - with representatives of all affiliated unions - will be held in Montreal May 1 to 3.

Top issues on the agenda are automation and extension of union organization across Canada.

RECREATION INSTITUTE

Vancouver and District Labor Council has been invited to send 25 delegates to an Institute on Recreation to be held the evening of March 22 and throughout the day of March 23 at the Vancouver YWCA.

MARCH REGULAR MEETING

Vancouver General Hospital Unit

Wednesday, March 20th
at 8 p.m.

Labor Temple, 307 W. Broadway

Please try to attend.

Members will please note that the day of the regular meeting of the V.G.H. Unit has been changed to the third Wednesday of each month.

DISTRICT COUNCILS.

Officers of the District Councils of the Hospital Employees' Union are:

Kootenays - Chairman, R. Cole, Vice-Chairman S. Wakaluk, Secretary Mrs. J. Muir, Provincial Executive representative Mrs. Mary Booth.

Okanagan - Chairman and Executive representative R. Socquet, Vice-Chairman A. Tetz, Secretary Jean Schneider.

Lower Mainland - Chairman Hector Carden, Vice-Chairman Tony Burrell, Secretary Bill McCulloch, Executive representative Les Moore.

Vancouver Island - Chairman and Executive representative L. Woodthorpe, Vice-Chairman C. Collins, Secretary Jessie Lessard.

EVERYONE CAN SPEAK.

At the last general meeting of the Vancouver General Hospital Unit held on Thursday, February 28, it was decided to change the regular meeting night to the third Wednesday of each month.

It is hoped that some of our members, who have had commitments which made it inconvenient or impossible to attend on Tuesdays, will take advantage of the change of day to come out and take an interest in Union affairs. Perhaps we will see a few new faces and hear a few new voices.

At the same meeting copies of the revised constitution and by-laws were handed out. The rules of order are on page 20 and 21. Special attention should be given to paragraphs 2, 4 and 9.

If these rules were carefully kept by all members they might not be so reluctant to come out and speak out.

One of the main factors tending to keep the membership passive and inarticulate is lack of experience in speaking. Just because they haven't spoken they think they can't speak.

This is not really so. Every member who does speak knows that the first time they took the floor their knees went weak, the voice faded to a whisper and came out as a few disjointed words that barely hinted at the torrent of thought they had intended.

The only remedy is to take the floor at every opportunity to make an attempt to put your own thoughts into words. It means keeping your mind on business

as it comes and giving thought to each item.

It means finding words for your thoughts on the spot.

If you practice getting on your feet and saying "I think this is a good idea, I support the motion". or "I don't think this is a good idea, it will hurt someone, or be difficult to put into practice". When the ideas or motions are fairly unimportant then when the big issue comes up you will be able to stand up and speak.

Jean Robertson.

SALMONELLOSIS COVERED.

Hospital workers and researchers who contract salmonellosis, an acute inflammation of the intestinal tract, are now eligible for compensation.

Hospital Guardian Deadline.

First Wednesday of each month.
(all submissions welcome).

POLITICAL ACTION.

B. C. Federation of Labour.

A political action drive has been launched by the B.C. Federation of Labour with a Political Education Workshop on March 10th, 11th and 12th which was attended by 100 union leaders. This was the first of a series of such workshops which are planned for the near future.

The Workshop discussed government structure and legislature and the need for party politics with an expert from the U.B.C.'s department of political science and economics, Professor Dave Corbett.

Representatives of the Social Credit, C.C.F. and Liberal members of the B.C. Legislature were invited to give one hour talks.

Vancouver Labour Council.

The possibility of an alliance with ratepayer groups to oppose the Non-Partisan Association in civic politics is being studied by the Vancouver Labour Council.

Bill Black, who is chairman of the Council's political education Committee, is requesting that city unions seek for prospective candidates among their membership.

Bill says that a full scale campaign is planned for the next election and that all members who expect to run must be sure that they qualify in respect to property holdings at least six months prior to the first day of the month in which such elections are to be held.

FAIR EMPLOYMENT THEME OF INSTITUTE.

The seventh annual labor institute on race relations will be held at the Y.M.C.A. Central at 955 Burrard St. on Sunday, March 31st, under the co-sponsorship of the Vancouver Labour Council and the B. C. Federation of Labour.

Knute Buttedahl, executive secretary of the Vancouver Labour Committee for Human Rights said: "Because of the recent enactment of anti-discrimination legislation in B.C., which will affect

trade union members, the theme this year will be 'Our Fair Employment Practices Act'.

All unions in British Columbia have been asked to participate and delegates and observers should register as early as possible with the Labour Committee for Human Rights, 113 Shelly Bldg.

The institute will get under way at 9:30 a.m. The program includes many top-notch speakers.

LOWER MAINLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL.

By now you will all have heard the minutes of the first meeting of the Lower Mainland District Council read at your Unit meetings but, as a delegate, I feel that a brief report from me is in order.

Brother W.M. Black, Business Manager, opened the meeting and the following are the highlights of the discussion which followed.

It was recommended that Unit executives should meet prior to Unit meetings so as to prepare recommendations and other items for consideration by the membership and also that all Unit meetings adjourn no later than 10 pm.

It was also recommended that Shop Stewards be established as soon as possible as a vital part of our organization and we felt, too, that Unemployment Insurance should be negotiated at the bargaining table where the Unit so desired it.

The names of the officers who were elected are reported elsewhere in the Hospital Guardian.

Fraternally,
G.W. McCulloch,
Secretary.

Co-operation would solve many problems; even freckles would make a good tan if they'd just get together.

WHEN YOU CAN'T PAY YOUR BILLS

When you can't pay your bills, remember this:

Your creditors will not worry as long as you let them know that you mean to pay them when you can.

If you can send them a dollar or two apiece, do it. In any case, write them a note or call them up and tell them: "I'm having a little trouble this month."

If you're so far behind you don't know when you can pay them maybe that's the time for a credit union loan.

Talk it over with the Treasurer whom you will find in the Credit Union Building, 96 East Broadway.

"Women are like TV sets. They usually come with a beautiful chassis; the upkeep is often greater than the initial cost; they are at times entertaining, instructive and annoying. Sometimes when they are not performing properly we are tempted to trade them in on a new model. Once we are captivated by them there is no escape."

"Hmm," said the doctor.
"Your temperature is 103."
"Great, Doc," replied the athlete weakly. "What's the world record?"

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BOARD.

Because of the alarming increase of rejected claims organized labour in B.C. is turning the spotlight of its attention on the actions of the Workmen's Compensation Board.

It is said that hundreds of justifiable claims are being thrown out because of unrealistic interpretations of the Workmen's Compensation Act by the Board. Claims are usually rejected on the grounds of insufficient proof of accident and the workers have not been able to appeal such decisions.

A 12-page brief, prepared by the B.C. Federation of Labour and the Vancouver Labour Council, was presented to the W.C.B. on March 6th by a team of 50 B.C. labour leaders.

The brief accused the Board of threatening to wreck the compensation system with a too rigid outlook and an obsession with "proof of accident". It pointed out that the legislature never intended that a disabled workman should have to furnish incontrovertible proof that he had suffered an accident and it stated that the Board is not, as workmen are driven to believe, appointed to deprive a workman of compensation because it can discover reasons for rejection on technical grounds.

The brief explained that an examination of the appropriate legislation reveals that it is the injuries, with the subsequent reduced earning power and costs, which are being compensated for and not the accident and it went on to suggest that letters of rejection should have one aim in mind, namely, to point out to a workman why he has failed to establish his right to compensation and how, if possible, he can establish that right.

Bill Black, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour and Lloyd Whalen, President of the Vancouver Labour Council, were joint chairmen of the committee presenting the brief.

If immediate action is not forthcoming a "mass trek" to Victoria will be considered.

Doctor: "And how is your patient doing?"

Nurse: "He's made wonderful progress, we're getting married soon."

Doctor: "Do you have bouts of giddiness?"

Patient: "Goodness me, no, I'm a respectable married woman".

OUR TEAM MUST WIN

While the Provincial Cabinet votes for salary boosts for its members to the amount of \$180,000, hospital employees are told that their wages are still frozen and they must continue to struggle along on an income below the level of decent living standards. We are still being forced to subsidize the hospital scheme which is enjoyed by ALL of the people in B.C.

We know that the money is available because the Government is continually boasting of its "prosperity" and "surplus", and the increased spending made possible by the substantial wage gains won by the rest of B.C. labour as well as the growth of population has resulted in a great increase in the amount of tax payments into the B.C. H.I.S. fund which amounted to \$178 million in 1956.

In 1957-58 hospital workers are also going to demand substantial wage increases and are no longer going to beg for pittances as in the past, but before we can be sure of winning our demands, we must close our ranks. We must resolve not to leave all the responsibility on the shoulders of our officers and committees.

We must all take a more intense interest in our organization, attend meetings, take part in discussions and decisions. We must learn to act as an organized body, not as a conglomeration of individuals playing follow the leader and then grumbling because we don't get what we want.

We cannot rely entirely on collective bargaining with hospital boards who no longer have autonomy in the operation of hospitals. We have to mobilize our full strength to pressure the Government into giving fair consideration to our problems and forget any petty differences we may have with each other.

We must let the public know our plight and we must begin to take an interest in economic and political action from the viewpoint of Labour.

We have 3000 members in our Union and with the co-operation of other labour groups, we can influence a broad section of the public.

We are performing a useful and essential service to the Province of British Columbia and it is time that we demand our just rewards.

Eric Thomas.