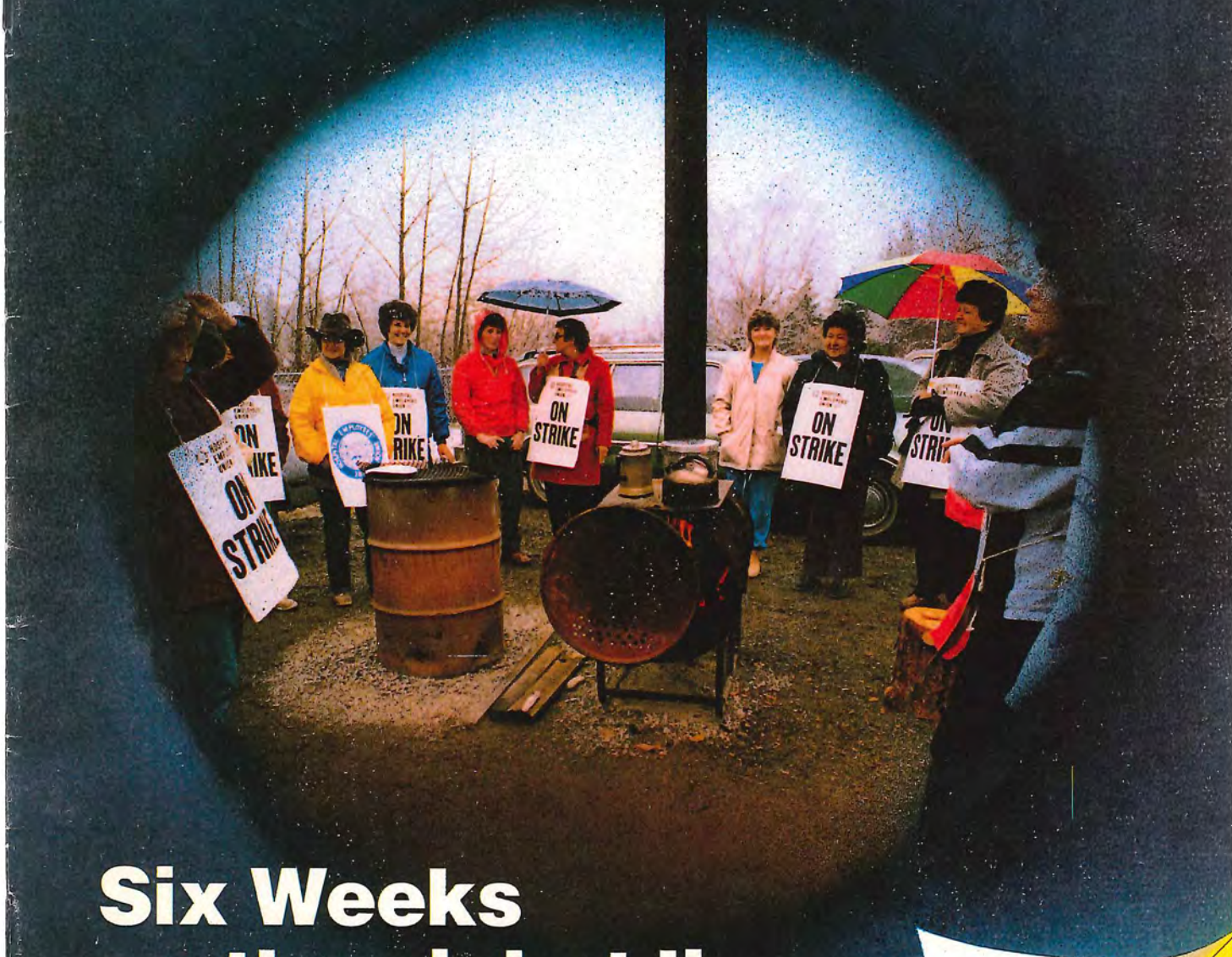


THE HOSPITAL **Guardian**

Volume 5 Number 2

June 1985



**Six Weeks
on the picket line
brings victory**

Strike coverage
page 12

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

THE HOSPITAL Guardian

Editor: Lecia Stewart

The Hospital Guardian is published by the Provincial Executive of the Hospital Employees' Union, Local 180, under the direction of an Editorial Committee whose members are: **BILL MACDONALD, JACK GEROW, MARY LaPLANTE, ALBERTA DORVAL, CLARKE GARDNER.**

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EMPLOYEES'
UNION** LOCAL
180

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Two answers — one question

By Jack Gerow

"Did we win?"

That question was asked by an HEU member at one of the ratification meetings which brought to an end HEU's 45-day strike in long-term care. The strike involved a contract dispute covering some 650 HEU members at 14 long-term care facilities across the province.

The question, "Did we win?" is at the same time one of the easiest and hardest questions to answer.

The short answer to this question is "yes."

Since 1974, HEU members in long-term care have been fighting for equal pay and benefits with their acute care colleagues under the HEU/HLRA Master Agreement.

In the past few years, there have been a number of "arbitrated" contracts that have provided equal pay and benefits for HEU's long-term care members. However, until the recent settlement between HEU and the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association, there have been no significant "negotiated" collective agreements that established the principle of comparable wages and benefits.

The important aspect of the settlement between HEU and CCERA is the agreement that comparable wages and benefits will not be an issue in future negotiations. In addition, this agreement will be a precedent for all other long-term care negotiations including the upcoming re-opener negotiations with HLRA long-term care facilities.

The longer and more difficult answer to the question of winning is this.

Although there is a significant breakthrough on comparable wages and benefits for all long-term care workers, HEU members



must do battle all over again when the HEU/CCERA contract is placed before the Compensation Stabilization Program for approval.

As HEU members know all too well, what can be won at the bargaining table can be lost at the offices of the Compensation Stabilization Program.

The cruelty of a CSP intervention is already apparent in long-term care. CSP has just ruled that the recent BCNU strike settlement was "excessive." The amount of the negotiated general wage increase that settled the BCNU strike was approximately 1 per cent.

Whether or not the HEU settlement with CCERA will be approved by CSP was not known for certain at the time this was written.

What is known, however, is this.

HEU members in long-term care are not second class health care workers. The jobs they perform are comparable to jobs in acute care. They work just as hard under the ever-increasing work loads that face health care workers in both long-term care and acute care. And, when they pay for groceries or rent, these workers don't receive any discounts because they are paid substandard wages.

There is no justification for the discrimination in wages and benefits between long-term care and acute care.

The HEU members who took strike action to prove this point have shown the strength and determination that will bring to them, sooner rather than later, the final victory of equal pay and benefits.

Furthermore, these members sacrificed their economic security not only for their own interest, but also for the interest of all health care workers — both those who seek the provincial standard of compensation and those who wish to maintain and advance this standard.

In more than 40 years of collective bargaining history, there have been a limited number of occasions when the members of the Hospital Employees' Union have said "now's the time to strike."

In this occasion, no one can take away the principle that was won by these trade unionists — not even the Commissioner under the Compensation Stabilization Act.

Conditions get critical for acute-care hospitals

British Columbia's acute-care hospitals have received their budgets for the coming year and the diagnosis is not good.

Across the province, hospital budgets have been virtually frozen. Where increases have been granted, few have exceeded two per cent.

By all accounts, the implications of the government's continued policy of restraint in health care will be staggering for both hospital workers and patients.

Even the traditionally conservative B.C. Health Association has



Shaughnessy unit HEU members demonstrate against hospital cutbacks and layoffs.



HEU secretary-business manager Jack Gerow criticizes the provincial government's underfunding of hospitals in a live interview on CKVU's Vancouver Show. Host, Mike Winlaw (centre) moderates the discussion between Gerow and a panel of journalists.

predicted a grim scenario for the province's acute-care hospitals. "I see a real tough situation ahead," said BCHA President Herman Crewson. "Hospitals have already bottomed out and it is going to be very difficult to find anywhere else to cut."

The BCHA estimates at least 400 health care workers will be laid off in the province's 15 largest hospitals alone. The association said in January that hospitals needed a minimum increase of six per cent just to cover the rising costs of medicine and other supplies.

The new hospital budgets also make no allowance for wage or benefit increases for health care workers. In a letter sent to each hospital from the ministry of health, administrators are instructed "not to set aside funds for these purposes."

However, the current HEU/HLRA Master Agreement provides for a wage re-opener effective Nov. 1, 1985.

Jack Gerow, HEU secretary-business manager, said the government's directives to the hospitals cast a dark cloud over upcoming negotiations with the Health Labor Relations Association.

HOSPITALS PREDICT CRISIS

Almost immediately after the budgets were mailed to hospitals in early May, administrators around the province began predicting the worst.

Vancouver's two largest hospitals — Vancouver General and St. Paul's — both announced that bed closures and staff layoffs might be inevitable because of the miserly budget levels.

St. Paul's announced it would be forced to take up to 283 beds out of service to cope with the \$600,000 deficit that would result from the near-miniscule budget increase handed to it by the ministry of health. VGH said at least 200 beds would have to be closed during July and August and during

Christmas after it was learned that the hospital would receive only a 1.5 per cent increase in its 1985-86 operating budget.

What most budget critics said was that the budget levels set by the health ministry failed to even keep pace with the current rate of inflation.

For the UBC Health Sciences Centre, like many other B.C. facilities, this means a near-crisis situation.

The Health Sciences Centre was forced to chop more than \$5 million and 97 staff last year. This year's budget increase of just 1.25 per cent could be a disaster.

"Occupancy is about 97 per cent for the total hospital," said President Robert McDermit. "If they (the provincial government) start talking about bed closures I don't know how we can handle it."

While most large urban hospitals in the Lower Mainland and Victoria bore the brunt of the government's inadequate health care financing, interior hospitals fared slightly better.

Although most were held to the same level of increase — between 1.5 and 2.2 per cent — few are faced with the same prospect of bed closures or staff cuts.

However, staff at these hospitals are quick to point out that this is indicative of the level of cutting that has already taken place at most of the smaller hospitals around B.C.

NOTHING LEFT TO CUT

As one interior HEU member put it, "The cutbacks have been going on steadily for the past four years. There's nothing left to cut."

The provincial government is maintaining that the increases granted to all the hospitals are adequate and that any further money will not be allotted because of a lack of cash in provincial coffers. Government critics scoff at this suggestion.

NDP health critic Eileen Dailly pointed out that the Socreds have lost over \$20 million in federal

transfer payments over the past eight months because they insist on violating the Canada Health Act. More than \$2.2 million a month has been held back by the federal government because the province continues to charge hospital user fees.

And Dailly told the legislature recently that B.C. health facilities are being starved for cash despite the existence of the much-ballyhooed health care maintenance tax.

The tax, introduced in the Socred's 1984 budget, is expected to raise \$166 million in the 1985-86 fiscal year, Dailly said. That amount could easily be applied to eliminate most of the deficits faced by B.C. hospitals.

The government's no-cash-for-health care plea is particularly weak in view of the money being spent on Expo 86.

"My God, there's no end of money for Expo," Dailly said.

Government estimates reveal the fair will show a whopping \$321 million deficit. Yet Premier Bennett has assured B.C. taxpayers that they will not fork out a cent to cover the overrun. It will be covered by lotteries, he claims, a funding solution not available to hospitals.

Moreover, as the government shifts its pre-Expo preparations into high gear, much-needed money is spent on boosting the event. One published report placed the price tag for the Expo Centre opening in April at \$500,000. It is predicted that a great deal more will be spent in the months leading up to the fair.

And in May it was revealed that the provincial government had spent close to \$1 billion on north-east coal over the past four years, money it is unlikely to recover. Government geologists say the massive project is in the wrong place and will never show a profit.

What these government decisions mean, economists agree, is that as more and more money is spent on Socred megaprojects, less and less is available for health care.

UIC changes spell trouble for Canada's jobless

Quietly and without any fanfare, the federal government is moving to radically alter Canada's unemployment insurance system.

And when it's over, the system Canadian workers fought for more than 50 years ago may be unrecognizable.

The first in a series of changes came into effect at the end of March. Parliament endorsed new regulations that would include severance benefits such as sick leave payouts, separation allowance and holiday pay as part of a workers total income.

A spokesman for the Unemployment Insurance Commission says this means jobless workers will now have to use up all severance benefits before they can start collecting their UI benefits.

"All these extra monies will have to be exhausted before a person can receive unemployment insurance," says Heather Stewart, public affairs manager for UIC's western region.

Stewart says severance benefits will be pro-rated to determine how long a worker must wait before starting on claim. For example, if you're laid off from the health care facility where you work and you're entitled to \$3,000 in accumulated sick leave and holiday pay, then that amount will be pro-rated on the basis of your weekly UI payment. If you're entitled to \$400 a week, then you will have to wait five weeks.

Stewart says she's not sure why the federal government has made these changes. "I really can't



Vancouver Unemployment Action Centre Co-ordinator Kim Zander addresses a rally of the jobless.
photo courtesy of Pacific Tribune

answer that. It's a political decision," she says.

Stewart does admit, however, that more "politically-motivated" changes to the UI system are on the government's agenda.

For Kim Zander, of Vancouver's Unemployment Action Centre, the UI alterations are easy to understand.

"The Tory government is trying to pay off its deficit on the backs of workers," Zander says.

Zander predicts that the federal government will soon introduce new UI regulations that will:

- extend the waiting period from two weeks to three weeks
- decrease the maximum number of weeks a worker can receive benefits from 50 to 40
- reduce from 60 per cent to 50 per cent the percentage of earnings on which benefits can be calculated
- increase the number of weeks a worker can be penalized for

quitting or being fired

In January 1986, pension benefits will be included as part of a worker's income for purposes of calculating unemployment payments, a move already passed by the Conservatives.

And to make sure workers who are collecting UI aren't abusing the system, the government has hired 700 "investigators" at a cost of \$30 million to scrutinize claims.

"The government's attitude to unemployment insurance and to unemployed workers is completely negative," Zander says. "They want to blame workers for the jobless crisis and their inability to do anything to create jobs."

The 20 Unemployment Action Centres around B.C. have gained much needed support from the province's labor movement.

The B.C. Federation of Labor recently launched phase one of an unemployment campaign to ensure the continued operation of the cen-

tres following the federal government's decision to cut off funding early this year. A key element of that campaign, Zander says, is to raise enough money to operate the centres without federal cash. The provincial government refuses to provide any financial aid to the UACs despite the deplorable unemployment situation it has created.

Federation Secretary-Treasurer Cliff Andstein stressed the importance of the UACs and the battle against further federal cuts at a recent meeting to launch the Fed's unemployment campaign.

"We are convinced that the provincial and federal governments are attempting to downplay chronic unemployment," Andstein said. "Local MLAs and MPs must

be made aware that the unemployment statistics being bantered around are about people who vote."

Zander stresses that urgent lobbying action is necessary to convince federal MPs to halt further UIC cuts.

"We have to get it across to them (federal politicians) now before it's too late."





Nowhere is the grim reality of B.C.'s economic crisis more apparent than at the daily line-ups for food at the Franciscan Mission in Vancouver. Up to 1,000 people wait in line each day for a sandwich and a cup of tea.

Report slams Socred economic policy

Popular theory has it that B.C.'s Social Credit party is made up of a bunch of economic experts.

The Socreds' free enterprise ideology and right-wing roots give them a lock on sound economic planning, the theory goes.

Most proponents of this theory ignore B.C.'s staggering unemployment, its record-breaking number of bankruptcies and its moribund industrial growth rate.

But now, a province-wide economic study has exploded the myth of the Socreds as sound economic planners.

A report by the People's Commission on Social and Economic Alternatives, which held hearings in 11 regions of the province, reveals that B.C. is in the midst of an economic crisis fueled by the Socred government's economic policies and its drive to centralize

decision making in the cabinet chambers.

The commission's report, entitled the People's Report, says that the Socred restraint program has caused B.C.'s economic woes, instead of curing them.

The report compares the Socred's neo-conservative approach to government spending with ancient medical practices.

"Like the medieval practice of blood-letting, these extreme right-wing policies are everywhere, a cure that is worse than the disease," the report states.

The four-member commission, sponsored by the Solidarity Coalition, spent more than five months touring B.C. listening to delegations and studying Socred restraint decisions. The commission was comprised of Chairperson Margaret Marguardt, Ray Haynes, Mel Watkins, and Jane Evans.

In May, a two-day conference was held at the University of British Columbia to present the 74-page People's Report.

One of the key findings contained in the report was that the Compensation Stabilization Act, the Socred's public sector wage control legislation, and a cornerstone of their restraint policy "virtually eliminates meaningful collective bargaining in the public sector."

And the commission discovered that government spending on mega-projects such as Expo 86, ALRT and Northeast Coal caused "severe underfunding" in education, health and social services.

The Social Credit government has been forced to deplete these areas of the provincial budget to pay for the massive costs of these projects, the report concludes.

LETTERS

Money for ads but no money for the sick!

The following letter was written to Eileen Dailly, health critic for the N.D.P. It is reprinted here for the information of all HEU members.

I wish you to pose a question to the government on hospital funding. I am a shop steward at Shaughnessy Hospital and am on a committee to deal with 105 recent layoffs.

The reason for these layoffs is a \$400,000 deficit at Shaughnessy. It is incredibly frustrating to tell our membership that the reason for all the dis-

ruption is \$400,000. Especially when the public hears news reports of the provincial government giving so many millions to save a bank, 1.5 million to help the University of Victoria with a new engineering department and, of course, the ironic \$400,000 ad campaign by the provincial government to promote new small business development.

The worst effect of these layoffs is the loss of nurse aides who will be forced into non-nursing

areas of the hospital because of no money being available for skill upgrading. Nurse aides are responsible for the greatest level of "hands on" patient care of any level of nursing. Nurse aides in Shaughnessy Hospital all work in the intermediate and long-term care sections of the hospital. The (mostly) men that they take care of cannot take care of themselves and many are war veterans. A nurse aide traditionally works on the same ward day

after day. Naturally, the aides and their patients gain emotional attachments towards each other. Familiarity of surroundings is a very important factor when speaking of long-term care residents, moving a resident to a different room can be a contributing factor in that person's health.

By not having the funds to upgrade these nurse aides, the level of patient care will decline. The residents will now be taken care of by all new employees. Because of the familiarity of surroundings questions which come into play, some residents will refuse the care of these new people and some will inevitably die. These men deserve better.

In addition, the orderlies at Shaughnessy are being refused the right to "bump" (a layoff provision) into practical nurse positions, again separating patients from those whom they have come to consider as family.

These layoffs I mention are happening as I write. I urge you to address this problem quickly and to contact myself or the HEU representative for further information.

Don Payzant
Shaughnessy Unit



A rush hour protest on a busy Vancouver street was staged by Shaughnessy HEU members to draw attention to the effects of cutbacks at the hospital.

LETTERS

Sally Ann no sacred cow

A letter addressed to the Salvation Army.

Just a brief note written more in sorrow than in anger. We are the recipient of material dealing with the current Army — Red Shield Appeal. Not to be too righteous, it must be said that the Building Trades Council and the various building trade unions do not always contribute to the Army and not always in great amounts — but it is fair to say that they do so sporadically and usually with a high regard. The Salvation Army stands rather high in the opinion of many, many workers.

The sorrow comes from the current impasse between the Army and our fellow unionists of the HEU. We can agree that the Army being in the management position of a facility is bound to be involved in labor relations, but considering the past rather compatible

relationships existing between the Army and the movement, we are somewhat put out by the current stance of your organization. We think you could have taken a much more progressive position with the hospital workers and thereby maintain your favorable image.

We are at a loss. We do not usually wish to contribute, or to encourage others to contribute, to opponents of the movement and at the same time we remember other times and other situations. We would hope that the Army could review the situation vis-a-vis the current labor relations situation and come to a conclusion that would restore the confidence in the Army that the labor movement has traditionally held.

Roy Gautier, President, B.C. and Yukon Territory Building and Construction Trades Council

Speaking out for hard-won union rights

In the past two years, we, and members of other unions, have witnessed the attack on our hard fought for rights, through the vicious assault of government and legislation.

I wish to use your magazine as a forum to forewarn my fellow union members of an equally savage attack, by management, on our rights as defined by our collective agreement.

The right I speak of is our right to paid leaves, particularly special leave. The attack takes the form of subtle intimidation, in the guise of face-to-face interviews designed to curtail abuse. However, the only prerequisite to taking part in this procedure is to request a leave, one need not

abuse the right. Soon, out of fear, our members stop requesting these leaves, and begin using other forms of leaves, often unpaid. (This is precisely what this age-old method of psychological harassment, used by terrorists and dictators, is designed to do.)

How much longer must we live with this subtle psychological manipulation? How long before our other rights are attacked in a similar fashion?

I urge you, my brothers and sisters, to fight this savage attack on our rights, with the full force of the grievance procedure and any other means available.

Georges Gagnon
Cranbrook Unit

"Bum-pinching all part of the job"

The following quote is from my husband's union newspaper (Argus-Journal, Public Service Alliance of Canada, January, 1985). Thought it might be useful for our Guardian.

Walter Block — Bool

Next time you read an economic report by the Fraser Institute, remember what the group's chief economist thinks about sexual harass-

ment:

"Many actions taken against women are not, strictly speaking, coercive. Consider the sexual harassment which continually occurs between a secretary and boss. Although to many people, and especially those in the women's movement, there is no real difference between this type of

harassment and that which occurs on public streets, the fact is that the pinching the secretary receives from her employer, while objectionable to many women, is not a coercive action. It is rather part of a package deal in which the secretary agrees to all aspects of the job when she agrees to accept the job, and

especially when she agrees to keep the job. The office is, after all, private property."

Walter Block, head economist, the Fraser Institute, and advisor to the B.C. (Social Credit) government. Defending the Undefendable

Carole A Schulties
Chilliwack Unit

LETTERS

A message to all union members — buy union label

I am a union worker and I shall not undermine the welfare of my fellow brothers and sisters. Canadian working people labored too long and too hard for me to destroy their gains by purchasing non-union.

I am a union family person who has been blessed with a decent living. I have come to enjoy better things because of the devotion, dedication, and the desire of those before me who labored to provide a standard of living unparalleled in the world. I shall not destroy all their efforts and render useless all the causes they so earnestly fought

to win for workers.

I am a trade unionist and refuse to reward those who have opposed my existence and way of life. I will not permit my union-earned dollars to penetrate the walls of those establishments where a union card is the same as a "No Vacancy" or "Not Welcome." As a person who believes in the dignity and rights of people, before I buy I shall look for the Union Label, Shop Card, Store Card or Service Button. In so doing I will strengthen the security of men and women who believe as I do in the goals of a free labor

movement.

I am a member of organized labor and will never forget I would not be able to purchase the amount of products I do without a union job and, therefore, common sense and a deep commitment to the ideals of our movement demand that I purchase those products which will further our cause.

I will support and strengthen my fellow brothers and sisters by using a simple tool — the Label Golden Rule — "Buy Union Products and Use Union Services as You Would Have Union Wages Paid Unto You!"

BUY CANADIAN

CUPE sends congratulations

I have just learned the details of your very impressive settlement in your long-term care institutions. Congratulations to you, to the HEU executive and to the striking members!

The militancy of your membership has shown what can be achieved through solidarity and determination in the face of uncaring employers and a hostile government.

CUPE is proud of your achievement, especially in the area of wage rates, and we are confident that your successful struggle will bear fruit for all of labor in B.C.

Jeff Rose, National President, Canadian Union of Public Employees

MILESTONES

A pot luck supper was held in honor of Eva Heuscher and Hazel MacDonald who retired from their nurse aide positions at Nelson's Willowhaven Private Hospital.

Sister Heuscher and her husband plan to take their first trip through the Prairies while Sister MacDonald plans to "take each day as it comes and enjoy life in general."

Violet Kearn, known as Vi to patients and staff at Como Lake Private Hos-

pital, retired from her nurse aide position on April 1, 1985 after almost 18 years of service. Sister Kearn was honored with a party before retiring and received gifts and best wishes from fellow workers.

Three veterans of the housekeeping department recently retired from Chilliwack General Hospital. They were, Elsie Tarras who worked as a housekeeping aide for 19 years, Anna Preike, a

housekeeping aide for 15 years, and Elisabeth Schlager, a housekeeping aide for 12 years.

Also retiring from Chilliwack General are Julia Tentsch, a long-term care aide for 13 years and Marian Skalky, a dietary aide for 12 years.

Apple Genseema retired in January from the housekeeping department at Nicola Valley General Hospital. Sister Genseema was presented with a camera from the members of the Mer-

rit unit and her retirement plans include travelling and "taking lots of pictures."

A combination retirement and Christmas party was held by members of the Menno unit to honor Frieda Toews, Agnes Sawatzky, Henry Dyck, Violet Olsen and Tina Tillsitsky retiring from their positions at the hospital.

Combined, these members represent a total of more than 70 years of service at Menno Hospital.



STRIKE

*Six weeks on the picket line
brings victory for
long-term care workers*



It took more than six weeks on the picket line, but 650 HEU members in 14 long-term care facilities have finally won a contract that recognizes their right to equal pay with other health care workers.

The agreement between the union and the employer's bargaining agent, the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association, was reached May 1, a day cele-

strike action.

The union's hit and run tactics were designed to cause the most inconvenience to management while minimizing the disruption to the elderly.

In fact, management was kept so off guard that at some facilities, senior representatives from CCERA had to be called in to wash dishes and deliver food.



The strength and determination of HEU members on the picket line was evident throughout the 48-day strike at a number of long-term care facilities in B.C. Shown on these two pages (top of left hand page and running clockwise) are scenes from the picket lines at Kiro Manor in Trail, Richmond Lion's Manor, Sunset Lodge in Victoria, Dr. F. W. Green Memorial Home in Cranbrook, Kimberley Special Care Home and again from Kiro Manor.

brated around the world in recognition of workers' rights.

For HEU members who had been without a contract for more than three years, it was to be a May Day like no other.

"We've been trying for years to get employers in long-term care to agree to comparability with other health care workers," said HEU secretary-business manager Jack Gerow. "This victory means the

principle is finally established and should therefore not be a point of issue in any coming round of negotiations."

But the breakthrough came only after 48 days of strike activity by some of the members employed at the homes.

The strike began March 14 at Haro Park Centre in Vancouver.

By April 2, 11 units had taken part in the on-again off-again

By April 8, employers were looking bleary eyed and harassed as a result of the union's strategy. However there was still no sign of any willingness to get back to the bargaining table to discuss equal pay.

So the members stepped up their actions. One by one, the units began coming off the job... and staying off.

First off was Haro Park on April 8. It was followed by Kinsmen



Retirement Centre on April 10, Kimberley Special Care Home on April 11, Sunset Lodge on April 12, Dr. F. W. Green Memorial Home on April 15, Richmond Lions Manor on April 16, Kiro Manor on April 17, and Nanaimo Travellers Lodge on April 18.

On April 25, the employer agreed to return to the bargaining table to negotiate comparable rates of pay. While the members at each of the strike-bound units maintained the strength of the picket lines, a 20 member HEU bargaining committee made up of representatives from each unit entered into marathon negotiations with the employer in Vancouver. After 60 hours of meetings

between HEU and CCERA, a settlement was reached.

The new contract runs for four years from April 1, 1982 to March 31, 1986. It provides for new wage increases of 2 per cent effective April 1, 1984, 2 per cent effective April 1, 1985 and 5 per cent effective November 1, 1985. In addition, the agreement includes an 8 per cent increase already paid to employees on August 1, 1982.

Gerow said the settlement will bring the wages of these HEU members into line with the HEU/HLRA Master Agreement. Prior to the strike, HEU members at the 14 long-term care facilities were paid 10 per cent less for doing the same work as many other HEU mem-



Members from Kinsmen Retirement Centre in Delta.

bers in acute care and long-term care.

The entire package is subject to review by the provincial government's wage control program, the Compensation Stabilization Act.

Trade unions rally around HEU

It was snowing lightly when the small pick-up truck slowly approached the picket line at Kimberley's Special Care Home.

The driver, unknown to any of the HEU members walking the picket line, rolled down the window and introduced himself as the president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 2091.

"We want to know what we can do to help," he said. "Maybe if you can give us your picket schedule, we can get some people up here."

There was no mistaking the look

of delight on the faces of HEU members within earshot.

Because, as one member put it, when you're out on the picket line, that kind of support means the world.

Indeed, the experience at Kimberley was repeated around the province as other trade unions, labor councils, prominent union leaders, and of course HEU units, rallied behind the striking HEU members.

The Canadian Labor Congress, to which HEU recently affiliated,

telegraphed the union to pledge its full support and solidarity to the strikers.

"The decision to withdraw 'our labor' is one that is not taken lightly, especially in the health care system, but when an employer attempts to delay negotiations by imposing 'pre-bargaining conditions' then indeed no settlement can be reached without job action," the CLC said.

From Jeff Rose, the National President of the 300,000-member

Canadian Union of Public Employees, HEU received the following telegram:

"Have just learned that your rotating strikes at 12 homes will now be replaced by all-out strikes. This telex is to offer CUPE's fraternal assistance in whatever form you feel appropriate — financial, demonstrations, solidarity pickets, etc. Please convey to the strikers my personal encouragement and best wishes together with those of the National Executive



Art Kube, president of the B.C. Federation of Labor, made several visits to HEU picket lines. Above, he pledges Federation support and assistance to members from Richmond Lion's Manor.



Picket lines at Haro Park Centre in Vancouver received a special boost when members of the Vancouver and District Labor Council showed up for picket duty on April 20. In the centre of the photograph, unit officer Susan Alexiou thanks labor council secretary-treasurer Frank Kennedy for the support.

Board."

Local CUPE members came through with flying colors at most of the strike-bound facilities and were on hand regularly to help bolster HEU picket lines.

Support from private sector unions was also encouraging. Much as both government and business delight in painting great divisions between public and private sector trade unionists, the recent experience of HEU members does not seem to bear out this theory.

The United Steelworkers of America, Local 651 (based in

Kimberley) passed a resolution at one its meetings pledging full support to HEU members on strike in that community and telling all its members to respect the picket lines.

Local USWA vice-president Tom Hill said financial assistance was considered for the strikers in the event of a prolonged dispute. The union also wrote a special story about the HEU strike in its newspaper, *The Conveyor*, which expressed concern about people who were working as volunteers at Kimberley Special Care Home during the strike. The story went on to

say that the union would print in its next issue the names of those people who continued to cross the HEU picket lines to volunteer at the facility.

Luckily for the volunteers, the strike was settled before the next issue of *The Conveyor*.

But in addition to the words of solidarity, the Steelworkers put their support into action by building on-site picket shacks for the members in Trail and Kimberley. Union representative Mark Atkinson described the Trail shelter as the "cadillac of picket shacks, some 10 feet in height with windows and everything."

For members on picket duty for 6 hour shifts, the shelter was a much welcomed addition.

In Vancouver, the Vancouver and District Labor Council designated April 20 as "HEU support day" and unions affiliated to the council walked the picket line at Haro Park Centre. Representatives from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, CUPE, the Longshoremen, and others were on hand.

Art Kube, president of the B.C. Federation of Labor, visited HEU members at Kinsmen Retirement Centre and Richmond Lions Manor. Kube told the members that the Fed was firmly behind the strike and would do "anything we can to help HEU to win their fight."

In Nanaimo, members of the Nanaimo and District Labor Council, and especially the Fisherman's Union, provided support pickets.

Needless to say, there was also considerable support extended by HEU units not involved in the dispute. Many of them pledged financial assistance to the strikers and were diligent in lending their support to the picketers.

"You just can't put a price tag on the kind of support we received," said Ruby Hardwick, secretary-treasurer of the Kimberley Special Care unit.

"Without it, there's no telling how long we might have been on strike."

Resident appreciation day

we're
planning
a nice
day
for you

taking
the time
to care

HOSPITAL
EMPLOYEES
UNION



While management did not support the concept of HEU's "Resident Appreciation Day," some of the residents had different ideas. Archie Smith-Henderson, a 91-year-old resident at Haro Park Centre, tells the news media that he's disappointed at management's refusal to allow the special day to go ahead.

Locked doors, stern-faced hospital administrators and extra security guards greeted striking members of the Hospital Employees' Union when they tried to provide a special resident's appreciation day April 22.

Around the province, HEU members traded picket signs for greeting cards and flowers in the hopes of re-entering the strike-bound long-term care homes to spend a few hours doing nice things for the seniors.

But the employers wanted no part of HEU's "Resident Appreciation Day." At seven facilities, where HEU had been on strike for

as long as a month, members bearing flowers and gifts for the residents were denied entrance.

As one reporter noted, when it comes to striking hospital workers, there's no such thing as visiting hours.

To be certain, the significance of the employer's actions were not lost on the members, or even the residents. At Haro Park Centre in Vancouver, 25 members were turned away at the door, much to

the disappointment of onlooking residents.

"They (the employers) were trying to convince the residents we didn't care about them," said Haro Park chairperson Susan Alexiou. "They were trying to prove to everyone that we didn't care. The fact that we showed up with flowers and cards and fruit for the residents destroyed their favorite theory."

That's why, for instance, that at



In spite of the locked doors and extra security guards that greeted most HEU members during Resident Appreciation Day, some members did manage to sneak a few moments of time with the seniors.

Haro Park and elsewhere, administrators even went so far as to try to keep residents from seeing the members' attempts to get past the guarded doorways.

"Those who managed to sneak a peek made their way through and came and joined us in the lobby and sang with us," Alexiou said.

"The relationship our people have with the residents is a special one — one that I don't think management understands very well. The residents are our friends and we wanted to take time we couldn't normally take to read to the residents, write letters for them and go for walks."

A special greeting card made up for the residents explained that it had never been the intention of the union to upset or inconvenience the residents. Another letter to relatives and friends reminded them that HEU members had waited

more than three years for a peaceful settlement of their collective agreement.

"In reality what management did was deny the residents the opportunity to feel better to protect their own needs," said Alexiou.

And the story was much the same at most other facilities. Employers at all the struck facilities labelled resident appreciation day as a "publicity ploy" and accused the union of "using the residents as pawns in the dispute."

In Cranbrook, at F.W. Green Memorial Home, members were refused entrance unless they stated they were prepared to return to work.

In Trail, the doors to Kiro Manor were actually locked, preventing residents from leaving and another resident, who had been visiting a doctor, from getting back in.

Similar situations were encountered at Sunset Lodge, Nanaimo Travellers Lodge, Kinsmen Retirement Centre and Kimberley Special Care Home.

At two facilities, Luther Court in Victoria and Greenwoods on Saltspring Island, HEU members were not on strike but took part in the resident appreciation day by abandoning their normal duties to spend time with the residents on a one-to-one basis.

HEU leader Jack Gerow contends that management made a big mistake by refusing to allow the special day to go ahead. "After that, it was pretty hard for them to point at HEU members with accusations of denying care to the residents."

For many of the residents, their families and friends, it was then only too clear who was using the residents as pawns.

The Salvation Army boycott



Holding the line at Sunset Lodge.

Charity works both ways

"We believe the Salvation Army should sit down and negotiate, in the true Christian spirit, a new contract with its HEU employees at Sunset Lodge."

With these words, the secretary-treasurer of the Victoria and District Labor Council announced the council's decision to boycott the Sally Ann's annual fund-raising campaign.

"How could the Victoria Labor Council justify... the endorsement of the Red Shield appeal when doing so would help fund the Salvation Army to possibly prolong the strike and keep our members outside longer?" said Andre Pel in defense of the decision.

But defensible or not, the move by the council to boycott the campaign until a settlement was reached with striking HEU members raised the ire of newspaper editorial writers and even one trade union leader.

IWA President Jack Munro, fresh from a B.C. government sponsored trip to China with Forest Minister Tom Waterland, blasted the labor council for its act of Solidarity and also took aim at HEU.

The IWA leader attacked HEU secretary-business manager Jack Gerow as a "flash in the pan" and said it was ridiculous for him to talk about a boycott. [Editor's note: The resolution urging the boycott came from the labor council executive at the meeting where HEU delegates were being sworn in for the first time.]

In response, Gerow welcomed the support of the Victoria council. "The Salvation Army can't have it both ways," he said. "They can't expect to get donations from workers while refusing to pay fair wages to its own employees."

Gerow said Munro's comments simply indicated that the IWA leader is more supportive of the employer than he is of union members. "It's regrettable that any trade union leader would come down on the side of management, especially when employees have been without a contract for more than three years."



HEU's Jack Gerow explains to the news media why HEU supports the boycott of the Salvation Army's fund raising campaign.



Pictured above is Andre Pel, secretary-treasurer of the Victoria Labor Council.

In any event, Gerow said that the members of the IWA could always count on the support of HEU if they were ever in a similar situation.

According to labor council head

Pel, the argument that the Salvation Army just runs Sunset Lodge but doesn't do the negotiating is not valid. "It hired the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association (the bargaining agent). It

could fire them and deal directly with the problem at hand.

"One must understand that the reasons CCERA was hired to do the negotiating... is that CCERA had promised to negotiate a better contract for the employers, meaning a lower rate of pay for the employees," Pel said.

Art Kube, B.C. Fed president concurred that being a charitable organization is no license for these institutions to be unfair to their employees.

In a letter to the Salvation Army, Roy Gautier, president of B.C. and Yukon Territory Building and Construction Trade Council said his organization did not usually wish to contribute to opponents of the labor movement.

"We would hope that the Army could review the situation (with HEU) and come to a conclusion that would restore the confidence in the Army that the labor movement has traditionally held," wrote Gautier.

In spite of the varied responses elicited by the boycott, it was the Labor Council's Andre Pel who remained at the eye of the storm. In fact, while Pel was visiting the Sunset picket line on April 30 he was assaulted. Pel has filed assault charges against a volunteer who was working at the Salvation Army-operated facility.

Nevertheless, Pel stood firm in his support of HEU's Sunset Lodge members in both newspaper interviews and on radio hot-line shows.

And throughout the dispute, Pel repeatedly stated that the council would urge all its affiliates to participate in the Red Shield campaign the moment the strike was settled.

On May 4, the same day that HEU members at Sunset Lodge returned to work, Andre Pel held a press conference in Victoria to announce an official end to the boycott.

As HEU members in Victoria had learned over the past month, Andre Pel was indeed a man who was good to his word.

FRONTLINES

Eaton's workers get first contract

A determined group of retail workers made labor history recently when they negotiated the first collective agreement with Eaton's stores.

The 1,200 members of the Retail Wholesale Department Store Union forced the 115-year-old retail giant to sign its first collective agreement af-

ter a five-month strike at six Ontario Eaton's outlets.

The majority of the striking workers were women employed on a part-time basis and receiving few benefits.

A national labor-sponsored boycott of Eaton's was gaining momentum and is considered a key

factor in the company's decision to retreat from its position of "no union at any cost."

The negative image the boycott created was said to be worrisome to the store's marketing executives.

The landmark agreement is seen as a positive sign by most union orga-

nizers. They feel it gives organized labor a crack at breaking into the entire retail sector that has historically remained non-union.

The same union was beaten in a massive organizing drive at Eaton's in the late-40s and 50s that destroyed labor in the retail field until now.

School board members receive pink slip

At 8 a.m., Monday, May 6, 1985 the City of Vancouver's elected school board was eliminated by a provincial government order in council.

In its place, Jack Heinrich, the minister of education, appointed one man, Alan Stables, as official trustee.

This unprecedented move on the part of the Social Credit government came on the heels of a six-month campaign by trustees from around the province to stop the cuts in education budgets. Five school boards, Vancouver, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Courtenay, and Cowichan decided to submit budgets that

would maintain services at 1984 levels.

Although the government claimed these school trustees were breaking the law, a Supreme Court Judge who reviewed the Cowichan case said the trustees had not personally infringed the School Act when they voted against the government imposed school budget bylaw.

However, of the five boards, Vancouver and Cowichan were "fired." The other three, Burnaby, Courtenay and Coquitlam, eventually passed the required by-law, but only after the minister of education extended the deadline several times

and after allowing them access to their capital resources to meet their operating deficit. This option was not given to any of the province's schools boards until two days after the Vancouver School Board was "fired."

In fact, fired Vancouver school trustee Carmela Allevato said the Vancouver school trustees suggested that option to Heinrich at a B.C. school trustees annual general meeting two days before they were fired. Heinrich declined to grant them permission to dip into the capital reserves.

The sequence of events leading up to the firing has caused many observers to question the

government's motives.

According to Allevato, the government acted in a politically partisan manner.

"The fact the government-appointed 'official trustee' was allowed to use the whole of the capital reserve fund to cover all additional costs, except inflation, shows that the firing of the elected Vancouver school trustees was not necessary," said Allevato.

"Heinrich fired the elected trustees to silence the most high profile critics of the Social Credit government's 'restraint' program in education," said Dr. Pauline Weinstein, former chairman of the board.

The former Vancouver trustees have launched an action in the Supreme Court of B.C. in an effort to have their jobs reinstated.

PEOPLE IN FOCUS



Vancouverites crowded into the streets April 27 to demonstrate for disarmament in Vancouver's annual Walk for Peace. HEU was, as in past years, well represented and members walked under the union's banner in the trade union column of the march.



Bill Macdonald, HEU president, speaks with news media at a May Day noon-hour demonstration at the offices of the Compensation Stabilization Program. The protest was held to show the union's opposition to the government's attack on trade union bargaining rights.

FRONTLINES

BOYCOTTS BOYCOTTS

Union members around the province are being asked by the B.C. Federation of Labor to boycott the following products and companies until labor disputes at these firms are settled. In all cases, the Federation has called a boycott at the request of the unions who represent workers at those companies in the hopes of pressuring management to settle long outstanding disputes.

—**Eaton's** The Canadian Labor Congress has not yet removed its boycott edict from all Eaton's stores even though the employees there have won their first contract. (See story on page 20.) There is an attempt underway to get the scabs, who worked at the six Ontario stores during the strike, to now sponsor a decertification vote. The CLC will not lift its boycott until this matter is settled.

—**Canada Trust** (all locations)

—**Canadian Tire** (all lo-

cations)

—**U.S. lettuce** (Red Coach, Donny, Big Fred, SAS, Big A, Bobby & Andrews brands)

—**Procter & Gamble** (soap products/detergents)

—**Louisiana Pacific Corporation, Forest Products** (Construction material, Waferwood Construction Panels, Pabco Xonolite Insulation, Weatherseal windows and doors)

—**Sandman Inns**

—**Chilean Products**

—**South African Products**

HOT EDICTS — The Federation is asking that no supplies of any kind be delivered or extended to these firms until disputes are settled.

—**Slade & Stewart Ltd.**

—**Okanagan H.R.I. Supply Ltd.**

—**Canadian Tire** — Prince George location

—**Stevenson Construction** — Pennyfarthing site

—**Purolator Courier**

—**Entex Door Systems Ltd.**

Charter of Rights guarantee equality

It's official — equality finally exists in Canada.

The passage of section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equality status to women and all minority groups not previously treated equally by the law.

For the thousands of women members of the Hospital Employees' Union it means discrimination on the basis of sex or age is now illegal. And the new section also means equal treatment without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, and mental or physical disability.

The Charter of Rights

was proclaimed in 1982 but the equality provisions were withheld until now to allow provincial governments to clean up their legislative acts.

However, some people don't think the three-year wait has resulted in a total elimination of discriminatory laws. A national women's coalition has been formed in Ottawa to bring Charter challenges against discriminatory federal and provincial statutes.

And for labor unions, the Charter may spell trouble. Constitutional experts claim sections of the Charter could be used to attack the validity of closed-shop unions.

John Fleming HEU pioneer

A former president of the Hospital Employees' Union and one of the union's pioneer members, John Fleming, died May 23 at the age of 74.

Brother Fleming served as president of HEU for more than a decade before his retirement from the post in 1968. After 1968, he continued to work at Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westmin-

ster until he retired in 1975.

In recognition of his contribution and service to HEU, Brother Fleming was made an honorary member of the union at the Fourteenth Biennial Convention in 1984.

He is survived by his daughter Marjorie, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

FRONTLINES

Board awards HEU family \$50,000

The family of a deceased HEU member has been awarded \$50,000 following a recent Labor Relations Board decision.

The board ruled that Simon Fraser Lodge in Prince George must pay the deceased worker's family \$50,000 because it failed to provide employees with life insurance coverage.

The life insurance policy was taken from the

master agreement between HEU and the health care industry.

But according to HEU Representative John Hurren, it was discovered in early 1984 that the lodge had never taken out the required coverage. About seven weeks later one of the workers at the lodge died unexpectedly, Hurren said.

The case went to the LRB where the employer argued that the master

agreement benefit did not apply to the 60 workers it employed. But the board rejected that argument noting the presence of a memorandum of agreement between the lodge and HEU which the board said established conditions of employment there.

That decision paved the way for the board's later award of \$50,000. "The decision was cut and dried," Hurren said.

Peck gets bigger club

The provincial government wants to hand wage control boss Ed Peck a bigger club to use against B.C.'s public sector unions.

Under the provisions of Bill 32, the Compensation Stabilization Amendment Act, Peck would have the power to arbitrarily impose an agreement on a public sector union. Prior to Bill 32, Peck could only reject negotiated compensation levels and instruct the parties to go back to the bargaining table and renegotiate them.

Art Kube, president of the B.C. Federation of Labor, predicted the amendments would cause bargaining chaos.

"This amendment brings back vivid memories of the infamous Mediation Services Commission which was the root of so much industrial upheaval in the 1960s," Kube said.

Kube added that Bill 32 would cause the death of public sector collective bargaining. "One would think this government would learn they can't legislate good industrial relations," Kube said.

Bill 32 was introduced in the legislature in April.

The case of the shrinking wage settlement

Wages paid to Canadian workers are on a continuing tailspin, according to recently-released statistics from the federal department of labor.

The statistics reveal that in 1984 the average annual wage increase negotiated in major collective agreements was a paltry 3.6 per cent. That's a marked decline from 1982 when Canadian workers managed to squeeze an average 4.7 per cent increase out of their bosses.

The 1984 figures mean that wage settlements in Canada are now running a full point behind the inflation rate which was

tagged at 4.7 per cent by Statistics Canada for the first quarter of the year.

Labor Canada said the

downward decline in wage settlements first started in 1982 and has continued since then.



Kitimat HEU members were out in full force recently to support the Kitimat Teachers District Association. The KTDA is fighting to keep the job security and seniority clauses of their contract intact.

SPEAKING OUT



By Andre K. Pel
Secretary-Treasurer
Victoria Labor Council

Finding strength in local labor councils

right from the start because of our common cause and the history of the HEU as a dedicated strong union.

For those of you who are not familiar with the labor councils, let me briefly explain how they operate. The various councils all across Canada are directly chartered by the Canadian Labor Congress. Our boundaries are described in our by-laws and vary in size and number of affiliates. We, in Victoria, for instance, have plus/minus 71 locals affiliated to the Council, with a total membership of 20,000. Those locals in turn elect delegates who make up the labor council. From those delegates, an executive is elected and now we have an umbrella organization where all are represented. Various committees are established including women's committees, political action committee, education committee, public sector committee, etc. and any and all delegates are encouraged to participate.

The purpose of the labor councils is to support the principles and policies of the Canadian Labor Congress; to advance the economic and social welfare of workers; to assist in organizing and protecting the rights of workers and the welfare of all people; to promote peace and freedom in the world and co-operate with free and democratic organizations seeking the same.

With the wealth of information coming from the Canadian Labor Congress and B.C. Federation of Labor and numerous sources we are able to keep our affiliates up to date on everything that is going on

around us and that may affect us in the labor movement.

One other task is to assist wherever we can those who ask for our help. For instance, we co-ordinate meetings between unions when members are affected by a strike or lock-out. This is to avoid surprise picket lines. We also supply people for picket lines to supplement the lines where necessary. We do what is necessary to persuade the employer to return to the bargaining table and negotiate in good faith to come to a collective agreement. The most recent example of this was the HEU strike against Sunset Lodge and our subsequent boycott of the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal. The Victoria Labor Council unanimously passed a motion to not participate in the Red Shield Appeal until such time as the employer (Sally Ann) reached an agreement with the HEU. Of course, every union basher took the opportunity to attack us, totally ignoring the facts, in an attempt to discredit organized labor.

In spite of this harassment, we constantly inform and educate the public about labor and the good it does for the community. We also administrate and co-ordinate, in co-operation with the B.C. Federation of Labor, the Unemployed Action Centre. We help union and non-union people alike with personal problems and try to help ease the burden of unemployment.

I sincerely hope this provides some insight into the workings of the labor council and I am looking forward to a future of friendship and co-operation.

First of all, I would like to welcome the Hospital Employees' Union back into the mainstream of labor by its affiliation to the Canadian Labor Congress and now all across the province through the different labor councils.

We, in Victoria, have now affiliated most of the units of the Hospital Employees' Union. The Victoria Labor Council is proud to boast of its excellent relationship with your Provincial Executive, your local representatives and the executives of the various units of HEU affiliated to us.

This relationship was positive